EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR THE WEST ALLIS-WEST MILWAUKEE SCHOOL DISTRICT AGENDA

Topic: 2025-2026 Regular Education & Special Education Open Enrollment Available Student Seats for Deeper Learning Virtual Academy (DLVA)

Prepared by: Dr. Devone Smith			
Date : January 27, 2025		Agenda Reference #	10.4
Recommended Action:	X	Discussion/Action Presentation/Discussion Information Only Presentation/Action Next Meet	ina
Virtual Open Enrollment Recom	 ımendati	-	iiig

It is the recommendation of the administration to approve **Unlimited Open Enrollment Virtual Seats** for the 2025-2026 school year.

**Reflective in the available seats listed above are 0 seats total for students with special needs.

Purpose:

The purpose is to set the available number of virtual Open Enrollment seats, as required, before the Open Enrollment period for the 2025-2026 school year.

Background:

Regular Education

Deeper Learning Virtual employs industry-standard asynchronous and synchronous instruction to deliver educational content for students. Teachers utilize a learning management system (LMS) to facilitate student progress through standard-based curricula and materials; teachers pull data from the LMS and other assessment applications to design and implement instructional support and intervention. Students work asynchronously a majority (about 80 percent) of the time and collaborate with teachers and/or peers the rest (about 20 percent). A model like this means that there would be a maximum 1:45 ratio of teachers to students in homerooms. Other virtual schools such as Texas Connections Academy and Stride, INC use a similar teacher-to-student ratio model. According to the National Education Policy Center's (NEPC) 2019 report, virtual schools have significantly higher student-to-teacher ratios compared to traditional public schools. The report reveals that virtual schools, on average, have 44 students per teacher—2.7 times the national average of 16:1 in traditional public schools (NEPC, 2019). The staff at Deeper Learning Virtual Academy feels that this is a sustainable teacher-to-student ratio compared to our current staffing situation.

Additionally, we are anticipating that our marketing and digital strategy endeavors will result in an increase in open enrollment applications and therefore, we are requesting flexibility with our open

enrollment seats. Currently, we have approximately 15% of our seats filled by open enrollment students. Schools such as Rural Virtual Academy in the Medford School District and eAchieve in the Waukesha School District are at 46% and 84% respectively. By contrast, 8% of our total seats (19 of 225) are open enrollment. Our 1:45 ratio allows us to project that we could fill approximately 115 seats (which are currently open) through open enrollment resulting in \$1,030,630 in additional funding with each additional enrollment being equal to \$8,962. State statute ensures that we can effectively monitor the mandatory participation and success of our student population.

Molnar, A., Miron, G., Barbour, M. K., Huerta, L., Shafer, S. R., Rice, J. K., & Gulosino, C. (2019). *Virtual schools in the U.S. 2019: The policy challenges of growth and performance*. National Education Policy Center. Retrieved from https://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/virtual-schools-annual-2019

Special Education

As part of our open enrollment available seat calculation, the District must annually review their availability to accept open-enrollment students with special needs. In order to accomplish this, Ann Locke and Laura Sage completed the caseload calculations and determined that there were no available seats for students with special needs. Calculations performed by Laura Sage and Ann Locke have been deemed an acceptable form of calculation by DPI.

Calculations for special education open enrollment are not completed on a per grade level but through a formula based on the number of teachers and level of students each teacher is currently managing. Because our special education teachers often serve multiple grade levels, this calculation provides us with grade ranges rather than individual grade levels.