

281—17.3(282) Application process. The following procedure shall be used by parents/guardians and school districts in processing open enrollment applications.

17.3(1) Parent/guardian responsibilities. On or before March 1 of the school year preceding the school year for which open enrollment is requested, a parent/guardian shall formally notify both the district of residence and the receiving district of the request for open enrollment. The request for open enrollment shall be made on forms provided by the department of education. Failure by the parent to send the form to the resident district and receiving district by the deadline may cause the application to be considered untimely. The parent/guardian is required to indicate on the form if the request is for a pupil requiring special education, as provided by Iowa Code chapter 256B. The forms for open enrollment application are available from each public school district and area education agency and from the state department of education.

17.3(2) School district responsibilities.

a. The board of the resident district shall take no action on an open enrollment request except for a request made under rule 281—17.5(282) or 281—17.14(282).

b. The board of the receiving district shall act on an open enrollment request no later than June 1 of the school year preceding the school year for which the request is made.

(1) The receiving district superintendent shall provide notification of either approval or denial of the request to the parent/guardian and to the resident district within five days of board action.

(2) As an alternative procedure, the receiving board may by policy authorize the superintendent to approve, but not deny, applications filed on or before March 1. The board of directors of a receiving school district may adopt a policy granting the superintendent of the school district authority to approve open enrollment applications submitted after the March 1 deadline, but the board of the receiving district shall take action to approve the request if good cause exists. The board shall have the discretion to determine the scope of the authorization. The authorization may be for regular applications filed on or before March 1, good cause applications, and kindergarten applications filed on or before September 1, or any combination that the board determines. The same timelines for approval, forwarding, and notification shall apply.

c. The parent/guardian may withdraw an open enrollment request anytime prior to the first day of school in the resident district. After the first day of school, an open enrollment request can only be changed during the term of the approval by the procedures of subrules 17.8(4), 17.8(5), 17.8(6), and 17.8(7).

d. The board of the receiving district shall comply with the provisions of rule 281—17.11(282) if the application for open enrollment is for a pupil requiring special education as provided by Iowa Code chapter 256B.

e. Notification to parents.

(1) By September 30 of each school year, all districts shall notify parents of the following:

1. Open enrollment deadlines;

2. Transportation assistance;

3. That within 30 days of a denial of an open enrollment request by a district board of education, the parent/guardian may file an appeal with the state board of education only if the open enrollment request was based on repeated acts of harassment or a serious health condition of the pupil that the district cannot adequately address; and that all other denials must be appealed to the district court in the county in which the primary business office of the district is located; and

4. Possible loss of athletic eligibility for open enrollment pupils.

(2) This notification may be published in a school newsletter, a newspaper of general circulation, a website, or a parent handbook provided to all patrons of the district. This information shall also be provided to any parent/guardian of a pupil who enrolls in the district during the school year.

17.3(3) Exception to process when resident district is under voluntary or court-ordered desegregation. If the resident district has a voluntary or court-ordered desegregation plan requiring the district to maintain minority and nonminority student ratios, the request for open enrollment shall be filed solely with the district of residence on or before March 1 of the school year preceding the school year for which open enrollment is requested. The superintendent of the resident district may deny

a request under this subrule unless the request is made on behalf of a student whose sibling already actively participates in open enrollment to the same receiving district to which open enrollment is sought for this student. A denial by the superintendent may be appealed to the board of the district in which the request was denied. A decision of the local board to uphold the denial may only be appealed to the district court in the county in which is located the primary business office of the district that upheld the denial of the open enrollment request.

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