2026-2027 Full-Time Open Enrollment Regular Application Period for Wisconsin Public Schools

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

YOU MAY APPLY FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT FROM FEBRUARY 2 – APRIL 30, 2026.

What is Public School Open Enrollment?

Wisconsin's public school open enrollment program allows parents to apply for their children to attend a school district other than the one in which they live. Applications may be submitted to up to three nonresident school districts if the pupil wishes to attend a brick and mortar school. There are no limitations to the number of open enrollment applications that can be submitted to a virtual charter school.

How and when may parents apply?

The open enrollment regular application period for the 2026-27 school year is from February 2-April 30, 2026. The application period closes at 4:00pm on April 30, 2026. Late applications will not be accepted for any reason.

Parents may apply online at https://dpi.wi.gov/oe.

Can I apply to a virtual charter school under open enrollment?

A pupil may only open enroll to an online/virtual school if: (1) the school has been created as a virtual charter school that meets the requirements of the charter school law [Wis. Stats. 118.40 (8)] or (2) the pupil is required to physically attend school on a regular basis in a school located in the nonresident school district on the days that school is in session. Other important things to know about applying to virtual charter schools:

- A virtual charter school is not homeschooling. Pupils attending virtual charter schools are public school pupils.
- You must know the nonresident school district in which the virtual charter school is located.
- You must know your resident school district to apply.
- A list of virtual charter schools may be found at https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/charter-schools/virtual-charter-schools.

Can parents appeal if an application is denied?

Parents whose applications are denied may appeal to the DPI within 30 days of the denial. State law requires the DPI to uphold the school district's decision unless DPI finds that the decision was arbitrary or unreasonable. The DPI's decision may be appealed to circuit court.

Who may participate in open enrollment?

Pupils in kindergarten to grade 12 may apply to participate in open enrollment.

Open enrollment for prekindergarten, four-year-old kindergarten and early childhood education is limited. Parents should call their resident school districts to find out if their preschool-aged children qualify for open enrollment.

Can an application be rejected?

Nonresident school districts may deny an application if regular or special education space is not available for the pupil; special education or related services are not available; or if the pupil has been referred for a special education evaluation but has not yet been evaluated. Nonresident school districts may also deny an application if the pupil has been expelled during the current or preceding two years for certain violent conduct or if the pupil was habitually truant from the nonresident school district during any semester in the current or previous school year.

If there are more applications than spaces, pupils must be selected randomly, after giving preference to pupils already attending school in the nonresident school district and siblings of currently-attending pupils.

Some school districts establish waiting lists to fill unused spaces, but others do not.

Can a resident district prevent a pupil from leaving?

A resident district can deny a pupil's application for an invalid application (early or late application or missing information), ineligibility due to age (too young or too old), or if the resident district does not offer the same type of prekindergarten, four-year-old kindergarten, or early childhood program as the nonresident district or the pupil is not eligible for the program in the resident district. These are also reasons that a nonresident district can deny an application.

Must pupils reapply every year?

Once a pupil is accepted into a nonresident school district, the pupil may continue to attend that district without reapplication except that:

- The nonresident district may require a pupil to reapply one time—at the beginning of middle school, junior high or high school.
- A pupil may be returned to the resident school district if the special education required in a new or revised IEP is not available in the nonresident district or there is no space.
- A pupil who has become habitually truant in the nonresident district may be returned to the resident district.

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Is there a cost for parents to participate in the open enrollment program?

There is no tuition cost to parents for participation in open enrollment. Parents of open enrolled pupils may be charged the same fees as resident pupils.

Who is responsible for transportation?

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from school.

If transportation is required in the IEP for a child with a disability, it must be provided by the nonresident district.

School districts may provide transportation to open enrollment pupils if they wish. Usually, if transportation is provided, parents must transport the pupil to a location in the nonresident district.

Low-income parents may apply to the DPI at the end of the school year for partial reimbursement of their transportation costs.



Can a parent select a specific school in the pupil's nonresident school district?

Yes. A parent may request a specific school or program in the nonresident district. However, assignment to the requested school or program is not guaranteed and your pupil may be assigned to a different school other than the one requested. It is up to each nonresident district to determine a pupil's school assignment.

Can an open enrolled pupil participate in sports and other extra-curricular activities in the nonresident school district?

Open enrolled pupils have the same rights and responsibilities as resident pupils.

Inter-scholastic athletics are governed by the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA), which has rules concerning transfer pupils. Parents should check with the school district's athletic director about eligibility.

IMPORTANT OPEN ENROLLMENT DATES

February 2 – April 30, 2026
Parents must submit applications online or directly to the nonresident school district.

June 5, 2026
Nonresident school districts must send notices of approval or denial via US mail or email. If the application is approved, the school district must notify the parents of the specific school or program to which the pupil is assigned. If the application is denied, parents have 30 days to file an appeal.

June 12, 2026
Resident districts must notify applicants if the application is denied. If the application is denied, parents have 30 days to file an appeal.

June 26, 2026
Parents of accepted applicants must notify the nonresident district if the pupil will attend the nonresident district in the 2026-2027 school year. If the parent fails to make this notification, the nonresident district may refuse to allow the pupil to attend the district.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF Public Instruction

For more information contact:
Public School Open Enrollment Program
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https://dpi.wi.gov/oe

2026-2027

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