



# Comments sought on school voucher program bills

By [Erin Richards](#) of the Journal Sentinel

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The state Assembly Committee on Education will hear [public testimony Tuesday](#) on two bills relating to Milwaukee's voucher program, and another aimed at making sure school officials licensed by the state Department of Public Instruction are stripped of their credentials in the event of immoral conduct.

Assembly Bill 92 would eliminate the enrollment cap on students participating in the voucher program, formally known as the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, and expand the program so that private schools in Milwaukee County could accept voucher students from the city.

That bill is similar to plans for the voucher program that Gov. Scott Walker included in his budget proposal. Walker wants to expand the program to the county, eliminate the enrollment cap and phase out the income requirements so eventually all children in Milwaukee could use a voucher to attend a participating private school in the city or county.

Currently, the voucher program allows for low-income children in the city to attend private schools in Milwaukee with the aid of a publicly funded voucher worth \$6,442.

Assembly Bill 94 proposes some other tweaks to the voucher program, including raising the state payment for full-time students in summer school. Currently, the state payment to voucher schools for their full-time summer school students is 40% of the payment given to full-time regular school year students. The bill proposes eliminating that reduction.

That same bill also proposes that the state combine payments for students in voucher schools into one check for the school, and that families with more than one student in the same voucher school may complete just one application instead of one for each student. The bill also proposes that the private schools' financial audits be conducted using nationally recognized accounting standards.

[Assembly Bill 71](#) proposes that the state Department of Public Instruction be allowed to initiate proceedings to revoke a school official's DPI-granted license if the official has a contract that fails to be renewed because of immoral conduct, such as using a school's computers to download or view pornography.

Currently state law allows DPI to revoke licenses it grants after it receives written notice of the charges and licensees have a chance to defend themselves.

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