

The **Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP)** allows a student with a disability, who meets certain eligibility requirements, to receive a state-funded scholarship to attend a private school that is located in Wisconsin and participating in the SNSP. The school receives a state aid payment for each eligible student. The student must be a resident of Wisconsin to be eligible for the program. The SNSP webpage has a document comparing the rights of students with disabilities and their families under state and federal special education laws to their rights under the SNSP.

For the 2016-17 school year, there are two options under which a student can qualify for the SNSP.

Eligibility Requirement	Option 1	Option 2 (2016-17 Only)
Wisconsin Resident	Required	Required
Enrolled in a Wisconsin public school for the entire 2015-16 school year	Required	Not Required
IEP or Services Plan	IEP developed and has an implementation date at time of application	Developed or had an implementation date between 7/1/11 and 6/30/16
Open Enrollment Denial & Appeals Upheld	For the 2016-17 school year	For a school year between 2011-12 and 2015-16

Option 1

Student applications can be submitted under Option 1 in 2016-17 and in all future years. Under this option, a student with a disability may be eligible to participate in the SNSP for the 2016-17 school year if **all** of the following apply:

- **Prior Year Enrollment:** The student was enrolled in a Wisconsin public school for the entire 2015-16 school year.
- **IEP or Services Plan:** The student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or services plan that was developed and has an implementation date at the time the student is applying to the SNSP.

- **Open Enrollment Denial:** The student applied to attend a public school under the open enrollment program for the 2016-17 school year, and all of the following occurred:
 - All of the student's open enrollment applications were denied. See the Open Enrollment Denial section for more information on which denial reasons meet the eligibility criteria.
 - If the open enrollment denial was appealed, the Department of Public Instruction (department) affirmed the decision.

Option 2 – 2016-17 Alternative Option

Student applications can be submitted under Option 2 for the 2016-17 school year **only**. Under Option 2, a student does not need to have been enrolled in a public school in the prior school year. A student with a disability may be eligible to participate in the SNSP if **all** of the following apply:

- **IEP or Services Plan:** The student had an IEP or services plan that was developed or had an implementation date between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2016.
- **Open Enrollment Denial:** The student applied to attend a public school under the open enrollment program for the 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, or 2015-16 school years and all of the following occurred for **that year**:
 - All of the student's open enrollment applications were denied. See the Open Enrollment Denial section for more information on which denial reasons meet the eligibility criteria.
 - If an open enrollment denial was appealed, the department affirmed the decision.

Open Enrollment Denials & Appeals

Open Enrollment Overview: Open enrollment allows a parent to apply to have their student attend a public school district other than the one in which they reside (known as the non-resident school district). There are two ways a parent can apply for open enrollment. A parent could submit an

application during the regular application period. An application submitted during the regular application period is for the following school year. The regular application period for the 2016-17 school year was from February 1, 2016 to April 29, 2016.

A parent could also submit an alternative application. This allows parents to apply for open enrollment outside of the regular application period. An alternative application must be submitted during the school year in which the student wants to begin attending school in the nonresident school district.

For more information about open enrollment, or access to open enrollment regular and alternative applications, please see the Public School Open Enrollment website at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment>.

Open Enrollment Denials that Meet the Eligibility Requirements: In order to qualify for the SNSP, the student must have been denied for one of the following reasons:

Non-resident School District Denials:

- A non-resident school district denied the open enrollment application for any reason.
- A non-resident school district terminated open enrollment because the school district did not have or space was not available in the special education or related services required under a newly developed or revised IEP.

Resident School District Denials:

- The application was submitted under the alternative open enrollment option and the alternative application was denied because the criteria relied upon to submit the application did not apply to the student.
- The resident school district denied open enrollment for a school year from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2016 because of undue financial burden.

Open Enrollment Appeals: For SNSP eligibility, open enrollment denials do not need to be appealed. If an open enrollment denial was appealed, then the denial must have been affirmed (upheld) by department.

IEP or Services Plan Requirements

Implementation. SNSP schools are required to implement the IEP or services plan of SNSP students as modified by agreement between the private school and the student's parent/guardian.

Quarterly Reports. SNSP schools are required to provide SNSP parents with quarterly reports about the implementation and progress of their student's IEP or services plan.

Reevaluation. In order for a student to be able to continue his/her participation in the SNSP, the student must be made available for a reevaluation by the resident school district within sixty (60) days of a reevaluation request being made. Resident school districts may only make a reevaluation request once every three (3) years for each SNSP student.

Continuing Student Eligibility

Partial Scholarship. If, during an IEP team reevaluation, a SNSP student is determined to no longer have a disability, then the student will receive a partial scholarship in the following school year. A partial scholarship student is able to continue to participate in the SNSP at the same school, but the SNSP scholarship will be at a lower rate.

Residency Reverification: SNSP students are required, on an annual basis, to provide residency documentation to their SNSP school. The student must be a resident of Wisconsin.

How to Apply

SNSP student applications can be submitted to SNSP schools for the 2016-17 school year starting July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. A student application is not complete until all of the following documents have been given to the school:

- 1) SNSP student application.
- 2) Documentation verifying the family's current address.
- 3) Copies of the open enrollment denial letter(s).
- 4) If an open enrollment denial was appealed, a copy of the appeal decision from the department.

SNSP schools must give student applicants a copy of the school's special education profile. The student application, list of SNSP schools and school special education profiles are available at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship>.

SNSP schools will accept SNSP students in the order that complete applications are received. If a school receives more applications than the number of available SNSP seats, the school will notify students of their place on a waiting list. Schools may choose to give preference to siblings of students who are already attending the school.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q.1- Are students required to reapply to participate in the SNSP every year?

A.1- No. A student who has been accepted into the SNSP will continue to receive a scholarship until one of the following first occurs: (1) the student graduates from high school; (2) the student turns 21; (3) the student no longer resides in Wisconsin; (4) the student enrolls in another school or a home-based educational program; (5) the student is not made available for a reevaluation; or (6) a partial scholarship student leaves the participating private school that he/she is attending.

Q.2- Can a private school charge an SNSP student tuition and fees?

A.2- Yes. A SNSP school may charge a SNSP student tuition and fees.

Q.3- Are there statutory procedures regarding student suspensions and expulsions that a private school participating in the SNSP is required to follow?

A.3- No. State law does not require SNSP schools to have suspension or expulsion policies. Parents should ask the SNSP school if they have a suspension or expulsion policy, and obtain a copy of the policy if the school has one.

For additional frequently asked questions, see the FAQ document at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship/student-applications>.



Special Needs Scholarship Program

2016-17 School Year

Information for Parents

For more information contact:

Special Needs Scholarship Program
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Web site: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship>



Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent
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