

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public school open enrollment application period begins Feb. 2

MADISON — Wisconsin’s public school open enrollment application period runs from Feb. 2 to April 30 for the 2015-16 school year, allowing parents an opportunity to send their children to any public school district in the state.

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

“Wisconsin’s open enrollment program has a long history of providing public school choice. It is the largest parental choice program in Wisconsin. I look forward to working with the governor and Legislature to enact the changes I proposed in my 2015-17 budget that would improve equity and access to open enrollment for students with disabilities and their families,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers.

Open Enrollment	
New and Continuing Transfers	
1998-99	2,464
2003-04	15,413
2008-09	28,025
2013-14	50,076
2014-15	Est. 51,903

The state’s open enrollment program is an inter-district choice program that began in the 1998-99 school year. During the first years of the program, the application window was three weeks. With legislation adopted for the 2012-13 school year, the application window expanded to three months. According to the Education Commission of the States, Wisconsin is among 21 states with inter-district open enrollment.

Under the full-time public school open enrollment program, parents may apply during the three-month application period to the school district they wish their children to attend. Online application is encouraged. Application deadlines are firm. Early and late applications are not accepted. Districts will notify parents by June 5 whether their open enrollment applications have been approved or denied. Although an alternate application procedure allows parents to apply outside of the application period, there are more restrictions associated with the alternate procedure.

Under the current open enrollment law, transportation, in most circumstances, is the responsibility of the parent. However, some school districts may provide partial transportation. Parents with questions should call the

(more)

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.

The Department of Public Instruction provides the following guidance for parents who wish to apply for open enrollment.

- Parents are urged to apply online directly from the open enrollment website <http://oe.dpi.wi.gov/>. The online application will be available from midnight Feb. 2 until 4 p.m. on April 30.
- Paper applications can be obtained from the DPI or any public school district. Paper application forms must be received by the nonresident school district no earlier than Feb. 2 and no later than 4 p.m. on April 30. A postmark for paper forms will not meet the requirement.
- Parents may submit applications to up to three nonresident school districts for each child during the open enrollment application period.
- Forms 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 in the requested school or program is subject to space and other limitations and is not guaranteed.
- Most students who attended a nonresident school district under open enrollment last year are not required to reapply for the 2015-16 school year. However, if the student will be entering middle school, junior high school, or high school in the 2015-16 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.

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>. More information is available from local school districts or from an open enrollment consultant at DPI, (888) 245-2732 (toll-free), or openenrollment@dpi.wi.gov.

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NOTES: This news release is available online at http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2015_03.pdf. Additional information about open enrollment may be found at <http://oe.dpi.wi.gov/>.