

## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Public school open enrollment application period begins in February

*Online application period runs from Feb. 6 to April 28*

MADISON — Public school open enrollment, Wisconsin’s public school choice program, continues its steady growth since it began in the 1998-99 school year with a new application period beginning Feb. 6 and running through April 28 for the 2017-18 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 public school open enrollment program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. In the first year, 2,464 students transferred from their home district to a nonresident public school district. The program has grown over the years with 55,737 students transferring through open enrollment during the 2015-16 school year. Program statistics for the 2016-17 school year will be available in fall of 2017.

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 9 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

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transportation costs is available for families whose children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals based on federal income guidelines.

The program is funded by state general equalization aid transfers between sending and receiving school districts, with the transfer amount calculated on a formula based on the prior year's amount for regular education students. For the 2016-17 school year, the transfer amount is \$6,748 per student. The transfer amount for students with disabilities is \$12,000. Resident districts cannot deny any 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 about open enrollment,

visit the department's [Public School Open Enrollment website](#) at <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. 6 until 4 p.m. on April 28.
- 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 are not required to reapply for the subsequent school year. However, if the student will be entering middle school, junior high school, or high school in the 2017-18 school year, districts may require re-application. Districts must notify parents of any re-application requirement prior to the start of the application period on Feb. 6.
- 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:** More information is available on the Department of Public Instruction's [Public School Open Enrollment website](#) at <http://dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment>. This news release is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2017\\_10.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2017_10.pdf).