



State of Wisconsin
2025 - 2026 LEGISLATURE

LRB-1122/P1

FFK:cdc

DOA:.....Kretschmann, BB0177 - Special Needs Scholarship Program Accreditation Requirements

FOR 2025-2027 BUDGET -- NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION

AN ACT ...; relating to: the budget.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

EDUCATION

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Special Needs Scholarship Program; accreditation or participation in another choice program

This bill provides that, with certain exceptions explained below, a private school may participate in the Special Needs Scholarship Program only if 1) the private school is accredited by August 1 of the school year in which the private school participates or 2) the private school participates in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, the Racine Parental Choice Program, or the statewide parental choice program. Under current law, a private school may participate in the SNSP if the private school is accredited or if the private school's educational program meets certain criteria.

The bill provides that, if a private school is participating in the SNSP in the 2025-26 school year and is not accredited by August 1, 2025, the private school must 1) obtain preaccreditation by August 1, 2026; 2) apply for accreditation by December 31, 2026; and 3) obtain accreditation by December 31, 2029.

For further information see the state fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 115.7915 (1) (a) of the statutes is renumbered 115.7915 (1) (ah).

SECTION 2. 115.7915 (1) (ad) of the statutes is created to read:

115.7915 (1) (ad) "Accrediting entity" has the meaning given in s. 118.60 (1) (ab).

BILL**SECTION 3**

SECTION 3. 115.7915 (1) (ap) of the statutes is created to read:

115.7915 (1) (ap) "Preaccreditation" has the meaning given in s. 118.60 (1) (c).

SECTION 4. 115.7915 (1) (at) of the statutes is created to read:

115.7915 (1) (at) "Preaccrediting entity" has the meaning given in s. 118.60 (1) (cm).

SECTION 5. 115.7915 (2) (c) (intro.) of the statutes is created to read:

115.7915 (2) (c) (intro.) Any of the following applies to the eligible school:

SECTION 6. 115.7915 (2) (c) of the statutes is renumbered 115.7915 (2) (c) 3. a. and amended to read:

115.7915 (2) (c) 3. a. ~~The~~ For the 2025-26 school year, the eligible school ~~has been either is~~ approved as a private school by the state superintendent under s. 118.165 (2) or is accredited by ~~Cognia, Inc., Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation, the Independent Schools Association of the Central States, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod School Accreditation, Wisconsin Association of Christian Schools, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Christian Schools International, Association of Christian Schools International, the diocese or archdiocese within which the eligible school is located, or any other organization recognized by the National Council for Private School Accreditation, as of the~~ an accrediting entity on August 1 ~~preceeding the school term for which the scholarship is awarded, 2025.~~

SECTION 7. 115.7915 (2) (c) 1. of the statutes is created to read:

115.7915 (2) (c) 1. The eligible school participates in a parental choice

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program under s. 118.60 or 119.23 for the school year for which the scholarship is awarded.

SECTION 8. 115.7915 (2) (c) 2. of the statutes is created to read:

115.7915 (2) (c) 2. The eligible school is accredited by an accrediting entity by August 1 of the school year for which the scholarship is awarded.

SECTION 9. 115.7915 (2) (c) 3. (intro.) of the statutes is created to read:

115.7915 (2) (c) 3. (intro.) If the eligible school participates in the program under this section in the 2025-26 school year, all of the following apply to the eligible school:

SECTION 10. 115.7915 (2) (c) 3. b., c. and d. of the statutes are created to read:

115.7915 (2) (c) 3. b. If the eligible school is not accredited as provided under subd. 3. a., the eligible school obtains preaccreditation by a preaccrediting entity by August 1, 2026. The eligible school may apply for and seek to obtain preaccreditation from only one preaccrediting entity. If the eligible school fails to obtain preaccreditation as required under this subd. 3. b., the eligible school may not participate in the program under this section in the 2026-27 school year or in any school year thereafter until the eligible school obtains accreditation as provided under subd. 2.

c. If subd. 3. b. applies to the eligible school, the eligible school applies for accreditation by an accrediting entity by December 31, 2026, and obtains accreditation by an accrediting entity by December 31, 2029.

d. This subd. 3. does not apply after the 2029-30 school year.

(END)