Statewide Enrollment Options Instructions

Overview

The Statewide Enrollment Options Instructions are for use with the following two applications:

- **General Statewide Enrollment Options Application for K-12 and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**
    - ECSE programs provide supports and services to infants, toddlers and preschool children with disabilities and their families.
    - This is the required application for all Minnesota school districts. Please use this application for inter-district K-12 open enrollment and inter-district enrollment in ECSE.
    - District may not modify this form, add data fields or create alternative formats
- **Statewide Enrollment Options Application for State-funded Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) or School Readiness Plus (SRP)**
    - VPK was established by Governor Dayton and the 2016 Minnesota Legislature for the purpose of preparing children for success as they enter kindergarten the following year.
    - SRP is a program targeted to 4-year-olds demonstrating one or more risk factors:
        - Qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch.
        - Is an English language learner.
        - Is homeless.
        - Has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or interagency intervention plan.
        - Is identified through health and development screening with a potential risk factor.
        - Is in foster care.
    - This is the required application for participating Minnesota school districts. Please use this application for voluntary pre-kindergarten or school readiness plus open enrollment.
    - District may not modify this form, add data fields or create alternative formats.

ECSE Eligible Children: Families of a child determined eligible for ECSE services may choose to open enroll into a non-resident district for the provision of ECSE services. If this is your intention, apply using the General Statewide Enrollment Options Application for K-12 and Early Childhood Special Education. Once your child is offered enrollment in the non-resident district, the IEP Team will determine the appropriate placement.

Families of a four year old child determined eligible for ECSE services may choose to seek open enrollment in a VPK or SRP program in a non-resident district. If this is your intention, apply using the Statewide Enrollment Options Application for State-funded Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten or School Readiness Plus. Your ECSE eligible child will be subject to the same selection criteria as all other children applying for enrollment in VPK or SRP. Once the child is offered a seat in either VPK or SRP, the district will request information about your child's

special needs and the IEP Team will determine the appropriate support and services necessary to your child's success in VPK or SRP.

Communication with Non-Resident District Prior to Applying: Families may apply in more than one district by submitting a separate application to each district. Certain situations require communication with the non-resident district before applying. Families must contact the non-resident district before proceeding with the application to ensure the child is eligible. These situations are:

- Requests to enter kindergarten when the child will not be age 5 by September 1 of the enrollment year;
- Requests to enroll in State-funded VPK; and
- Requests to enroll in SRP.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Do not disclose other information to the non-resident district until a seat is offered in writing. At that point, the district will request information such as special needs, birth date, race, ethnicity, academic and other records.

Application Deadline and Submission

January 15 Deadline and Exceptions to it: Applications must be sent to the non-resident district by January 15 in order to enroll in the following school year, unless:

- One or both districts has a Minnesota Department of Education Achievement and Integration plan, in which case there is no deadline and enrollment may begin at any time after notification of acceptance. (Minn. Stat. 124D.03, subd. 4 [2022]); or
- The student moved into the resident district on or later than December 1. (Minn. Stat. 124D.03, subd. 7 [2022]); or
- The commissioner of education and the commissioner of human rights determine that the policies, procedures, or practices of a district are in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352) or chapter 363A, any pupil in the district may submit an application to a nonresident district at any time for enrollment beginning at any time. (Minn. Stat. 124D.03, subd. 7 [2022]).

Instructions

Resident School District vs. Non-resident School District: Open enrollment agreements are between one school district and another school district, not a school site. To determine your resident school district, go to the Minnesota Secretary of State's office website and enter your address. Contact information for all Minnesota public school districts can found at MDE-ORG. You must include the reason why you are seeking to enroll in the nonresident district

Age Requirements: Minnesota's age requirements for public school are age 5 by September 1 for kindergarten and not older than age 21 and without a high school diploma. (See Minn. Stat. 120A.20, Admission to Public School, subd. 1 [2017]). Special instruction and services must be provided from birth until July 1 after the child with a disability becomes 21 years old but shall not extend beyond secondary school or its equivalent, except as provided in section 124D.68, subdivision 2 [2022]. (See Minn. Stat. 125A.03 (b)[2022]). However, open

enrollment is also available for younger children ages birth to 7 in Early Childhood Special Education, and in State-Funded Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten and School Readiness Plus.

Acceptance or Denial of Open Enrollment: Students cannot be accepted or denied based on previous academic achievement, athletic or other extracurricular ability, disabling conditions, proficiency in the English language, or previous disciplinary proceedings (unless the child is currently expelled as the result of a previous disciplinary proceeding). A student's district of residence also cannot be used except in cases where the resident district and non-resident district are working together in an MDE- approved Achievement and Integration School Choice Program, or the enrollment involves city of Edina residents whose resident district is not Edina Public Schools. (Minn. Stat. 124D.03, subd. 6 [2022]).

Reapplication for Subsequent Years: Families do not need to reapply in subsequent years for a student to retain their K-12 open enrollment spot if they do not move. If they move within Minnesota, the open enrollment paperwork must be updated but they do not lose spot. NOTE: Districts may set policies to require early childhood open enrollees to reapply at kindergarten entrance.

Site or Program Preferences: Families may indicate preferences for school sites or programs within the district; if the preferred sites or programs are unavailable, districts will offer options at other sites/programs unless the grade level or open enrollment has been closed by board action. If you wish to rank more than three sites/programs, attach the ranking to the application.

Currently Expelled Students: Non-resident districts may, but are not required to, reject applications from students currently expelled as defined in Minnesota Statutes 2022 121A.45, and Minnesota Statutes 2022 124D.03, subd. 1.

Notice of Decision on the Application: You can expect to receive an approval or disapproval from the non-resident district by February 15, or, when applying with a deadline exception (listed above). (Do not apply for statewide enrollment options further in advance than for the upcoming school year).

Lotteries: In situations where school districts have more applications than they can accommodate, the school district must hold lotteries to determine which students will receive spots. Statewide Enrollment Options lottery procedures must be approved by the local school board and posted on the school district's website. Before a general lottery, a priority lottery must be held for:

- Siblings of currently open-enrolled students;
- Students who are part of a Minnesota Department of Education approved Achievement and Integration plan;
- Children of district employees who are Minnesota residents; and
- Students who live in the City of Edina but whose resident school district is not Edina Public Schools and seek attendance there.

Application Submission: Please use one application per student per requested district. Send the signed application to superintendent's office in the non-resident district. Do not send the application to the Minnesota Department of Education.

Updated 07/05/2023

If your Application has been Accepted

Notify the non-resident District: Contact the non-resident district as to whether you are accepting the enrollment offer according to the following timelines:

- If you applied under the January 15 deadline, you need to respond **by March 1**.
- If you applied under a situation that allowed an exception to the January 15 deadline, notify the non-resident district no later than **10 business days** from when the seat is offered.

Visit the non-resident district office at least **10 business days** before the starting date to complete all enrollment applications.

Families of Children with Special Needs: If your student receives special education services for K-12 or if you are applying for Early Childhood Special Education, please contact the non-resident district as soon as possible after (not before) being offered an open enrollment spot in order to start the process of establishing an Individual Education Program for your child.

Transportation: You may contact the school district for information regarding transportation within its borders (Minn. Stat. 123B.88, subd. 6 [2022]; Minn. Stat. 124D.03, subd. 8 [2022])

Obligation to Attend at Least One Year: By accepting an enrollment options offer, your student is obligated to attend the non-resident district during the upcoming school year. Once offered a K-12 spot, you do not need to reapply in subsequent years for your student to remain enrolled unless you move out of your current district. If you move into another Minnesota non-resident school district, the student does not lose the seat but you do need to submit an updated Enrollment Options Form. Note: You do need to apply again for siblings but the siblings must be given a preference if open enrollment requests exceed available seats.

Notify your Resident District if you Seek to Return by January 15: To return to your resident district after one year in the new district, notify your resident district that you are returning by January 15 for the following fall.

If your Application has been Denied

If your Application was Denied:

1) Districts must indicate the provision in state law that applied.
2) Districts must report denied applications to the Minnesota Department of Education by July 15.
3) Districts may inform you that your application was rejected because you missed the January 15 deadline.

In this case, you can ask your resident district to form a non-resident agreement with the non-resident district for the upcoming year.

Non-resident Agreements: Such agreement may be able to roll into a regular open enrollment for subsequent years. Districts are not required to enter into non-resident agreements. The Minnesota Department

of Education has an application, School District Non-resident Agreement for Interdistrict Enrollment, which districts can use for the agreement, or they may use another format. This application is the last page within the open enrollment application.

For technical assistance, please contact:

Public Engagement

MDE.Engagement@state.mn.us