

Inter-District Open Enrollment

Inter-District Open Enrollment is the process by which parents residing in an IOWA district may enroll their children into another IOWA school district under the terms and conditions of Iowa Code section 282.18 and the administrative rules of the Iowa Department of Education, 281 Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 17.

Parent/Guardian Information/Responsibilities

Parents or guardians requesting open enrollment in or out of the school district must complete an application form that is available in the central office of all Iowa school districts and available via the Iowa Department of Education's website at www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/options-educational-choice/open-enrollment. The completed form must be filed with both the resident and the receiving district by March 1 of the year preceding the school year for which open enrollment is desired.

An open enrollment request for a prospective kindergarten student may be filed with the receiving district by September 1 of the school year of enrollment into kindergarten. In addition, certain "good cause" circumstances defined by state law are acceptable for a timeline waiver if the change occurred/began AFTER March 1.

Applications shall indicate the current grade level and whether or not the student is in a special education program. The parent/guardian may request the desired attendance center, but final placement is subject to board or administrative discretion.

Students who open enroll in grades 9 through 12 shall not be eligible to participate in varsity contests and competitions during the first 90 school days of transfer.

The parent/guardian is responsible for transporting the student to and from the receiving district, unless the family qualifies for transportation assistance according to income guidelines. If the parent/guardian qualifies for transportation assistance and requests it, the resident district must provide transportation assistance in accordance with established guidelines.

The open enrollment application is valid for the duration of the student's attendance. Open enrollment to the receiving district continues until the student graduates or until the parent/guardian notifies the district in writing that they desire to terminate open enrollment (Iowa Code section 282.18(6)).

If open enrollment is denied, the parent/guardian may appeal to Iowa District Court. If the application meets good cause due to alleged repeated acts of harassment or if the child is alleged to have a serious health condition that the resident district cannot adequately address, an appeal may be filed with the Iowa State Board of Education.

Resident and Receiving Districts

By September 30 of each year the district shall publish a notification to its residents of open enrollment deadlines, the availability of transportation assistance and the possible loss of athletic eligibility. Notification shall also be provided to any parent/guardian who transfers into the district during the school year.

Receiving Districts Only

The receiving district makes the decision regarding approval or denial of an open enrollment request unless the applicant claims “pervasive harassment” or a “severe medical condition.”

The Board shall take action on a pending open enrollment request at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The only determining factors in considering approval of an open enrollment request will be if the enrollment will cause a class size to exceed the recommended maximum or if the student has been suspended or expelled without reinstatement from the sending district.

The board shall act on a timely filed open enrollment application no later than March 1. If the application is filed under good cause, the board must act within 30 days of receiving the request.

In order to deny open enrollment based on class size of general or special education classrooms, the district must adopt an “insufficient classroom” policy and review this policy annually.

If the request is for a student with an IEP, the receiving district should determine the appropriate program in conjunction with the resident district.

The receiving district will notify the resident district and the parent within 15 days of board action.

The receiving district must indicate the basis for its action if the request is denied.

Adopted: June 12, 1989
Revised: January 14, 2008
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