



Student Application Information – 2016-17 School Year

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 participating private school. The following information is intended to assist the SNSP administrators as they are reviewing a student's application before submitting it to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI or department).

The official application form must be filled out completely, accurately and legibly with required signatures. Parents must complete the paper student application available at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship/student-applications>. Further information on student eligibility is available at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship/student-applications-processing>.

To ensure that each student application includes all required information, it is recommended that schools use the Student Application checklist available at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship/student-applications-processing>.

Applications may be copied as needed for distribution.

Application Processing Timeline

1. Application Receipt: Applications may be accepted at any time during a school year. Applications must be accepted in the order that they are received. However, preference may be given to siblings of pupils who are already attending the private school. An application is considered to be "received" when the SNSP administrator obtains all of the following: (1) the student's SNSP application; (2) the required residency documentation; and (3) the open enrollment denial letters and/or letters from the department confirming that the open enrollment application was denied and any appeal was upheld by the department, if applicable.

The school must provide a copy of its special education program profile to all applicants when they apply.

If a school receives a SNSP student application from a sibling of a current student at the school, the school may give the sibling preference over another student applicant who has not yet been identified as eligible.

In order to give preference to a sibling, the school must:

- Determine that the sibling's application is eligible prior to the date that the eligibility determination must be made for the student who submitted the earlier application.
- Not submit the application for the student who submitted the earlier application prior to determining the eligibility and submitting the application for the sibling.

2. Application Eligibility Review: Within twenty-one (21) days of receiving an application, the SNSP administrator must complete the following:

- Determine if the student is eligible, including determining that the parent/guardian provided the correct residency and open enrollment denial documentation. If the documentation provided is not correct, the school may obtain the correct documentation with the twenty-one (21) days.
- If the student is eligible and the school has space available for the student, complete the electronic student application submission form with the student information. This form will notify the department that the student is eligible pending verification that the student has or had an IEP or services plan that meets the requirements.
- If the student is eligible but the school does NOT has space available for the student, notify the parent/guardian that the school does not have space available for the student. The notification letter must include the student's place on the waiting list. Do not submit the electronic application form to the department.
- If the student is not eligible, notify the parent/guardian that the student is not eligible. The notification letter must indicate the reason(s) the student is not eligible. Do not submit the electronic application form to the department.

3. Individual Education Program (IEP) or Services Plan Verification: Once the school submits an electronic application to the department, the department will send an email to the current resident school district requesting that they do the following within three (3) days:

- Provide verification to the department that the student has or had an IEP or services plan during the required time.
- Provide a copy of the IEP to the participating private school.

If the resident school district notifies the department that the student does not or did not have an IEP or services plan and a different school district prepared the IEP or services plan, the department will then notify the school district that prepared the IEP or services plan that it must do the following within three (3) days:

- Provide verification to the department that the student has or had an IEP or services plan during the required time.
 - Provide a copy of the IEP to the participating private school.
4. Eligibility Notification: The private school must notify the applicant whether or not they are eligible for the program within 7 days of the private school receiving one of the following:
- The IEP from the public school district,
 - Notification from the department that a services plan is or was in effect, or
 - Notification from the department that an IEP or service plan is or was not in effect.
5. Application and Letter of Acceptance or Denial Retention: Schools are required to retain a copy of the letter accepting or denying the application, the original paper application, and all supporting documentation received even if the application is not accepted or if the pupil declines a seat when offered for at least five (5) years from the end of the school year in which the pupil applies or five (5) years after the pupil no longer attends the school, whichever occurs later. Do not destroy the original application. The *Comparison of Rights of Students with Disabilities and their Families under State and Federal Special Education Law and under the Wisconsin Special Needs Scholarship Program*, which is included with the application, does not need to be retained with every application.
6. IEP or Services Plan Implementation: If the student has/had a services plan, the SNSP administrator must obtain a copy of the services plan. The school and the parent/guardian must agree to the services that will be provided to each student. The school will indicate if the parent/guardian and school have agreed to the services that will be provided on the first pupil count form that a student is included on. If the school and parent/guardian haven't agreed to the services that will be provided, the school will not be eligible for payment for the student. The school must obtain signed confirmation of the agreed upon services. This documentation will be reviewed by the auditor as part of the Enrollment Audit.

Application Review

7. General Review: The SNSP administrator must fully understand the information needed on the application form. He/she must review the application and determine that all parts of the application are properly and completely filled out.
8. School Name: The SNSP administrator may use a school stamp or type in the school name on the application.
9. Completed in Ink: The application must be completed in ink. Pencils may not be used on an application.

10. Age Requirement: For K4, K5 and 1st grade applicants, student must have been born on or before: (a) September 1, 2012, for K4; (b) September 1, 2011, for K5; or (c) September 1, 2010, for 1st grade. Please note there is no early admission option for the SNSP. Additionally, students may not be 21 as of the date they apply or September 1, whichever is later.
11. Address & School District Review: The SNSP administrator needs to obtain residency documentation from a parent to verify that the student resides at the address on the application at the time the application is received and to verify the current resident school district, which is the public school district in which the student resides. Detailed information about the required residency documentation is available at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship/student-applications-processing>.
12. Public School District in 2015-16 (SNSP-0002 Application Only): The SNSP administrator must make sure that name of the public school district and specific public school the student attended for the 2015-16 school year is listed.
13. IEP or Services Plan: The SNSP administrator must make sure that the student has indicated whether he/she has an IEP or services plan, the date of the student's last IEP team or services plan evaluation or reevaluation, and the name of the public school district that developed the student's IEP or services plan.
14. Open Enrollment: The SNSP administrator needs to verify that the student applicant was denied open enrollment to all of the nonresident school districts that he/she applied to. If the student appealed an open enrollment denial, then the SNSP administrator needs to confirm that the open enrollment denial was upheld or affirmed by the department. For the SNSP-0002 application, the open enrollment denial and appeal of a denial, must have occurred during the 2016-17 school year. For the SNSP-0003 application, the open enrollment denial and appeal of a denial, must have occurred during the 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, or 2015-16 school years. The parent must select which of the years the denial(s) occurred. The parent must provide the following documentation to the school:
 - Open Enrollment Denial Letter from District: A parent must submit the letter of open enrollment denial that the parent received from the nonresident or resident school district(s) to which the child applied.
 - Department Open Enrollment Decision: If the child appealed an open enrollment denial to the department, then the parent must submit a copy of the appeal decision from the department.

If the parent/guardian did not retain the open enrollment denial letter from the nonresident or resident school district, then the SNSP administrator may email the department for confirmation that the open enrollment application was denied and any appeal was upheld by the department, if applicable. The email should include: 1) the name of the student, 2) the student's date of birth, 3) the year of the open enrollment denial, 4) the school district(s) that denied the school open enrollment, and 5) if the school needs a copy of the district denial and/or the department's appeal decision.

The school must determine that the reason the open enrollment applications were denied is one of the reasons that qualify the student for the SNSP. See the Initial Student Eligibility Bulletin for information on which of the denials qualify the student for the SNSP.

15. Parent or Guardian Certification: The SNSP administrator must make sure that the parent or guardian has put their initials indicating they received: a) The comparison of the rights of students with disabilities under special education law and under the SNSP, and b) The profile of the private school's special education program. If the parent/guardian has not put their initials for either of these items, the parent/guardian must add them.

The parent/guardian must sign and date the application. **The parent/guardian signature and date may not be added after the application is accepted or rejected.**

16. For School Use Only: The date application received and the printed name and signature of the SNSP administrator must be on the bottom of the application. The SNSP application cannot be accepted by anyone other than the SNSP administrator. The SNSP administrator approval and signature must occur within twenty-one (21) days of the date the application is received. SNSP administrators are reminded that their signature at the bottom of the application, and submission of the application to the department, attests that they have reviewed the application and determined the student is eligible for the SNSP pending verification that the student has an IEP or services plan that meets the requirements.

Corrections to Application Information

17. Paper Application Corrections: Any corrections to the application are to be made with a “~~strike through line~~” and initialed by the SNSP administrator. The school must have written documentation to support the change. Any applications corrected with “white-out” will be ineligible for payment. **The SNSP administrator and parent may not make the following changes to an application after the school has submitted the application to the department:**
- Adding parent signature and/or date signed to the application or Alternative Residency Form.
 - Adding the date application received.
 - Any changes that result in the application being ineligible due to residency, open enrollment denials, or status of the IEP or services plan.
18. Grade Changes: Grade changes must be done by the school while completing the September 1 Enrollment report, the 3rd Friday in September Count report, or the 2nd Friday in January Count report. If any grade changes are missed in the count reports, the school must notify the auditor of the required change. The auditor will include the correction in the September or January Enrollment Audit.
19. Other Application Information Changes: If the school determines that the student name, student date of birth, current resident school district, or IEP/services plan information that

was submitted to the DPI was incorrect prior to receiving the verification that the IEP or services plan is in place, the school must notify the department immediately. If the school determines that any other information submitted to the department was incorrect or determines this information is wrong after receiving the IEP or services plan verification, the school must notify the school's independent auditor of the required change. The auditor will include the correction in the September or January Enrollment Audit.