Ohio’s Open Enrollment Policies

• Interdistrict open enrollment allows students to attend schools not in their home district (intradistrict choice is up to districts)
• Open enrollment law established in 1989, one of the first states to adopt
• District participation is voluntary: can accept students statewide or only from adjacent districts
• Participating districts may refuse open enrollees based on capacity limits
• Cannot discriminate based on athletic or artistic talents, or special-education status
Student Participation Trends

- Steadily increasing participation
- Nearly 80,000 open enrollees as of 2016-17
- Represents about 5% of Ohio’s public school population
District Participation

• In 2018-19:
  • 455 districts allow statewide open enrollment
  • 48 districts allow open enrollment from adjacent districts
  • 106 districts do not allow open enrollment
  • 83% of all districts participate
• Slight uptick in district participation in recent years
• About 1 in 5 districts still refuse open enrollees
What Open Enrollment Looks Like on a Map

• Districts surrounding Ohio’s big-city districts usually don’t participate

• Creates “donuts” around districts such as Cleveland, Columbus, and Dayton

• Almost all rural & small town districts participate; open enrollment is one of few options in these areas
District Participation
By Student Race/Ethnicity

• Non-participating districts are more diverse by race/ethnicity
• Reflects greater diversity of suburban districts vs. rural and small town
District Participation
By Various Student Characteristics

- Non-participating districts tend to have fewer low-income students, and more ELLs
- Non-participating districts have slightly fewer students with disabilities
District Participation
By Student Achievement

- Non-participating districts score noticeably higher on state math and reading exams
Academic Impacts Associated with Open Enrollment

- Chart displays gains of consistent open enrollees compared to non-open enrollees of similar baseline achievement
- Black students who open enroll consistently make significant gains on state exams
For More Information