

**281—17.14 (282) Voluntary diversity plans or court-ordered desegregation plans.**

**17.14(1) *Applicability.*** These rules govern only the components of a voluntary diversity plan or court-ordered desegregation plan as the plan affects open enrollments. Nothing herein shall prohibit a district from implementing a lawful voluntary diversity plan or court-ordered desegregation plan or components thereof for transfers other than open enrollment.

**17.14(2) *Eligibility to adopt and implement a plan applicable to open enrollments.***

*a. Adoption.* The board of an eligible school district may adopt a voluntary diversity plan with a component that applies to open enrollments if either of the following conditions exists: (1) The percentage of minority students in the district exceeds the percentage of minority students in the state by at least 20 percentage points; or (2) the percentage of minority students in one or more attendance centers in the district exceeds the percentage of minority students in the district as a whole by at least 20 percentage points.

*b. Implementation.* The open enrollment component of the plan adopted by the district board shall only be implemented by the district if other components of the diversity plan describe the steps the district is taking internally to avoid or reduce minority student isolation, and the district demonstrates the extent to which it has implemented those steps. For districts with multiple attendance centers at the same grade level, such steps may include intradistrict student transfer policies, pairing of attendance centers, revision of boundaries of attendance centers, selecting school sites, realignment of feeder systems, magnet schools, and the placement of specialized programs and services. In a district without multiple attendance centers at the same grade level, such steps may include pupil assignments to classrooms, classroom pairing, community and family outreach programs, student-to-student mentoring or grouping designed to promote understanding and acceptance of and positive interactions with all groups of minority students, and professional development activities designed to promote understanding and acceptance of and positive interactions with all groups of minority students. The open enrollment component of the plan adopted by the district board may remain in effect for so long as the district's total minority student population exceeds 15 percent, and shall remain in effect for so long as the district demonstrates is necessary to avoid minority student isolation in the district.

**17.14(3) *Open enrollment elements of a diversity plan.***

*a.* All applicable deadlines for the filing and determination of open enrollment requests, including the exceptions for good cause under rule 17.4(282), apply to open enrollment requests filed in a district that has adopted an open enrollment component in its voluntary diversity plan.

*b.* The plan shall establish a districtwide ratio of minority-to-nonminority students to be maintained, consistent with subrule 17.14(2). All open enrollment requests, both those into and out of the district, shall be acted on according to whether the request will adversely affect or will positively affect the implementation of the plan. Under Iowa Code section 282.18, if an open enrollment request would positively affect the plan, the district shall give priority to granting the request over other requests.

*c.* A district with multiple attendance centers at the same grade level shall specify in the open enrollment component of its diversity plan which attendance centers are affected by the open enrollment component. For each of those attendance centers, the district shall establish and specify the individual attendance center ratios of minority-to-nonminority students, consistent with subrule 17.14(2). The plan may provide for an initial determination of whether a requested open enrollment will negatively affect the specific attendance center ratio. With respect to a request to open enroll out of the district, if such enrollment will negatively affect the ratio established for the student's current attendance center, the request may be denied by the district with no further determination of the impact of the request on the districtwide ratio. For a request to open enroll either into or out of the district, if the open enrollment will not negatively affect the attendance center ratio, the request shall be denied only if there would be a negative impact on the districtwide ratio. As of July 1, 2003, if a district's plan sets a threshold lower than allowed in paragraph 17.14(2) "a" and that plan has not been disapproved by a court of competent jurisdiction, the district may implement its individual attendance center ratios in addition to its districtwide ratio.

*d.* The plan shall include provision for the formation and operation of a waiting list for those requests that could not be granted immediately. A parent/guardian of a child on the waiting list must be informed by the district of the details of the operation of the list and whether the parent/guardian must refile a timely request for open enrollment in order to remain on the waiting list.

*e.* The plan shall specify a district contact person to whom questions may be directed from parents/guardians.

*f.* The plan shall include a provision whereby a parent/guardian has a means to request that the district determine whether a hardship exists for granting a request that may not otherwise be granted under the plan.

**17.14(4) Exceptions.** The following exceptions shall apply:

*a.* If an open enrollment request is filed on behalf of a student whose sibling is already participating in open enrollment to the same district to which the student desires open enrollment, the request shall be granted.

*b.* If an open enrollment request is filed on behalf of a student whose parent/guardian moves out of the school district of residence and who wishes to remain in the district of residence as an open enrolled student without interruption in the student's educational program under subrule 17.8(7), the request shall be granted. This option is not available to the parent/guardian of a student who is entering kindergarten for the first time.

*c.* A request for open enrollment based on repeated acts of harassment of the student shall not be denied on the basis that such request would have an adverse impact on the district's ratio of minority-to-nonminority students.

*d.* A request for open enrollment based on a serious health condition of the student that the district cannot adequately address shall not be denied on the basis that such request would have an adverse impact on the district's ratio of minority-to-nonminority students.

**17.14(5) Review by department.** All voluntary desegregation plans adopted under this rule prior to June 28, 2007, are no longer valid. An eligible district whose board desires to adopt a voluntary diversity plan for open enrollment must do so by March 1, 2008. The district shall submit a copy of its plan to the department for review within 10 days of the adoption of the plan. Open enrollment requests received prior to March 1, 2008, by a district that has a voluntary diversity plan may be held by the district for action pursuant to the district's new voluntary diversity plan.

The department shall inform the district within 10 days of receipt of the district's voluntary diversity plan whether the plan complies with this rule. All changes to voluntary diversity plans for open enrollment shall be submitted to the department within 60 days of local board action.