

## **OPEN ENROLLMENT INFORMATION (2009-2010 applications are available now)**

**1. Question: What is open enrollment?**

**Answer:** It is the cost free option by which parents/guardians 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.

**2. Question: How does a parent/guardian file for open enrollment?**

**Answer:** The parent/guardian must complete an application form that is available in the central office of Iowa school districts at Cardinal contact Sherry VanBlaricom in the business office 641-652-7531 extension 201. The form is also available via the Department's web site at [www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/asis/index.html](http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/asis/index.html). The completed form must be filed with both the resident and receiving district by March 1 of the year preceding the school year for which open enrollment is desired for students entering grades 1 through 12. The deadline for kindergarten students is September 1. Iowa Code section 281-17.3(2)

**3. Question: May a student who is presently open enrolled into one receiving district change enrollment to a different receiving district?**

**Answer:** Yes. In such a case, the parent/guardian files an OE application with the district the student is currently attending (receiving district) and the district the student wants to attend (alternate receiving district). The new district (alternate receiving district) will notify the parents of acceptance or denial. The due date for application is March 1 unless there is a circumstance that constitutes good cause (see #10 for explanation of good cause). 281 IAC rule 17.8(4).

**4. Question: May an open enrolled student return to the district of residence?**

**Answer:** Yes. A pupil that is open enrolled may return to the district of residence, and enroll, at any time (unless under suspension or expulsion). The parent or guardian must notify the district of residence and the receiving district in writing of the decision to enroll the pupil in the district of residence. A 90-day period of athletic ineligibility accompanies the transfer from district to another. Iowa Code section 282.18(6).

**5. Question: Must the sending and receiving districts be contiguous to each other?**

**Answer:** No. However, transportation assistance is only applicable when open enrollment is to a contiguous receiving district. Iowa Code section 281 17.9(2).

**6. Question: Who is responsible for school transportation for an open enrolled student?**

**Answer:** The general rule is that the parent/guardian is responsible for transporting the student to and from the receiving district. It is also possible for parents to transport the child to a point on an existing school bus route of the receiving district. The receiving district may not send its buses into the sending district to transport an open enrolled student unless the boards of both districts agree.

If an open enrolled student's family qualifies economically for transportation assistance, and **if the sending and receiving districts are contiguous**, it is the responsibility of the sending district to arrange for transportation assistance if the cost does not exceed the average per pupil cost. The sending district may meet this obligation by a) providing reimbursement to the parent/guardian; b) by providing the transportation directly; c) by contracting with the receiving district or another third party to provide the

transportation. The cost of the transportation is deducted from the open enrollment tuition. Iowa Code section 282.18(10).

7. **Question: What are the economic eligibility requirements for transportation?**

**Answer:** The student is eligible if the household income of the parent/guardian is at or below the federal poverty guidelines for household size. These guidelines are adjusted annually, and are provided to districts each year. (Refer to the chart on page 13.) 281 IAC rule 17.9(3).

## Timeline Questions

8. **Question: Are there any exceptions to the March 1 deadline?**

**Answer:** Yes. 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. Iowa Code section 282.18(2); 281-IAC rule 17.7.

In addition, the following circumstances are considered "good cause" and are acceptable conditions for a timeline waiver

**IF** the change occurred/began **AFTER** March 1.

- Change in family district of residence
- Change in the marital status of the student's parents resulting in a change in resident district
- Placement of the child in foster care resulting in a change of residence
- Adoption
- Participation in a foreign exchange program
- Participation in a substance abuse or mental health treatment program resulting in a change of residence
- Serious health need (see #12)
- Pervasive Harassment (see #11)
- Failure of district negotiations to reorganization or rejection of proposed reorganization plan after March 1
  
- Failure of district negotiations for whole grade sharing or rejection of whole grade sharing agreement after March 1
- Loss of accreditation or revocation of a charter school contract after March 1

***(If good cause is related to change in status of child's resident district, open enrollment request must be filed within 45 days of last board action or 30 days of certification of an election, whichever is applicable.)***