Memorandum

To: Board of Education Members
From: Steve Summers
Date: May 12, 2025
Re: Open Enrollment Applications In/Out

The purpose of this agenda item is to request School Board approval or denial for open enrollment applications in/out for the 2025-2026 school year. The open enrollment program for the state of Wisconsin allows parents to apply for their student(s) to attend a non-resident district of their choice. Parents must complete the application form for their student(s) and they are allowed to apply at up to three non-resident districts. The application must have been completed and turned in (or submitted online) to the non-resident district between February 3, 2025 and April 30, 2025.

School Board Policy 423 and 423 Rule-1 governs the District's open enrollment process. The policy states when the Board will accept and deny open enrollment applications. The policy allows for a waiting list if the applications are denied because of a lack of classroom space.

Please remember that the open enrollment law was revised in 2012. School Boards are required to approve the number of openings at each school/grade level at the beginning of the open enrollment process. The number of identified openings now drives the decision making process for applications.

I have attached a list of applications in/out and the subsequent decision per the policy. There are a total of 109 student applications in (142 last year). This year we have created a wait list of 10 students for 4K, and 4 students for KG.

There are 19 (17 last year) student applications out. Of the applications out, 9 of the students are currently attending school in different school districts or private schools. 1 student is currently homeschooled.   Of the applications out, 3 of the students are currently enrolled in the Waunakee Community School District and 6 of the students will be entering 4K, so they did not attend public school last school year. One of the six 4K applicants is currently receiving speech and language services with WCSD.

The policy does recommend the denial of 36 open enrollment applications in.

Currently, there are 274 non-resident students attending the Waunakee Community School District, 10 withdrew from open enrollment status, and there are 67 resident students currently attending other school districts, 6 withdrew from open enrolled status during the 2024-2025 school year. There are seventeen 12th graders that will graduate in June 2025.

The district receives a payment of $8,962.00 (estimated for 2024-2025) for every non-resident student attending Waunakee. The district makes the same payment for every resident student attending another district. Special education students have a different payment amount, which is $13,814.00 (2024-2025 amount).

The open enrollment students, in, that are recommended for approval are based on class size estimates that are below the optimum level. Because the staffing is already in place for these classrooms, adding these open enrollment students increases revenues to the district without adding staffing expenses.

The open enrollment students, in, that are recommended for denial- waiting list are based on class size estimates that are at or above the optimum level. Because the staffing is not in place for these additional classrooms, adding these open enrollment students increases revenues to the district while adding staffing expenses. The staffing expense to add a classroom section is estimated at $85,000, plus furniture/equipment costs, if needed. The advantage to the waiting list is the ability to allow these students to enroll at a later date if the district decides to add a section or if space becomes available.

The special education department does not have all of the IEP records of the open enrollment in students. A review of these records may result in changes to the recommendations of student applications. An update will be provided at the board meeting, if necessary.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments on this agenda item. Thanks.