

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPI-NR 2018-09

Thursday, January 25, 2018

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Application period begins Feb. 5 for public school choice program

Online application period is Feb. 5 to April 30

MADISON – Online applications for public school open enrollment for the 2018-19 school year, Wisconsin’s public school choice program, will be available on the Department of Public Instruction website beginning Feb. 5 through April 30.

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.

Open Enrollment

2018-19 School Year

Application Period
February 5 to April 30, 2018

The state’s public school open enrollment program has been in operation since the 1998-99 school year and is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. In the first year of open enrollment, 2,464 students transferred from their home district to a nonresident public school district. Last year, 58,347 students transferred through open enrollment. Program statistics for the 2017-18 school year will be available in fall of 2018.

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 8 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

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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 open enrollment program is funded by state general equalization aid transfers between sending and receiving school districts, with the transfer amount calculated on statutory provisions. For the 2017-18 school year, the transfer amount is \$7,055 per student. The transfer amount for students with disabilities is \$12,207. 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. To find additional information about open enrollment, visit the department's [Public School Open Enrollment website](#). 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.

Guidance for Parents and Guardians

- Parents and guardians may complete open enrollment applications online. The online application will be available from midnight Feb. 5 until 4 p.m. on April 30, 2018.
- 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 2018-19 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. 5.
- 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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NOTE: This news release is available electronically at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2018-09.pdf>.