

TO: Members, Assembly Education Committee

FROM: Daniel Henderson, Project Manager



DATE: January 17, 2024

RE: AB 898 - Required instruction in civics in elementary and high school grades.

Thank you for your consideration. The Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS) opposes AB-898.

As you may know, WCRIS represents over 600 private schools and over 100,000 students in K4-12 schools across the state. About two-thirds of those schools utilize the choice programs to carry out their mission of expanding access to the education they provide.

While the goal of AB-898 is noble and important to a free society, it is redundant to current law.

Current law requires that all graduating high school seniors in the state's private schools must pass a civic exam. This required civic exam is based on the US Citizenship test.

Our schools have used current law to create successful civic education programs that tie in their religious mission and values to create a well-rounded citizen. This success is only possible because of the autonomy that currently exists in state law.

Because AB-898 mandates curriculum standards, we believe that it's too prescriptive. It will stifle our schools' ability to create civic education that complies with their sponsoring organizations. For this reason, WCRIS opposes AB-898.

We urge lawmakers to remove private school inclusion and allow private schools to continue under current law.

Don't hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions or are in need of services.

Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Association of Christian
Schools International

Christian Schools
International

Diocese of Green Bay

Diocese of LaCrosse

Diocese of Madison

Diocese of Superior

Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod
North Wisconsin District

Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod
South Wisconsin District

Wisconsin Association
of Independent Schools

Wisconsin Conference
of Seventh Day Adventists

Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
Northern Wisconsin District

Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
Western Wisconsin District

Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
Southeastern Wisconsin
District

Associate Members

PHONE
(608) 287-1224

E-MAIL
wcris.staff@wcris.org

WEBSITE
www.wcris.org

ADDRESS
110 East Main Street
Suite 802
Madison, WI 53703