

The **Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP)** allows a student with a disability, who meets certain eligibility requirements, to receive a state-funded scholarship to attend a private school that is located in Wisconsin and participating in the SNSP. The school receives a state aid payment for each eligible student. The student must be a resident of Wisconsin to be eligible for the SNSP. The SNSP webpage has a document comparing the rights of students with disabilities and their families under state and federal special education laws to their rights under the SNSP.

Student Eligibility

A student with a disability may be eligible to participate in the SNSP for the 2017-18 school year if **all** of the following apply:

- **Prior Year Enrollment:** The student was enrolled in a Wisconsin public school for the entire 2016-17 school year.
- **IEP or Services Plan:** The student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or services plan that is in effect at the time the student is applying to the SNSP.
- **Open Enrollment Denial:** The student applied to attend a public school under the open enrollment program for the 2017-18 school year, and all of the following occurred:
 - All of the student's open enrollment applications were denied. See the Open Enrollment Denial section for more information on which denial reasons meet the eligibility criteria.
 - If the open enrollment denial was appealed, the Department of Public Instruction (department) affirmed the decision.

Open Enrollment Denials & Appeals

Open Enrollment Overview: Open enrollment allows a parent to apply to have his/her student attend a public school district other than where he/she resides (known as the non-resident school district). There are two ways a parent can apply for open enrollment: regular application and alternative application.

A parent could submit an application during the regular application period. An application submitted during the regular application period is for the following school year. The regular application period for the 2017-18 school year is from February 6, 2017 to April 28, 2017.

A parent could also submit an alternative application. This allows parents to apply for open enrollment outside of the regular application period. An alternative application must be submitted during the school year in which the student wants to begin attending school in the nonresident school district.

For more information about open enrollment, or access to the open enrollment applications, please see the Public School Open Enrollment website at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment>.

Open Enrollment Denials that Meet the Eligibility Requirements: In order to qualify for the SNSP, the student must have been denied for one of the following reasons:

Non-resident School District Denials:

- A non-resident school district denied the open enrollment application for any reason.
- A non-resident school district terminated open enrollment because the school district did not have the special education, related services or space required under a newly developed or revised IEP.

Resident School District Denials:

- The application was submitted under the alternative open enrollment option and the alternative application was denied because the criteria relied upon to submit the application did not apply to the student.

Open Enrollment Appeals: For SNSP eligibility, open enrollment denials do not need to be appealed. If an open enrollment denial was appealed, then the denial must have been affirmed (upheld) by department.

IEP or Services Plan Requirements

Implementation. SNSP schools are required to implement the IEP or services plan of SNSP students as modified by agreement between the SNSP school and the student's parent/guardian.

Quarterly Reports. SNSP schools are required to provide SNSP parents with quarterly reports about the implementation and progress of their student's IEP or services plan.

Reevaluation. In order for a student to be able to continue his/her participation in the SNSP, the student must be made available for a reevaluation by the resident school district within sixty (60) days of a reevaluation request being made. Resident school districts may only make a reevaluation request once every three (3) years for each SNSP student.

How to Apply

SNSP student applications can be submitted to SNSP schools for the 2017-18 school year starting July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018. A student application is not complete until all of the following documents have been given to the SNSP school:

- 1) SNSP student application.
- 2) Documentation verifying the family's current address.
- 3) Copies of the open enrollment denial letter(s).
- 4) If an open enrollment denial was appealed, a copy of the appeal decision from the department.

SNSP schools must give student applicants a copy of the school's special education profile. The student application, list of SNSP schools and school special education profiles are available at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship>.

SNSP schools will accept SNSP students in the order that complete applications are received. If a school receives more applications than the number of available SNSP seats, the school will notify students of their place on a waiting list. Schools may choose to give preference to siblings of students who are already attending the school.

Continuing Student Eligibility

Continuing SNSP Student Status. SNSP students do not need to resubmit SNSP applications every year. A student who has been accepted into the SNSP will continue to receive a scholarship until one of the following occurs: (a) the student graduates from high school; (b) the student turns 21; (c) the student no longer resides in Wisconsin; (d) the student enrolls in another school or a home-based educational program; (e) the student is not made available for a reevaluation every 3 years; or (f) a partial scholarship student leaves the SNSP school that he/she is attending.

Partial Scholarship. If, during an IEP team reevaluation, a SNSP student is determined to no longer have a disability, then the student will receive a partial scholarship in the following school year. A partial scholarship student is able to continue to participate in the SNSP at the same school, but the SNSP scholarship will be at a lower rate.

Residency Reverification: SNSP students are required, on an annual basis, to provide residency documentation to their SNSP school. SNSP students must be residents of Wisconsin.

Transfers. A SNSP student may transfer from one SNSP school to another SNSP school and retain his/her scholarship if the student has been continuously enrolled in the SNSP and has **not** been determined to no longer be a child with a disability through a SNSP reevaluation. In order for a SNSP student to transfer and successfully retain his/her scholarship, the student must complete a Transfer Request Form and submit the Transfer Request Form and all required documentation to the school that the student is applying to transfer to. The Transfer Request Form is available at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship>.

The SNSP student must remain at his/her current SNSP school until the transfer request is accepted by the new school.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q.1- Is the private school required to implement the student's IEP or services plan?

A.1- SNSP schools are required to implement the IEP or services plan of SNSP students as modified by agreement between the SNSP school and the student's parent/guardian.

Q.2- Can a student attend any private school under the SNSP? How does an applicant know which schools are participating in the SNSP?

A.2- Only schools that registered to participate in the SNSP for the 2017-18 school year may participate in the SNSP. A list of schools that have registered to participate for the 2017-18 school year is available at: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship/student-applications-17-18>.

Q.3- Can a private school charge an SNSP student tuition and fees?

A.3- Yes. A SNSP school may charge a SNSP student tuition and fees.

Q.4- Are there statutory procedures regarding student suspensions and expulsions that a private school participating in the SNSP is required to follow?

A.4- No. State law does not require SNSP schools to have suspension or expulsion policies. Parents should ask the SNSP school if they have a suspension or expulsion policy, and obtain a copy of the policy if the school has one.

For additional frequently asked questions, see the FAQ document at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship/student-applications>.



Special Needs Scholarship Program 2017-18 School Year Information for Parents

For more information contact:

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Web site: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/special-needs-scholarship>



Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent
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