

TO: Members, Assembly Education Committee

FROM: Daniel Henderson, Project Manager

DATE: February 7, 2024

RE: AB 1042 - Relating to: combining the choice programs and granting rule-making authority.

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Thank you for your consideration. The Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS) supports specific provisions of AB-1042.

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.

Over the last 20 years, the choice programs have become over-regulated and been given vastly different deadlines and processes. The programs are in need of simplification and unification.

We urge you to address your specific questions about the bill to the Department of Public Instruction, which will be granted rulemaking authority to implement the bill.

When you do, it will be important to express your legislative intent to support parental choice in education by providing parents of low-income students with options for schooling that the government does not over-regulate.

One provision of AB-1042 that helps accomplish that, is its changes to the use of substitute teaching permits in choice schools. Current law does not allow choice schools to use substitute teaching permits, unlike their public school counterparts. The changes provided in AB-1042 mirror existing law for public schools and will allow choice schools the ability to address current staffing shortages.

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

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WCRIS requested this particular change from the DPI after countless requests from our member choice schools across the state. They reached out to WCRIS and expressed frustration at being unable to comply with this part of choice law while they are competing for the same staff with the public schools, who are not similarly hamstrung.

Please support the much-needed substitute teacher permit changes in AB-1042.

Don't hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions about our private schools' needs, or would like to schedule a tour of a private school in your district.

Thank you for your time.

I'd be happy to take your questions.