

STEM Charter School Announces Transition to Independent Charter

Top-ranked Wisconsin School Will Now be Authorized by UW–Parkside

Wauwatosa, WI — [January 21, 2026] — Wauwatosa STEM Charter School is proud to announce its transition to an independent public charter school, authorized by the University of Wisconsin–Parkside. This milestone marks a new chapter for WSTEM—one that builds on the school’s strong foundation, honors its long-standing traditions and successes, and strengthens its ability to deliver a high-quality, student-centered STEM education while deepening its impact in the community.

As an independent charter, WSTEM will gain greater autonomy to innovate, respond to student needs, and align its academic model, operations, and culture with its long-term vision, while continuing the award-winning programs, practices, and school culture that families and staff value.

Authorization by UW–Parkside reflects confidence in WSTEM’s academic plan, governance, and commitment to strong student outcomes, while providing oversight that supports growth and continuous improvement.

“This transition allows us to fully live out our mission while continuing the traditions that have made WSTEM so successful,” said Libby Woodard, president of the WSTEM Governance Council. “As we move forward in this new chapter as an independent charter school, WSTEM will no longer be affiliated with the Wauwatosa School District; however, we remain deeply committed to the students, families, and community we serve. Partnering with UW–Parkside as our authorizer ensures we are held to high standards of accountability and public oversight while continuing our top-ranked educational mission.”

WSTEM is dedicated to preparing students for success through rigorous academics, hands-on STEM learning, and a supportive school culture that emphasizes curiosity and real-world application. Instruction is delivered through intentional multi-aged class groupings, which allow students to build leadership skills, collaborate across age levels, and engage in meaningful peer mentorship.

Beginning in fall 2026, WSTEM plans to serve students in grades 4K–6 during its inaugural year as an independent charter school, with plans to add grades 7 and 8 in subsequent school years, creating a full 4K–8 public charter school model. The school will remain tuition-free and open to all.

“This moment represents both continuity and growth,” said Nicole Meier, UW-Parkside Teacher Education Department Outreach Coordinator and Charter Schools Liaison. “We are thrilled to partner with WSTEM to carry forward the strengths, relationships, and

successes this community has built, while embracing the opportunities this partnership creates for the future.”

WSTEM plans to begin accepting enrollment applications on Monday, January 26. For more information about enrollment or to join the WSTEM contact list, visit [WSTEM.org](https://wstem.org) or email contact@wstem.org. Additional details regarding community information sessions and the upcoming school year will be shared in the coming weeks.

About WSTEM:

WSTEM Charter School is a tuition-free public charter school in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, currently recognized by U.S. News & World Report as the #4 elementary school in the state. WSTEM provides rigorous and innovative STEM education through hands-on, interdisciplinary learning and intentionally designed multi-aged classrooms. Beginning in fall 2026, WSTEM will serve students in grades 4K–6 as an independent charter school authorized by the University of Wisconsin–Parkside, with plans to expand through grade 8. Learn more at [WSTEM.org](https://wstem.org).