

## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Public school open enrollment application period opens Feb. 6

*Legislation will extend application period from three weeks to three months*

MADISON — Wisconsin’s open enrollment application window for the 2012-13 school year opens Feb. 6, allowing parents an opportunity to send their children to any public school district in the state.

Senate Bill 2, which extends the application period from three weeks to three months, has passed the Legislature and awaits action by the governor. The new law will be effective when the bill is signed by the governor and published by the secretary of state. Upon enactment, the open enrollment application period will be from Feb. 6 to April 30.

Traditionally, children in Wisconsin are assigned to school districts based on the location of their parents’ home. Since legislation was passed allowing public school choice, interest in open enrollment has continued to grow. The open enrollment application period is the only tuition-free opportunity for most parents to apply for their children to attend public school in a school district other than the one in which they live.

	Open Enrollment Applications	New and Continuing Transfers
1998-99	5,926	2,464
1999-00	6,691	4,858
2000-01	7,616	7,213
2001-02	9,523	9,603
2002-03	11,859	12,379
2003-04	13,770	15,413
2004-05	15,367	18,210
2005-06	16,461	21,025
2006-07	17,803	23,406
2007-08	18,745	25,898
2008-09	20,953	28,028
2009-10	29,706	31,916
2010-11	32,591	34,498
2011-12	36,007	Not Available

“The extended open enrollment application period supports parental involvement and shared responsibility for educating children,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “Parents who are involved in their children’s education make a critical difference in the success of their students and the strength of local public schools. Wisconsin’s open enrollment program is one way for parents to take an active role in their children’s education,” he said.

Under the full-time public school open enrollment program, parents must apply during the Feb. 6 to April 30 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. Under the new legislation, parents will be informed by June 8 whether their open enrollment applications have been approved or denied.

(more)

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 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 lunches 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 on line directly from the open enrollment website <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/psctoc.html>. The online application will be available from midnight Feb. 6 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. 6 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 2012-13 school year. However, if the student will be entering middle school, junior high school, or high school in the 2012-13 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.
- Senate Bill 2 makes other changes to the open enrollment program. The DPI is developing procedures to implement the bill and will post information on the open enrollment website as it becomes available.

To assist parents in submitting open enrollment applications, a directory of public school districts is available on the DPI website at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/schlsrch3.aspx>. More information is available from local school districts or from an open enrollment consultant at DPI, (888) 245-2732 (toll-free), or [DPIopenenrollment@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:DPIopenenrollment@dpi.wi.gov).

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**NOTE:** This news release is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2012\\_13.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2012_13.pdf). Additional information about open enrollment may be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/psctoc.html>.