
Wisconsin Legislative Council

AMENDMENT MEMO



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2019 Assembly Bill 849

**Assembly
Amendment 1**

2019 ASSEMBLY BILL 849

Current state law allows public high school students to take up to two courses at a time in another school district under a program called “part-time open enrollment.” Assembly Bill 849 expands the program and renames it the “course choice program.”

The bill expands the program to allow students in grades one to eight to participate, in addition to students in the high school grades. The bill also expands the program to allow private school students to participate, if the private school a student attends chooses to take part in the course choice program and makes its own courses available to other students not enrolled in the private school. Additionally, the bill expands the program to allow students to attend courses in another “educational institution,” which means a public school, an independent charter school, a private school, or any nonprofit organization approved by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Under the bill, the educational institution a student regularly attends must make a payment to the other educational institution where the student is attending a course that is equal to the costs of providing the course, as determined by DPI. The educational institution the student regularly attends can deny the student’s application to enroll in a course at another educational institution, if the cost would impose an undue financial burden on the paying institution.

A student attending a course at another educational institution is responsible for his or her own transportation, but can apply to DPI for reimbursement of transportation costs if the student is unable to pay them. In reimbursing students who apply, DPI must give preference to low-income students and to students who regularly attend an educational institution in a “rural community.”

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 1

Assembly Amendment 1 limits the course choice program to educational institutions within the state, and clarifies the transportation reimbursement preference for students in a rural community. Specifically, the amendment alters the definition of “educational institution” to include a private school “located in this state” and a nonprofit organization approved by DPI and “located in this state.” Under the amendment, a student may attend a course offered by a qualifying school or organization in Wisconsin, but not one located out-of-state.

The amendment also changes the preference for reimbursing transportation costs so that it applies to low-income students and students who regularly attend an educational institution located within a “rural school district,” rather than in a “rural community.” The amendment defines “rural school district” as a district with a membership of no more 745 students in the previous school year.

BILL HISTORY

Assembly Amendment 1 was offered by Representative Thiesfeldt on February 20, 2020. On that same date, the full Assembly adopted the amendment and passed the bill, as amended.

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