

# 10 Need-to-Know Things **VOUCHERS**

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## **WHERE THE CHILDREN ARE**

About nine in 10 Wisconsin children attend public schools.

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## **COST OF VOUCHER SYSTEM**

In 2022-23, voucher programs cost Wisconsin taxpayers \$568.5 million. The web of private voucher systems in Wisconsin includes those in Milwaukee, Racine, statewide and one targeting special needs students. There is also a fifth tax-funded system, Independent Charter Schools.

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## **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Voucher students achieve similar academic results as public school students. Recent Forward exams show 22% proficiency in language arts and 18% in math.

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## **ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

Public schools welcome all students without exceptions. The voucher system isn't required to accept all students and may send children back to public schools after collecting funding.

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## **SPECIAL EDUCATION RIGHTS**

Parents give up special education rights when enrolling children in private voucher schools.

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## **IMPACT ON RURAL PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Rural public schools are especially harmed, as many have no access to voucher schools. Local taxpayer funding may go to schools outside the community with no benefit to local students.

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## **LACK OF OVERSIGHT**

There is little oversight, with no publicly elected school board. This can lead to mismanagement, such as discovery of unlicensed employees teaching at a Milwaukee voucher school. Plus, the voucher system is not subject to fair employment practices.

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## **FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

In 10 years, over \$139 million was given to Milwaukee voucher schools removed for failing to meet requirements for finances, accreditation, student safety and auditing.

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## **TRANSPARENCY ISSUES**

Lobbyists fought to keep tax-funded voucher schools off the state's transparency dashboard, which shows how money is spent, academic standards, procedures and student achievement.

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## **COMPLICATED BY DESIGN**

Voucher lobbyists are currently pressuring some politicians in the state Capitol to further complicate the way the half-billion in taxpayer funding gets to their system, and several bills have already been introduced.