

## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Public school open enrollment application period begins Feb. 1

MADISON — Wisconsin's public school open enrollment application period, which allows parents an opportunity to send their children to any public school district in the state, runs from Feb. 1 to April 29 for the 2016-17 school year.

Traditionally, children in Wisconsin are assigned to public school districts based on the location of their parents' home. Open enrollment is a tuition-free opportunity for parents to apply for their children to attend a public school in a school district other than the one in which they live.

The state's open enrollment program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and began in the 1998-99 school year with 2,464 students transferring from their home district to a nonresident district. The program has grown over the years with 53,188 students transferring during the 2014-15 school year.

Under public school open enrollment, parents may apply during the three-month application period to the school district they wish their children to attend using the online application website. Application deadlines are firm. Early and late applications are not accepted. Districts will notify parents by June 10 whether their open enrollment applications have been approved or denied. Although an alternate application procedure allows parents to apply for open enrollment outside of the three-month application period, there are more restrictions associated with the alternate procedure.

Transportation to and from a nonresident school, in most circumstances, is the responsibility of the parent. However, some school districts may provide partial transportation. Parents with questions should call the nonresident school district office to find out if any transportation will be provided. Reimbursement of a portion of transportation costs is available for families whose children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals based on federal income guidelines.

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This is the first year provisions are in place to improve access to open enrollment for students with disabilities. Those changes include a new transfer amount of \$12,000 for students with disabilities. The regular education student transfer amount is calculated on a formula based on the prior year's amount. For the 2015-16 school year, the transfer amount was \$6,639 per student. Along with the higher transfer payment for special education students, resident districts will no longer be able to deny a student's open enrollment application for cost reasons.

To assist parents in submitting open enrollment applications, a directory of public school districts is available on the DPI website at <http://dpi.wi.gov/directories>. To find additional information on open enrollment, visit <http://dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment>. More information also is available from local school districts or from an open enrollment consultant at DPI, (888) 245-2732 (toll-free), or [openenrollment@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:openenrollment@dpi.wi.gov).

### Guidance for Parents and Guardians

- Parents and guardians may complete open enrollment applications online at <http://dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment>. The online application will be available from midnight Feb. 1 until 4 p.m. on April 29.
- Parents are limited to no more than three applications to nonresident school districts for each child during the open enrollment application period.
- Applications must be filled out completely and accurately. Contact the local school district office or the DPI if assistance is needed in completing the application.
- Parents may request enrollment in a specific school or program in the nonresident school district; however, enrollment is subject to space and other limitations and is not guaranteed.
- Most students who attended a nonresident school district under open enrollment in the current school year (2015-16) are not required to reapply for the 2016-17 school year. However, if the student will be entering middle school, junior high school, or high school in the 2016-17 school year, parents should call the nonresident school district to find out if reapplication will be required.
- Parents may apply for their children to attend 4-year-old kindergarten under open enrollment only if the resident school district also offers a 4-year-old kindergarten program for which the child is eligible.

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**NOTES:** This news release is available online at [http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2016\\_06.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2016_06.pdf). Additional information about open enrollment may be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment>.