

To: School District of Neillsville Board of Education and Community Members
From: John Gaier, District Administrator
Date: December 21, 2015

Re: 2015 Wisconsin Act 55 Notice Requirements

District Public Schools

The School District of Neillsville offers the following public educational school options for resident attendance area students and students choosing to open enroll from nonresident districts.

Elementary School: Neillsville Elementary School (K4-6)

Middle/High School: Neillsville Middle/High School (7-12)

Private School Choice Program (Voucher Schools)

The private school choice program in our region is based on where the student resides. Eligibility in our resident attendance area pertains only to the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) or statewide program. Schools participating in the program receive a state aid payment for each eligible student on behalf of the student's parent or guardian. Additionally, applicants may be required to meet income and age requirements.

We have no participating schools within our district boundaries that are identified WPCP schools. To see a list of specific schools participating in the WPCP please refer to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) website at:

<https://sms.dpi.wi.gov/wpcp-statewide>.

Charter Schools

Charter schools are public, nonsectarian schools created through a businesslike contract or “charter” between the charter governance board and the sponsoring school board or other chartering authority. The Wisconsin charter school law gives charter schools freedom from most state rules and regulations in exchange for greater accountability for results. The charter defines the missions and methods of the charter school. The chartering authority holds the school accountable to its charter. The charter school motto is “Autonomy for Accountability.”

There are no charter schools that lie within the School District of Neillsville resident attendance area.

Virtual Schools

The statewide web academy, known as the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative (WDLC) has been established pursuant to the authority granted in Wis. Stat. §115.28(53), to provide equitable access to high quality online education by offering online learning to school districts, cooperative educational service agencies, charter schools and private schools located in this state. The WDLC consists of two collaborating organizations: 1) the Wisconsin Virtual School; and 2) the Wisconsin eSchool Network.

The two organizations collaborate with DPI to provide a single point for schools to access quality online courses, integrating them into the new student system. Combined, these two programs provide partnership pathways for schools to provide a variety of online and blended learning opportunities.

If you are interested in virtual programs or schools, contact your local school district first as many have virtual and online programs available. The difference between the “online programs” and “virtual schools” is that the online programs usually offer courses to school districts, while the virtual schools usually offer courses directly to students.

The School District of Neillsville does offer online programs when necessary. There are no other virtual schools that lie within the School District of Neillsville resident attendance area. To see a complete list of operating virtual schools within the state please refer to the DPI website at: dpi.wi.gov/imt/digital-learning/virtual-schools

Full-Time Open Enrollment

The inter-district public school open enrollment program allows parents to apply for their children to attend public school in a school district other than the one in which they reside.

Any Wisconsin resident in four-year-old kindergarten to grade 12 may apply to attend a nonresident school district under the open enrollment program. Additionally, a child may transfer to a nonresident school district for early childhood education or four-year-old kindergarten only if the child's resident school district offers the same type of program and only if the child is eligible for that program in the resident school district.

The regular open enrollment application period for each school year typically starts at the beginning of February of the preceding school year and ends at 4:00 p.m. on April 30. The best way to apply is online via a link on the DPI website.

An alternative application procedure allows pupils to apply for open enrollment at any time during a school year if certain criteria are met. Additional information regarding the alternative application procedure can be found on the DPI Open Enrollment – Parent Page.

For your convenience, please refer to the DPI website for further information at: <http://oe.dpi.wi.gov/parents-main>

Youth Options

Wisconsin's youth options program allows public high school junior and senior students who meet certain requirements to take postsecondary courses at a UW institution, a Wisconsin technical college, one of the state's participating private nonprofit institutions of higher education, or tribally-controlled colleges. Approved courses count toward high school graduation and college credit.

The program offers greater learning opportunities for motivated students considering a technical career, wishing to begin college early, or preparing themselves to enter the workforce immediately after high school graduation.

Under youth options, a student does not pay for a college course if the school board determines the course qualifies for high school credit and is not comparable to a course already offered in the school district. If approved by the school board, the student can receive both high school and college credit upon successful completion of the course.

To see a list of specific requirements for enrollment in youth options programming, including timelines, please refer to the DPI website at: youthoptions.dpi.wi.gov/

Course Options

2013 Wisconsin Act 20, the 2013-15 biennial budget act, established a new program for students entitled Course Options. Course Options provides a means for Wisconsin students to take courses offered by other Wisconsin school districts, but now also includes the opportunity for students to enroll in courses offered by charter schools, various institutions of higher education, and approved nonprofit organizations at no cost to the student.

Specifically, the new Course Options law allows a pupil enrolled in a public school district to take up to two courses at any time from an educational institution. Wisconsin educational institutions are defined under the Course Options statute as:

- a public school in a nonresident school district;
- the University of Wisconsin System;
- a technical college;
- a nonprofit institution of higher education;
- a tribal college;
- a charter school; and
- a nonprofit organization that has been approved by the DPI.

To see a list of specific requirements for enrollment in a Course Options offering, please refer to the DPI website at: courseoptions.dpi.wi.gov/

Home-Based Private Educational Program Options

“Home-based private educational program” means a program of educational instruction provided to a child by the child’s parent or guardian or by a person designated by the parent or guardian. An instructional program provided to more than one family unit does not constitute a home-based private educational program.

Attendance in the public school by pupils enrolled in a home-based private educational program is allowed for a pupil who has met the standards for admission to the course and may attend up to 2 courses at a public school in the district during each school semester if the school board determines that there is sufficient space in the classroom. Also, a pupil enrolled in a home-based private educational program and attending a public school under this section may attend

one course in each of 2 school districts, but may not attend more than 2 courses in any semester.

In addition, Wis. Stat. §118.133, provides for participation in interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities to a pupil who resides in the school district and is enrolled in a home-based private educational program. Students may participate in interscholastic athletics in the school district on the same basis and to the same extent that pupils enrolled in the school district may participate. The home-based educational program in which the pupil is enrolled shall provide the school board with a written statement that the pupil meets the school board's requirements for participation in interscholastic athletics based on age and academic and disciplinary records. No person may provide a false statement under this paragraph.

A school board may charge a pupil who participates in interscholastic athletics or extracurricular activities as permitted under this section participation fees, including fees for uniforms, equipment, and musical instruments, on the same basis and to the same extent that it charges these fees to a pupil who is enrolled in the school district.

Special Needs Voucher Program

The School District of Neillsville hereby acknowledges this section to serve as our required notification to the parents/guardians of each child in our district who has a disability and is enrolled in our school district of the new Special Needs Scholarship Program (private school voucher program), which begins in the 2016-17 school year and the program is available to students with an individualized education program (IEP) who meet specified conditions outlined in state law. Further details of this program will be forthcoming from the DPI.

