

# How to Explain- Accountability

# Why Is Accountability Important?

- Every school throughout Wisconsin must meet certain standards in order to retain the accreditation. Choice schools are no different.
- Accountability is important because it ensures that schools are providing their students the education, resources, and academic environment they deserve.
- These checks allow for leaders, lawmakers, parents, and the general public the ability to know these schools are performing effectively and funding is being put to good use.

# How Regulated Are Choice Schools?

Parental Choice Schools are some of the most regulated schools in the country. By law, each school is mandated to:

- Maintain accreditation
- Provide background checks and at least a bachelor's degree for all teachers
- Maintain proper records retention
- Appropriate curriculum and a board of governance
- Meet all federal safety and anti-discrimination guidelines
- Allow students to opt out of religious programs.

If at any time a parent feels their choice school is not providing their students with the proper academic experience, they have the ability to remove the child from the choice program.

# How Regulated Are Choice Schools?

Any student that meets the eligibility requirement can apply to receive a voucher and a school must admit the student if they have a declared seat.

- If there are more applications than seats, a blide lottery must be done.
- By law, schools can NOT pick and choose their students. (Wis. Stat. 119.23(3)(a))

# Additional Accountability Measures

Recent changes in state laws have increased what were already strict accountability requirements on choice schools. These measures include:

- Making it more challenging for schools to become apart of the choice programs in order to combat any fraud or abuse of funds.
- Requiring schools provide comprehensive financial audits, conducted by a certified public accountant, which are reviewed by the Department of Public Instruction annually.
- Provide the state with evidence of sound fiscal practices and financial viability.
- Require school administrators under financial training and to have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education or a Wisconsin teacher or administrator license.
- Giving the Department of Public Instruction authority to deny, withhold funding from, or remove schools that do not comply or meet their requirements.

# School Report Cards

- All schools receiving public funding must publish an annual report card..
- **All schools, regardless of sector, are judged on the exact same merits.**
- These Accountability Report Cards include data on multiple indicators for multiple years across four Priority Areas (Student Achievement, Growth, Closing Gaps, and On-track and Post-secondary Success).
- In addition, given the impact on student success, the Accountability Report Cards also measure chronic absenteeism and dropout rates.
- Every publicly funded school must provide a copy of their report card to students' parents.
- All report cards are publicly available.

# State Testing

- All choice schools must administer their students the same statewide testing as any other public school
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- That includes 5 separate standardized state tests throughout the a students education from grades 3-11.