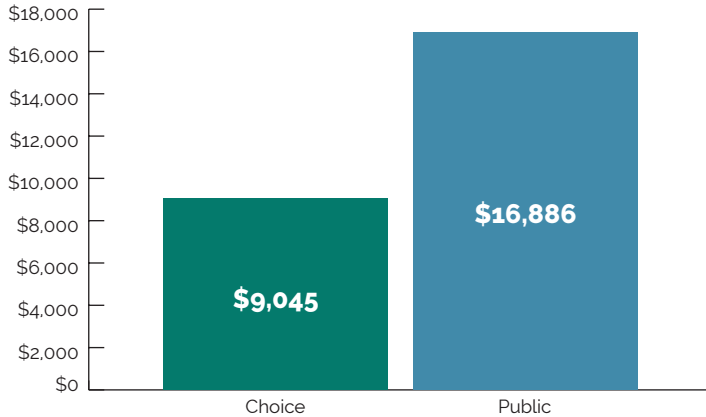
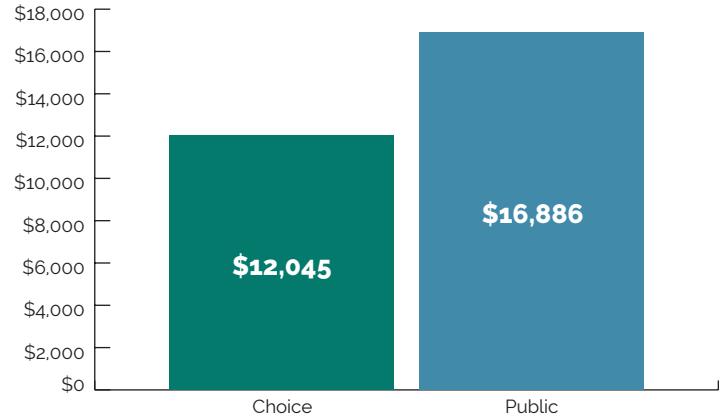


**Current High School Funding Gap**



Private high schools in parental choice programs get nearly \$8,000 less per pupil in taxpayer support than free-standing public high schools.\*

**Increase of \$3,000 for Choice High Schools**



Increasing payments by \$3,000/pupil means that private high schools would still receive **nearly \$5,000 less per pupil** than public high schools.

## Why the current model is unsustainable

Independent CPAs approved by DPI audit schools in the choice programs. The audits document **financial shortfalls facing all high schools** and many K-8 schools. As of 2020, audits at 227 schools showed that cumulative state support was **\$186 million less** than costs. **High schools accounted for about half of that amount.** Schools must raise funds to cover the gap. They cannot charge more than the voucher amount nor can they go to a referendum.

## What if high schools do not get significant relief?

A well-regarded Milwaukee high school closed two years ago because of insufficient funding. Another might do the same. School Choice Wisconsin research shows many others will limit or reduce seats. This essentially chokes a critical part of the educational pipeline.

## Why do high schools cost more than K-8 grades?

They need more teachers with specific expertise for core course offerings and advanced offerings like STEM and AP courses. They also offer more athletic and extracurricular activities and student support than lower grades. See Attachment.

This is true for public and private high schools.

## What about results?

High school students in choice programs outscore public school students on the college-readiness ACT test.

Separately, DPI report cards rate public and choice schools on whether they meet state expectations. Choice high schools in Milwaukee and Racine significantly outperform public high schools.

- In Milwaukee, **82% of choice students attend high schools that meet, exceed, or significantly exceed expectations.** Conversely, nearly 80% of MPS high school students attend schools that meet few expectations or fail to meet expectations.
- In Racine, **all choice high schools meet or exceed expectations.** In the Racine Unified School District, fully 75% of students attend schools that meet few or fail to meet expectations.

\*Average per-pupil cost of Wisconsin's public Union High School districts. See Attachment.

## What increase does our Coalition recommend?

We seek a minimum increase of \$3,000 for high schools.

## How might legislators respond to the charge that this increase is greater than public schools receive?

The current high school funding gap is nearly \$8,000. An increase of \$3,000 still leaves a gap of nearly \$5,000.

These schools get **better results for less money**.

## Do Wisconsinites favor narrowing the funding gap?

Yes. Fully 58% say the gap should be narrowed for choice and independent charter schools and 56% think it should be closed entirely.

## ATTACHMENT

### Why do high schools cost more?

Just like public schools, private schools spend more on high schools than earlier grades. For example:

**Shoreland Lutheran High School** in Kenosha receives \$4,000/pupil less than actual costs. Its Project Lead the Way programs — Engineering, Biomedical Science, and Computer Science — require five teachers and nearly \$30,000 annually for training and curriculum adjustments. Growth in AP courses will require two more teachers. Shoreland also employs four staff to support students with general learning struggles and learning loss recovery. All eleven positions cost about \$80,000 each.

**Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School** receives \$3,000/pupil less than actual costs. Its teachers earn significantly less than public school counterparts despite more demanding workloads; they teach six classes per day and coach or lead two major extra-curricular activities. The school offers many courses beyond core academic subjects, including technical education, pre-engineering, AP and Dual Credit courses, family and consumer education, and foreign languages. A high priority is to help struggling students.

As do most other high schools, both schools offer extensive and costly sports programs that do not exist in lower grades.

### Why compare private high schools with Wisconsin's Union High School districts?

While union high schools are in an imperfect comparison, they provide the best illustration of public high school costs given available data on district spending at the school level.

Like most private high schools, they are free-standing schools. They accept students from multiple public districts just like private high schools accept students from multiple K-8 schools.

### How much state/local revenue per pupil do Union High School Districts receive?

2021–22 State Comparative Revenue Numbers	
DISTRICT NAME	REVENUE
Arrowhead UHS	\$12,998.57
Big Foot UHS	\$19,713.02
Central/Westosha UHS	\$15,439.77
Hartford UHS	\$13,212.66
Lake Geneva-Genoa UHS	\$16,248.29
Lakeland UHS	\$19,065.00
Nicolet UHS	\$19,478.21
Union Grove UHS	\$15,661.45
Waterford UHS	\$17,696.07
Wilmot UHS	\$19,345.49
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$16,885.85</b>

## Coalition Capabilities

Coalition partners have an array of legal entities under their umbrella organizations. Together, we have the capabilities to engage in all the ways necessary to achieve results. Collectively, we bring a reputation for effectiveness based on decades of experience and millions of dollars of expenditures.

With these capabilities inside a single coalition, our ability to successfully plan and execute is unmatched.



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Prepared by School Choice Wisconsin

