

**Public School Open Enrollment Program**  
**Part-Time Open Enrollment Frequently Asked Questions**  
October 2024

**Table of Contents**

Program Eligibility .....	1
Application Process.....	2
Special Education .....	5
Tuition and Funding .....	5
Transportation .....	6
Appeals .....	7

**Program Eligibility**

**1. What is part-time open enrollment?**

Part-time open enrollment allows a student to apply to take up to two courses in any public school district, while remaining enrolled in their district of attendance for the majority of their courses. [\[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(2\)\]](#)

**2. Who may participate in part-time open enrollment?**

Any Wisconsin high school student enrolled in a public school may participate in part-time open enrollment. [\[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(2\)\]](#)

**3. Can a student who is not in high school participate in part-time open enrollment?**

No, a student who is not in high school cannot participate in part-time open enrollment. However, if a public school student not yet in the high school grades is interested in taking

courses in another public school district, the nonresident district can enter into a tuition agreement with the resident district or the district of full-time attendance for the cost of the course or the parent can pay for the cost themselves. [[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(2\)](#)]

**4. Can a full-time open enrolled student participate in part-time open enrollment?**

Open enrolled students may apply for part-time open enrollment to a different nonresident school district or to their resident school district. [[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(2\)](#)] and [[Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.15\(6\)](#)]

**5. Can private school students participate in part-time open enrollment?**

No, private school students cannot participate in part-time open enrollment; however, private school students in the high school grades are eligible to take up to two courses per semester in their resident district under the part-time attendance law. [[Wis. Stat. § 118.145\(4\)](#)]

**6. Can homeschool students participate in part-time open enrollment?**

No, homeschool students cannot participate in part-time open enrollment; however, they are eligible to take up to two courses per semester in any district under the part-time attendance law. [[Wis. Stat. § 118.53](#)]

**7. Can an expelled student participate in part-time open enrollment?**

No school board is required to enroll a student who is expelled from another school district. [[Wis. Stat. § 120.13\(1\)\(f\)](#)]

In addition, school board policies and criteria for accepting and rejecting part-time open enrollment applications from students who reside in another school district shall be the same as the policies and criteria for entry into the course that apply to students who reside in the school district, except that the school board may give preference in attendance in a course to residents of the school district. [[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(5\)](#)]

**Application Process**

**8. How does a parent apply for part-time open enrollment?**

Parents may obtain [an application](#) from any school district or from the Department of Public Instruction's [part-time open enrollment website](#). [[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(3\)\(a\)](#)]

**9. How/where must the part-time open enrollment application be submitted?**

The part-time open enrollment application must be submitted to the school district(s) where the student wishes to take the course(s). [[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(3\)\(a\)](#)]

For part-time open enrollment purposes, the nonresident district is where the student wishes to take the course(s). The resident district is where the student resides, unless the student is open enrolled, in which case the resident district is the student's district of full-time attendance. [[Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.15\(3\)](#)] and [\(6\)](#)]

**10. How many courses can a student take through part-time open enrollment?**

A student may attend no more than two courses at any time in nonresident school districts. [Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(2\)](#)

**11. If taking two courses, can they be at different school districts?**

Yes, a student may attend no more than two courses at any time but is not limited to attending them in the same school district. [Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(2\)](#) and [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.17\(1\)\(d\)](#)

**12. What is the deadline to submit a part-time open enrollment application?**

The part-time open enrollment application must be submitted to the nonresident school district in which the student wishes to attend a course no later than six weeks prior to the start of the course. There are no exceptions to this deadline. [Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(3\)\(a\)](#)

**13. If a student would like to take a course in a nonresident school district but is not within six weeks prior to the start of the course, are there other options that would allow the student to take a course in a nonresident district?**

If a student did not submit a part-time open enrollment application six weeks prior to the start of the course, the student may not participate in part-time open enrollment. However, school districts may consider entering into a tuition agreement for the course. The parent also has the option of paying tuition for the course.

**14. What records can be requested when making decisions for a part-time open enrollment application?**

When a parent/guardian signs the part-time open enrollment application, they are authorizing the nonresident school district to obtain pupil records from the applicant's resident district or district of full-time attendance that are necessary to determine whether the pupil meets the entrance criteria for the course(s) requested. These records can include the pupil's transcript and any expulsion records. [Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(10\)](#) and [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.17\(1\)\(f\)](#).

**15. Can a part-time open enrollment application be denied? If so, what are the reasons for denial?**

Yes, a part-time open enrollment application may be denied by a nonresident district as well as a resident school district (or district of full-time attendance).

A nonresident district may deny a part-time open enrollment application for any of the following reasons:

- Space is not available in the course.
- The student does not meet the nonresident school district's criteria for admission to the course.
- Ineligibility, which includes the student is enrolled in private school or homeschooling; the student is not in the high school grades; and the application was not submitted six weeks prior to the start of the course.

The resident school district (or district of full-time attendance) may deny a part-time open enrollment application for the following reasons:

- The cost of course creates an undue financial burden on the resident school district.
- The course conflicts with the individualized education program (IEP) for a student with disability.
- Ineligibility, which includes the student is enrolled in private school or homeschooling; the student is not in the high school grades; and the application was not submitted six weeks prior to the start of the course.

[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(2\) and \(3\)](#) and [118.52\(5\) and \(6\)](#)

**16. If a school district has no space available for full-time open enrollment, can it have space available for students to take courses through part-time open enrollment?**

A school district may have space available in a course, but not have space available for full-time open enrollment in the school district. Space determinations for a course are not dependent on space availability for full-time open enrollment.

**17. Can a resident school district deny a part-time open enrollment application if they offer the same course the student is applying to take in a different school district?**

No, a resident district cannot deny a part-time open enrollment application if they offer the same course that the student is applying to take in a different school district. There are specific denial reasons allowed in state law and they are outlined in question 15.

**18. How is a student notified if the application is approved or denied?**

No later than one week prior to the start of the course(s), both the nonresident and resident school district must notify the student in writing of the application's approval or denial.

[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(3\)\(c\)](#)

**19. Does the parent need to let the district know whether the student will be attending the course?**

If the parent has been notified that their student has been accepted into the course(s), the parent must notify both the nonresident and resident school districts whether the student will attend the course by the last weekday (excluding state holidays) before the course starts.

[\[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(3\)\(e\) and Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.17\(1\)\(g\)\]](#)

**20. Can a full-time open-enrolled student apply for part-time open enrollment to their resident school district?**

Yes, a full-time open-enrolled student may apply for part-time open enrollment to their resident school district. [Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(2\)](#) and [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.15\(6\)](#)

**21. Can a student take summer school courses in a nonresident school district under the part-time open enrollment program?**

Yes, a student can take summer school courses in a nonresident district under the part-time open enrollment program. However, only [courses that are eligible to be counted for state aid purposes](#) may be taken under the program.

**22. Are students who wish to take online courses limited to applying to only school districts that have virtual charter schools?**

If a student wishes to take an online course through part-time open enrollment, the parent is limited to applying to a virtual charter school. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.16\(3\)](#)

**Special Education**

**23. If a student with a disability attends a course by means of part-time open enrollment, which school district is responsible for providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE)?**

The school district of full-time attendance remains the FAPE agency when a student participates in a part-time open enrollment course. If a student requires supports as identified in the student's individualized education plan (IEP) that are not provided through the normal structure of the course, the student's district of full-time attendance is responsible for providing those supports.

**Tuition and Funding**

**24. Which school district is responsible for paying the cost of the course?**

The resident school district or district of full-time attendance (if the student is open enrolled) is responsible for the cost of the course. The nonresident school district directly bills the resident school district or district of full-time attendance. [Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(12\)](#) and [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.15\(6\)](#)

**25. How is the cost of the course calculated?**

The cost of providing a course to a student shall be determined by first dividing the total number of hours of instruction provided to the student in the course by 1,137, then multiplying the result by the annual tuition rate as determined by [Wis. Stat. § 121.76\(2\)\(a\)](#).

For purposes of determining hours of instruction for virtual charter school coursework, the total number of hours of instruction shall be 135 hours per credit.

Information regarding the determination of the annual tuition rate can be found on the Department's School Financial Services [webpage](#). [[Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.19](#)]

**26. If a student drops a part-time open enrollment course, who is responsible for paying the cost of the course?**

If a student drops a part-time open enrollment course, the resident district (or district of attendance for a full-time open enrolled student) is responsible for the cost of the course. The cost of the course should be prorated by the number of days the student was enrolled.

**27. Are part-time open enrollment applications entered into the open enrollment database (OPAL)?**

No, part-time open enrollment applications are not entered into OPAL. School districts must maintain their own records. OPAL is only used to track full-time open enrolled students.

**28. Which district counts a part-time open enrolled student?**

There is no state funding provided for part-time open enrollment and as such, there is nothing that needs to be done on the membership report.

The nonresident district directly bills the resident district for the cost of the course. It is recommended that the nonresident district send an estimate to the resident district along with their copy of the part-time open enrollment application. Once the student has completed the course or has dropped from the course, the final bill should be sent to the district of full-time attendance.

**Transportation**

**29. Who is responsible for transportation?**

The parent is responsible for transporting the student to and from the course in the nonresident school district. [[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(11\)\(a\)](#)]

**30. Is there any transportation assistance for low-income parents?**

Low-income parents may apply to the DPI for reimbursement of transportation costs for part-time open enrollment. Low-income means the family meets the income-eligibility guidelines for free or reduced price meals under the federal school lunch guidelines. [[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(11\)\(b\)](#)]

Claims for transportation reimbursement may be submitted to the DPI at the end of the school year. The online claim form will be available starting June 1 on the open enrollment website at <https://dpi.wi.gov/oe>. Claims are due July 15 and any claims submitted after this date will not be paid. [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.18\(1\)](#)

**31. How much reimbursement are low-income parents eligible to receive?**

The parent will receive reimbursement of transportation costs up to the state-set maximum. The reimbursement is paid from a state appropriation. Parents are reimbursed only for the costs of transportation up to the maximum amount. If costs were lower than the maximum, the parent will

receive the lower amount. Also, parents do not receive a “per student” amount; they are reimbursed only for actual mileage, regardless of how many students are in the vehicle. [[Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.18\(2\)](#) and [\(3\)](#)]

Because of the increasing number of participants in this program, the department receives more claims than the amount of money appropriated to pay them. There is not enough money in the fund to pay everyone fully, so the amount that the parent receives will be less than the amount for which they are otherwise eligible.

Based on claims from previous school years, it is estimated that each family’s total reimbursement will be 15 percent of their full eligible amount (proration).

## **Appeals**

### **32. Can a parent appeal a school board’s denial?**

If the application is rejected by either the nonresident or resident school district, the parent may appeal the decision to the Department within 30 days of receipt of the notice of denial. [[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(8\)](#) and [Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.17\(4\)](#)]

### **33. When does the 30-day appeal period begin?**

The 30 days begins on the day the notice of denial is postmarked or is delivered to the parent, whichever occurs first. [[Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.14\(1\)\(b\)](#)]

### **34. How does a parent file an appeal?**

An appeal may be filed on [form PI-9418](#) or may be filed in the form of a letter or legal brief. It must state the decision being appealed and the specific reasons for the appeal, which includes why the appellant believes the decision was arbitrary or unreasonable. It must be signed by the appellant or the representative of the appellant.

If possible, the appellant should include a copy of the written denial notice and any information that accompanied it and copy of the postmarked envelope in which the denial notice was mailed. If the denial was sent via email, include a copy of the email. If the appellant no longer has the notice or envelope, they can still file the appeal. [[Wis. Admin. Code § PI 36.14\(1\)](#)]

### **35. How long does it take to decide an appeal?**

The length of time it takes to decide an appeal depends on when the appeal was received, how long it takes to compile the record of the decision, whether the parties file briefs and responses, how many appeal DPI received, and how complicated the issues are in the appeal. In most cases, the appeal decision should come within six to eight weeks.

### **36. Under what circumstances will the DPI overturn the school board’s decision?**

The Department is required to uphold the school board’s decision unless it finds that the decision was arbitrary or unreasonable. [[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(8\)](#)]

**37. Is the DPI's appeal decision final?**

Yes, the Department's decision is final. [[Wis. Stat. § 118.52\(8\)](#)]