

District to District Open Enrollment

District to District (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 for each child in the family.

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 in grades nine through twelve open enrolling into the school district will be eligible for participation in interscholastic athletics, at the varsity level, in accordance with applicable law.

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 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.

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 superintendent will notify the sending school district and parents within five days of the school district’s action to approve or deny the open enrollment request.

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

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