

LHS Parental School Choice Ad Hoc Committee Presentation to Congregations

Below are some of the points that have come up as LHS has examined the Wisconsin Parental School Choice Program. The questions and answers that follow are meant to prompt discussion and answer some of the many questions that surround this program.

What is the Wisconsin parental school choice (WPSC) program?

A program whereby funds are provided by the state to a school for students to attend that school who otherwise may not be able to.

The program is designed for anyone to participate who wishes to do so provided they meet certain financial qualifications as laid out by the state of Wisconsin department of public instruction (DPI). Those qualifications are based upon family size and income.

How does the WPSC program work?

A school must apply to be a “choice school” in January if they wish to be in the program the following school year. Prior to application, an audit of the school is done by a state certified CPA firm to insure that the institution is legitimate.

When a school is accepted into the choice program that school can then advertise as such if it so desires. LHS’s administration and faculty will give direction as we determine how many ‘choice students’ to enroll at LHS.

Should it so desire, a ‘choice school’ may cease to participate in the program at any time.

What are the positives of the WPSC program for Luther High School?

More students will be able to attend a Lutheran high school and hear the Word of God on a daily basis in religion classes, chapel services and as it is applied to various life situations.

Families of our LHS association congregations who otherwise may not send their son or daughter to LHS for financial reasons would be aided.

The financial aid that LHS does have could be spread around to others who are not ‘choice students’.

LHS may have the opportunity to share the gospel with a student or students who have never heard of how much Jesus loves them or what he has done in love to save them.

What are the potential negatives of the WPSC program for Luther High School?

A 'choice student' does have the right to opt out of religion if he/she so desires. (To date no one has done so at any 'choice school' throughout Wisconsin, WELS or otherwise.)

Whenever state leadership might change, changes to the program could place it at odds with the mission & purpose of Luther High School.

Because the school receives money from the state, an estimated \$7,969 per child for the 2016-17 school year, LHS could become dependent upon such funds and resist leaving the program for financial reasons even if religious principles would dictate that LHS should leave the program.

Since support for LHS would be coming from a 3rd source, there is the possibility that participation in the program could hinder individual & congregation stewardship/support of LHS.

Are there any costs to LHS to be a part of the WPSC program?

There is an annual audit that must be done. Cost of the audit varies depending upon which firm does the audit, but estimates are between \$15,000 and \$20,000 annually.

There is additional paperwork that is a part of the WPSC program. Most, if not all, other area Lutheran high schools have absorbed that work into the duties of current personnel and not added staff.

If LHS becomes a part of the WPSC program, when would that happen?

The Conference of Delegates will be making a final vote to become a part of the program or not at its November, 2016 meeting. If approved, LHS would not begin accepting 'choice' students until the 2018-19 school year, as a complete audit must be done beforehand and there wouldn't be enough time between November of 2016 and January of 2017 to complete that. Remember, to participate in the program in the Fall a school must apply the previous January.

If you have questions or comments, please speak with your congregation's LHS delegate(s). You may also contact Pastor Wassermann at pastorw@mtcalvarylacrosse.org or (608) 784-5324.

A list of Frequently Asked Questions can be found on the website of the state's Department of Public Instruction www.dpi.wi.gov