



Navigating Schooling Options in Wisconsin

Alternative Schools: These are generally schools whose educational philosophies are different from traditional programs. Typically, alternative schools have small classes, a social and emotional development curriculum, and a self-paced academic curriculum. This title is used officially as well as informally to describe a wide range of schools, so it's important to ask specific schools why they are classified as alternatives.

Resources

- [WI DPI Alternative Education Programs](#)

Charter Schools: One of the most significant changes in public education in recent years has been the growth of the charter school movement. Charter schools are public schools that are liberated from some of the traditional school regulations required by the state. These schools are bound by charter agreements granted by local school boards. If they don't meet the requirements of their charter, they can be shut down. Charter school enrollment is voluntary and is not governed by neighborhood boundaries, which means your child can choose to attend any charter school within your district, or outside your district, as long as there is space available.

Resources

- [Charter Schools in Wisconsin](#)
- [What is a Charter School](#) (2 min. video)

Homeschooling: Another option is for parents to teach their children at home instead of sending them to a public or private school. Each state has different laws governing homeschooling. Many communities have organizations that assist homeschooling families with curriculum and opportunities to meet other homeschoolers.

Resources

- [WI DPI Home-Based Private Education Program \(Homeschooling\)](#)
- [Meet 3 Different Families with 3 Different Approaches to Homeschooling](#) (4 min. video)

Open Enrollment: School districts generally set their own policies for intradistrict transfers from one school in the district to another, sometimes called boundary exceptions. In Wisconsin, transfers between districts fall under the Public School Open Enrollment program.

Resources

- [WI Open Enrollment Guidelines](#)

Private Schools: Private schools are schools that do not receive funding from the state. They can be faith-based or not and set up their own criteria for admission. Families of the students pay tuition or, in some cases, students receive scholarships to attend.

Resources

- [WI DPI Private Schools](#)

Private School Choice Programs (Voucher Program): The Private School Choice Programs (Choice) includes the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), the Racine Parental Choice Program (RPCP) and the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program or statewide program (WPCP).

Resources

- [WI Private School Choice Programs](#)

Public Neighborhood Schools: Generally, your first option is your neighborhood school. Each public school district sets up its own rules and boundaries for each school in the district, so it is best to check with your local district to find out which school your child will be assigned to. There are over 400 school districts in Wisconsin. School districts sometimes change the neighborhood boundaries for schools to balance enrollment, so don't assume that if you move in across the street from a school that your child will automatically go to that school.

Resources

- [WI School Districts by County](#)

More questions? WRCCS, ISN, and DPI are here to help!