



**FOREST LAKE AREA SCHOOLS  
FOREST LAKE, MN 55025**

**January 7, 2016**

**AGENDA ITEM: 12.4**

**TOPIC: New Policy 503: Enrollment of Nonresident Students**

**BACKGROUND:** The school district desires to participate in the Enrollment Options Program established by Minn. Stat. § 124D.03. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the application and exclusion procedures used by the school district in making said determination.

**PROCESS:** The Policy Committee has reviewed the MSBA model policy, and they are recommending that it be implemented.

**RECOMMENDATION:** First reading of this policy.

*[Note: The provisions of this policy substantially reflect statutory requirements.]*

## I. PURPOSE

The school district desires to participate in the Enrollment Options Program established by Minn. Stat. § 124D.03. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the application and exclusion procedures used by the school district in making said determination.

## II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. Eligibility. Applications for enrollment under the Enrollment Options (Open Enrollment) Law will be approved provided that acceptance of the application will not exceed the capacity of a program, excluding special education services; class; grade level; or school building as established by school board resolution and provided that:
1. space is available for the applicant under enrollment cap standards established by school board policy or other directive; and
  2. in considering the capacity of a grade level, the school district may only limit the enrollment of nonresident students to a number not less than the lesser of: (a) one percent of the total enrollment at each grade level in the school district; or (b) the number of school district resident students at that grade level enrolled in a nonresident school district in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 124D.03.
  3. the applicant is not otherwise excluded by action of the school district because of previous conduct in another school district.
- B. Standards that may be used for rejection of application. In addition to the provisions of Paragraph II.A., the school district may refuse to allow a pupil who is expelled under Minn. Stat. § 121A.45 to enroll during the term of the expulsion if the student was expelled for:
1. possessing a dangerous weapon, including a weapon, device, instruments, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, with the exception of a pocket knife with a blade less than two and one-half inches in length, at school or a school function;
  2. possessing or using an illegal drug at school or a school function;
  3. selling or soliciting the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function; or

4. committing a third-degree assault involving assaulting another and inflicting substantial bodily harm.
- C. Standards that may not be used for rejection of application. The school district may not use the following standards in determining whether to accept or reject an application for open enrollment:
1. previous academic achievement of a student;
  2. athletic or extracurricular ability of a student;
  3. disabling conditions of a student;
  4. a student's proficiency in the English language;
  5. the student's district of residence except where the district of residence is directly included in an enrollment options strategy included in an approved achievement and integration program; or
  6. previous disciplinary proceedings involving the student. This shall not preclude the school district from proceeding with exclusion as set out in Section F. of this policy.
- D. Application. The student and parent or guardian must complete and submit a School District Enrollment Options Program application developed by the Minnesota Department of Education (that enrollment form follows this policy).
- E. Lotteries. If a school district has more applications than available seats at a specific grade level, it must hold an impartial lottery following the January 15 deadline to determine which students will receive seats. Siblings of currently enrolled students and applications related to an approved integration and achievement plan must receive priority in the lottery. The process for the school district lottery must be established by school board policy and posted on the school district's website.
- F. Exclusion
1. Administrator's initial determination. If a school district administrator knows or has reason to believe that an applicant has engaged in conduct that has subjected or could subject the applicant to expulsion or exclusion under law or school district policy, the administrator will transmit the application to the superintendent with a recommendation of whether exclusion proceedings should be initiated.
  2. Superintendent's review. The superintendent may make further inquiries. If the superintendent determines that the applicant should be admitted, he or she will notify the applicant and the school board chair. If the superintendent determines that the applicant should be excluded, the

superintendent will notify the applicant and determine whether the applicant wishes to continue the application process. Although an application may not be rejected based on previous disciplinary proceedings, the school district reserves the right to initiate exclusion procedures pursuant to the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act as warranted on a case-by-case basis.

G. Termination of Enrollment

1. The school district may terminate the enrollment of a nonresident student enrolled under an enrollment options program pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 124D.03 or 124D.08 at the end of a school year if the student meets the definition of a habitual truant, the student has been provided appropriate services for truancy under Minn. Ch. 260A, and the student's case has been referred to juvenile court. A "habitual truant" is a child under 16 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school, or a child who is 16 or 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school under Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, Subd. 8.
2. The school district may also terminate the enrollment of a nonresident student over 16 years of age if the student is absent without lawful excuse for one or more periods on 15 school days and has not lawfully withdrawn from school under Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, Subd. 8.

***[Note: Effective with the 2014-15 school year, the school district may terminate the enrollment of a nonresident student over 17 years of age pursuant to this section.]***

3. A student who has not applied for and been accepted for open enrollment pursuant to this policy and does not otherwise meet the residency requirements for enrollment may be terminated from enrollment and removed from school. Prior to removal from school, the school district will send to the student's parents a written notice of the school district's belief that the student is not a resident of the school district. The notice shall include the facts upon which the belief is based and notice to the parents of their opportunity to provide documentary evidence, in person or in writing, of residency to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee will make the final determination as to the residency status of the student.

- H. Notwithstanding the requirement that an application must be approved by the board of the nonresident district, a student who has been enrolled in a district, who is identified as homeless, and whose parent or legal guardian moves to another district, or who is placed in foster care in another school district, may

continue to enroll in the nonresident district without the approval of the board of the nonresident district. The approval of the board of the student's resident district is not required.

- Legal References:**
- Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, Subd. 3(e) (Residency Determined)
  - Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, Subd. 8 (Withdrawal from School)
  - Minn. Stat. § 121A.40-121A.56 (The Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)
  - Minn. Stat. § 124D.03 (Enrollment Options Program)
  - Minn. Stat. § 124D.08 (School Board Approval to Enroll in Nonresident District)
  - Minn. Stat. § 124D.68 (High School Graduation Incentives Program)
  - Minn. Ch. 260A (Truancy)
  - Minn. Stat. § 260C.007, Subd. 19 (Habitual Truant Defined)
  - Minn. Op. Atty. Gen. 169-f (Aug. 13, 1986)
  - Indep. Sch. Dist. No. 623 v. Minn. Dept. of Educ.*, Co. No. A05-361, 2005 WL 3111963 (Minn. Ct. App. 2005) (unpublished)

- Cross References:**
- Student Discipline Policy 515
  - MSBA/MASA Model Policy 517 (Student Recruiting)
  - MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 5, Various Educational Programs

## Statewide Enrollment Options Form

Required form for all Minnesota school districts

### Section 1: To be completed by the student's parent/guardian

**PARENTS:** email, mail or fax this form to the superintendent's office of the non-resident district where you would like your student to attend school. **Do not** mail to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). See separate instructions for important January 15 deadline information that may apply.

#### Parent/Legal Guardian Information

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Resident District: \_\_\_\_\_

District #: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

District of Choice (Non-Resident School District): \_\_\_\_\_

District #: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

District of Choice Fax Number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Student Information

Student Name: Last: \_\_\_\_\_ First: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level Desired: \_\_\_\_\_ Desired Date of Enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this student currently expelled under Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.45 for a reason listed in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.03, Subdivision 1?  Yes  No

Will the student be at least age 5 and under age 21 by September 1 of enrollment year?  
 Yes  No

*When a spot is offered, districts will then request birthdate, records and other required registration information. If you answered NO to the statement regarding age 5, the student is not eligible for open enrollment unless the student fully meets the requirements for an exception to the age requirements listed in the Enrollment Options Instructions document.*

Yes, this student qualifies under the terms of the exceptions described on page 3 of this form.

Does the student have a sibling open enrolled in this district?  Yes  No

Please rank the schools in the non-resident district in order of preference:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby verify that the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 2: To be completed by the non-resident district**

**Non-resident district:** Notify parents/guardians by **February 15** (or no more than 90 days after receiving applications that come later through an Achievement and Integration School Choice Program) of approval or disapproval of application. Families must accept or decline the offer by **March 1 or 45 days later**. After receiving the commitment to attend, the non-resident district must notify the resident district by **March 15** (or 30 days after initial receipt if form filed after January 15) of the student's intent to enroll. Report all rejected applications to the Minnesota Department of Education by July 15.

Date Application Received: \_\_\_\_\_

District Name: \_\_\_\_\_ District Number: \_\_\_\_\_

District Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling Preference Applies

District of residence preference due to MDE approved Achievement and Integration School Choice Program.

**APPROVED**

On the basis of information provided in the above application, and with respect to district policies and procedures, the above student will be assigned to:

School Building Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Starting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOT APPROVED**

The non-resident district has denied the request for open enrollment because of the following reason(s) allowed in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.03. **Check all that apply.**

The January 15 deadline applies and was not met; situations that would have waived the deadline are not present. See Statewide Enrollment Options Instructions or Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.03, Subdivision 3.

Statutory enrollment cap has been reached. (Minn. Stat. § 124D.03, Subd.2)

Grade is closed district-wide by board action. (Minn. Stat. § 124D.03, Subd. 2 and Subd.6)

District has denied the application because of specific expulsion reasons allowed in law. (Minn. Stat. § 124D.03, Subd.1)

**NON-RESIDENT DISTRICT SIGNATURE**

Superintendent/Responsible Authority: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***DISTRICTS MAY NOT MODIFY THIS FORM, ADD DATA FIELDS OR CREATE ALTERNATIVE FORMATS.***

***PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS MUST PHYSICALLY SIGN THE FORM.***

## Statewide Enrollment Options Instructions

**GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS:** Kindergarten through twelfth grade students and pre-kindergarten children with disabilities may apply to attend a public school outside of their resident district (Minn. Stat. § 124D.03). Use one application per student per requested district. Complete and sign Section 1 of the Statewide Enrollment Options Form and send to the non-resident district's superintendent's office. **Please do not send the form to MDE.**

### Age requirements:

**Open enrollment is only available to students who will be age 5 by September 1 and under age 21, without a high school diploma, unless:**

- The student is under age 5 and has been identified through a formal assessment process in the resident district as needing an individual education plan for early childhood special education. In these situations, the family should list "EC" as their requested grade level.
- **OR**, the student has met all requirements of the nonresident district for consideration for early entrance to kindergarten such as a September or October birth date, assessment testing and a trial period of enrollment **and** the nonresident district has agreed to consider an open enrollment for the child for early entrance to kindergarten. Do not submit this form in this situation without first working with the nonresident district to determine eligibility.

### Deadlines and exceptions to deadlines:

**Applications must be sent to the nonresident district by January 15 in order to enroll beginning the following school year unless:**

- One or both districts has a Minnesota Department of Education Achievement and Integration Plan, in which case there is no deadline and enrollment may begin at any time after notification of acceptance. (Minn. Stat. § 124D.03, Subd. 4)
- **OR**, the student moved into the resident district on or later than December 1. (Minn. Stat. § 124D.03, Subd. 7).
- **OR**, other unusual situations apply under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.03, Subdivision 7.

Acceptance or denial of open enrollment cannot be based on previous academic achievement, athletic or other extracurricular ability, disabling conditions, proficiency in the English language, previous disciplinary proceedings or the student's district of residence unless the resident district and nonresident district are working together in an MDE approved Achievement and Integration School Choice Program. (Minn. Stat. § 124D.03, Subd. 6.)

Families may indicate preferences for school sites or programs within the district; if unavailable, districts will offer families options in the family's stated order of preference at other sites unless the grade level or open enrollment has been closed by board action. Families may apply in more than one district. Use one form per child per district.

Do not disclose special needs of students on the *Statewide Enrollment Options Form*; this information is provided after an enrollment spot is offered.

**Currently expelled students:** Nonresident districts may, but are not required to, reject applications from students currently expelled as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.45 and Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.03 Subdivision 1.

**Notice as to acceptance of application:** You can expect to receive an approval/disapproval from the nonresident district by **February 15 or when applying through the waived deadlines for Achievement and Integration districts 90 days** after applying for the current or upcoming school year. (Do not apply for statewide enrollment options further in advance than for the upcoming school year.) School districts who have more applications than they can accommodate hold lotteries to determine which students will receive spots. Siblings of currently open-enrolled students receive preference. Districts may also give lottery preference in some Achievement and Integration Program situations. Statewide Enrollment Options Lottery procedures must be approved by local school board and posted on the school district website.



**If the nonresident district notifies you that your application has been accepted:**

Notify the nonresident district as to whether you are accepting the offer of enrollment by **March 1** or, if you applied under a no deadline situation, 45 days after notification. The nonresident district must notify the resident district that your student is changing enrollment by March 15 (or 30 days after notice from you that you are accepting the enrollment if January 15 application deadline was not applicable). Visit the district offices at least 10 days prior to the above starting date for completion of all enrollment forms.

Parents or guardians of students with special needs are encouraged to contact the district as soon as possible after accepting an offer of enrollment in a nonresident district so an IEP team can be convened.

The school district will provide you with information regarding transportation if you request it from a bus stop in that district. (Minn. Stat. § 123B.88, Subd. 6; Minn. Stat. § 124D.03, Subd. 8.)

By accepting this enrollment, your student is obligated to attend the nonresident district during the upcoming school year. You do not need to reapply in subsequent years for your student to remain enrolled unless you move out of your current district. If you move into another Minnesota non-resident school district, you will not lose your seat but do need to submit an updated Enrollment Options Form. Note: you **do need** to apply again for siblings but the siblings must be given a preference if open enrollments requests exceed available seats.

To return to your resident district for the following school year, notify your resident district that you are returning by January 15 for the following fall.

**If your application was denied, districts:**

- Must indicate the provision in state law that applied.
- Must report to the Minnesota Department of Education by July 15 all denied applications.
- May inform you that the only reason the application was rejected was a missed January 15 deadline. In this case, you could ask your resident district whether it would be willing to form a nonresident agreement with the nonresident district for the upcoming year--both districts must agree. However, you will need to apply again next year through the regular open enrollment process, meeting the January 15 deadline, so your student's enrollment is not subject to year-to-year mutual agreements between districts. (Minn. Stat. § 124D.03, Subd.6)