



**WAUSAU SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Special Education and Pupil Services Department  
Longfellow Administration Center

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Wendy Cartledge, Director of Special Education and Pupil Services

**Date:** 12/15/2025

**To:** Wausau School District Board of Education

**From:** Wendy Cartledge, Director of Pupil Services/Special Education

**RE:** Open Enrollment Space Determinations 2026-2027

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## **BACKGROUND**

The Wisconsin Public School Open Enrollment Program, Wis. Stat. § 118.51, and Wis. Admin. Code Chapter PI 36 requires School Boards to designate the number of regular education and special education spaces available for the next school year. Space determinations must be made and approved by the School Board at its January Board meeting. If the Board does not intend to deny applicants due to space, it may make that determination and document it as such in the January Board minutes.

The changes in the Open Enrollment Program also require school districts to consistently apply specific criteria to ensure decisions on special education space are not arbitrary or unreasonable. Criteria utilized for determining regular and special education spaces available for Open Enrollment are as follows:

### **Regular education Open Enrollment availability considerations:**

- District policies, procedures, or other factors regarding class size for particular programs or classes;
- District policies, procedures, or other factors regarding student-teacher ratios for particular programs, classes or buildings;
- District policies, procedures, or other factors regarding building capacity;

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- Enrollment projections for the schools of the district which include, but are not limited to, the following factors; projected student transfers in and out of the district, preference requirements for siblings of non-resident open enrollment students, reserved space for potential growth based on a Board established percentage, and current and future space needs for special programs, laboratories (e.g., in technology or foreign languages), or similar district educational initiatives;
- the number of nonresident students currently attending the schools of the district; and
- the number of resident home schooled or private school students likely to attend the schools of the district in accordance with §118.145.

### **Special Education Open Enrollment space availability considerations:**

- Review each special education teacher and related service providers' current caseload, projected caseload for the next school year, and compare the projected caseload with projected enrollment and DPI caseload recommendations,
- Utilization of the Wisconsin DPI caseload factoring analysis,
- Review of current and projected special education programs and services
- Review of current staffing patterns, certifications, experience

## **SUMMARY**

Following an analysis using the criteria detailed above, in tandem with District Policy, the administration projects the following spaces to be available under open enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year.

### **Regular education:**

- Grade 4K: No limit set
- Grade KG: No limit set
- Grade 1: No limit set
- Grade 2: No limit set
- Grade 3: No limit set
- Grade 4: No limit set
- Grade 5: No limit set
- Grade 6: No limit set
- Grade 7: No limit set
- Grade 8: No limit set
- Grade 9: No limit set
- Grade 10: No limit set

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- Grade 11: No limit set
- Grade 12: No limit set
- Red Granite: Based on lottery in February (Tentative) - State statute
- Montessori: Based on lottery in February - State statute
- WAVE Elementary: No limit set
- WAVE Secondary: No limit set

### **Special Education:**

The District will not have available open enrollment space available for students requiring:

- Cross Categorical Special Education services, including all specially designed instruction, services, supports, and related services PK-12+
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing programs or services for all grade levels PK-12+
- Physical Therapy programs or services for all grade levels PK-12+
- Occupational Therapy programs or services for all grade levels PK-12+
- Speech Language Pathology services for all grade levels PK-12+
- Vision Impairment Services PK-12+
- Orientation and Mobility Services PK-12+
- Transition Age 18-21 programs or services

The Pupil Services and Special Education Departments will maintain waiting lists for Open Enrollment applicants, should additional spaces become available the Friday following the first Monday in June. The availability of additional spaces will be determined by applying the aforementioned criteria, and in accordance with Board policy.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Motion to approve the regular and special education non-resident spaces available under open enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year as presented.

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