**Costs Involved in the Education of Children in Wisconsin**

**There are 2,276 public schools in Wisconsin distributed in 467 school districts. A total of 853,348 students attend Wisconsin schools and 60,296 teachers work for the schools. (www.univstats.com)**

**There are four private school choice options in Wisconsin paid for by Wisconsin taxpayers. This funding comes directly from each public school district in the state.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Total Number of Private Schools Funded by Taxpayers** | **Milwaukee Parental Choice Program****(MPCP}****Student Participants** | **Racine Parental Choice Program Student Participants** | **Wisconsin Parental Choice Program Student Participants** | **Special Needs Scholarship Program Student Participants** | **Total Number of Students** |
| **2016-17** | **212** | **27,102** | **2462** | **2990** | **201** | **23,756** |
| **2020-21** | **343** | **27,751** | **3772** | **11,719** | **1394** | **44,673** |
| **2024-25** | **403** | **28,937** | **4073** | **21,056** | **3001** | **57,068** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Cost** |
| **2016-17** | **$246,594,168.30** |
| **2020-21** | **$384,298,755.83** |
| **2024-25** | **$633,014,058.77** |

**Average State Aid/Revenue Limit Payment Per Pupil**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Parental Choice .5 4K with 87.5 hours of parental outreach**  | **Parental Choice****Grades K-8****Full Time** | **Parental Choice** **Grades 9-12****Full Time** | **Public Schools 5K-12** **Full Time** |
| **2021-22** |  | **$8336** | **$8982** | **$10,551** |
| **2022-23** |  | **$8399** | **$9045** | **$10,553** |
| **2023-24** | **$5935.00** | **$9893** | **$12,387** | **$11,000** |
| **2024-25** | **$6142.00** | **$10,237** | **$12,731** | **$11,325** |

**Note: Choice Schools can charge tuition for their high school students if the family income level exceeds a percentage of the federal poverty level.**

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**In addition, legal mandates on school districts add costs that are not required to be borne by voucher schools. A school district payment can only be comparable to a voucher school payment if it takes those “un-aided” costs into account. The largest school-district-specific mandated expenditures are transportation and special education.**

**Want information specific to your school district? Contact your school district’s Business Manager or contact the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials (WASBO) Research Director, Anne Chapman @** **Anne.Chapman@wasbo.com**

**The Wisconsin Supreme Court recently ruled that Governor Ever’s partial line item veto allowing a $325 increase per pupil through the year 2425 was legal. “We uphold the 2023 partial vetoes, and in doing so we are acutely aware that a 400-year modification is both significant and attention-grabbing,” Justice Jill J. Karofsky wrote in the majority opinion. “However, our Constitution does not limit the governor’s partial veto power based on how much or how little the partial vetoes change policy, even when that change is considerable.”**

**The proposed state budget had outlined two years of revenue limit increases, for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years. By editing out the text in red, Mr. Evers allowed increases until 2425.**

**More and more school districts are seeking to pass referendums to have sufficient funding for maintaining current programs, salaries for staff, and upkeep of buildings.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date of Referendum** | **Number of Referendum on Ballot** | **Number of Referendum PASSED** | **Number of Referendum FAILED** |
| **Spring 2024** | **103** | **61** | **42** |
| **Fall 2024** | **140** | **109** | **31** |
| **Spring 2025** | **94** | **53** | **41** |

**Districts which do not pass referendum fall farther and farther behind. Under 2017 Act 141, if a district failed to pass an operating referendum in one of the three school years prior to a given school year, and it does not subsequently succeed in passing an operating referendum, the low revenue ceiling (LRC) amount to which that district is subject is frozen for three years. For example, if a district held a failed operating referendum (recurring or nonrecurring) during 2023-24, the per pupil LRC would be $11,000 for the three years following the failed referendum: 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27. If the district subsequently passes an operating referendum, the three-year freeze of the LRC is removed, effective the year after passage of the referendum.**

**Per an article by Anne Chapman, Research Director for the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials (WASBO) , a series of state policy decisions over the last 30 years have left public schools increasingly under-resourced. As a result, a school district’s ability to persuade local taxpayers to pass operating referendums has evolved into an essential component of Wisconsin’s school finance system. The pervasive and growing use of operating referendums as a vital strategy on which school districts have come to rely originates in three overriding state-level drivers: 1) annual general spending authority that is not based on educational need and does not keep pace with inflation, 2) declining enrollment, and 3) minimal support for mandated special education costs. (**[**School referendums are sending a clear message - Central Wisconsin News**](https://www.centralwinews.com/recordgleaner/2025/01/07/school-referendums-are-sending-a-clear-message/?destination=star-news)**)**