

Open Enrollment Overview

ExcelinEd National
Summit on Education
Reform

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**EDUCATION
COMMISSION**
OF THE STATES

Your education policy team.

Who we are

The **essential, indispensable** member of any team addressing education policy.

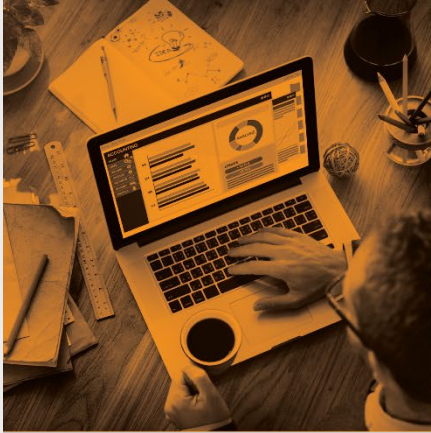


What we do

We believe in the power of **learning from experience** and we know informed policymakers create **better education policy.**



How we do it



RESEARCH



REPORT



COUNSEL



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Open Enrollment

Open enrollment lets students **select** and **transfer to** the public school **they would like to attend**, rather than attending a school based on where they live.

Intradistrict

Students transfer to another school *within* their resident school district.

Interdistrict

Students transfer a school *outside of* their resident district.

RESOURCE TITLE:

50-State Comparison: Open Enrollment Policies (2018 Update)

Education Commission of the States researched open enrollment policies in all states to provide this comprehensive resource. Click on the questions below for 50-State Comparisons showing how all states approach specific open enrollment policies. View a specific state's approach by going to the [state profiles](#) page. For more information about open enrollment, see our [Open Enrollment Quick Guide \(2017\)](#) or our [Open Enrollment: Overview and 2016 legislative update](#) resource (2016).

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Key Takeaways

- Forty-seven states plus the District of Columbia have state policies addressing open enrollment in some way.
- Open enrollment policies allow a student to transfer to the public school of his or her choice. There are two basic types of open enrollment policies.
 - Intradistrict: Students transfer to another school within their resident school district.
 - Interdistrict: Students transfer a school outside of their resident district.
- Depending on the state, open enrollment policies are either mandatory or voluntary.
 - Mandatory policies require districts to participate in open enrollment.
 - Voluntary policies allow districts to choose whether to participate in open enrollment, often allowing districts the discretion to enter into transfer agreements with other districts.
- Several states have both mandatory and voluntary policies. This usually means requiring mandatory open enrollment in low-performing districts, in defined regions of the state or in other specific circumstances while allowing voluntary open enrollment in the rest of the state.
- In a few states, open enrollment is a function of geographic access to schools. For example, Montana and Georgia both require open enrollment for students facing lengthy transportation time or geographic barriers to attending their assigned schools.



Open Enrollment Spectrum

Colorado
Delaware
Florida

Maryland
North Carolina
Nevada

Open

**Mandatory,
with
limitations**

**Voluntary and
mandatory**

Voluntary

Closed

Arkansas
Nebraska
Vermont

Connecticut
Indiana
Michigan

Hawaii
Kansas
Oregon

Open Enrollment: State Examples & Context

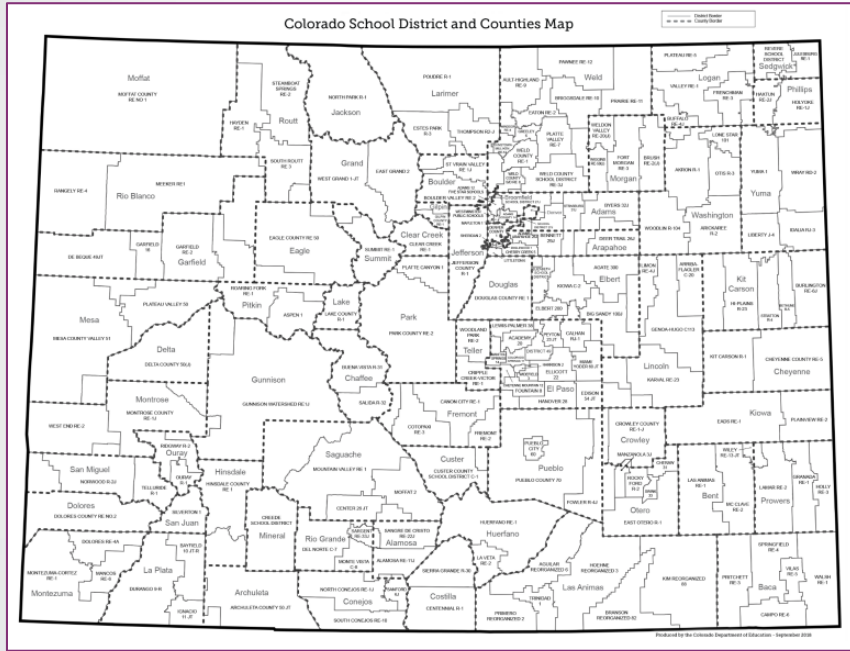
Nevada

- Voluntary interdistrict only in limited circumstances:
 - ◆ Adjoining districts
 - ◆ Indian reservations located in 2+ counties
- 16 counties, each a single school district
- 2017 population: 2.99 million
 - ◆ Clark County: 2.2 million
 - ◆ Washoe County: 460,500
 - ◆ Eureka County: 1,961



Source: Nevada Department of Education

Open Enrollment: State Examples & Context



Colorado

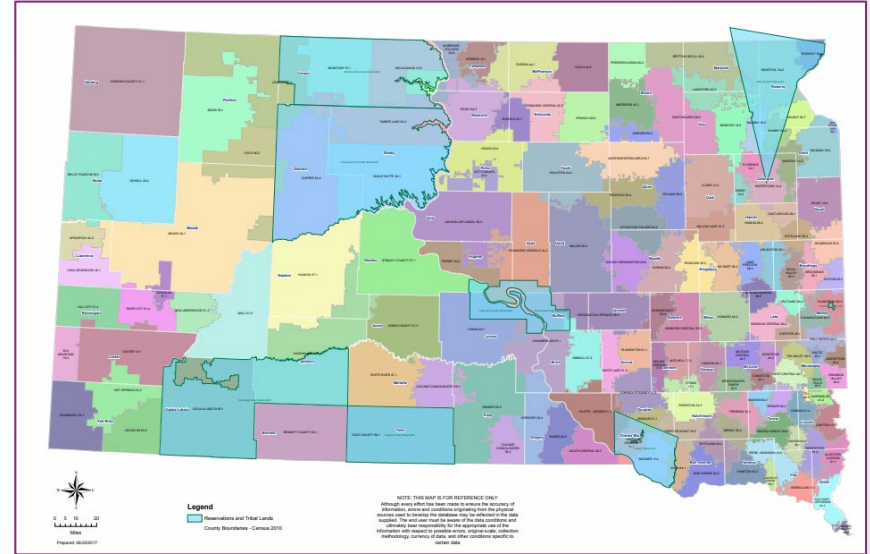
- Mandatory intradistrict and interdistrict enrollment
- 178 districts, 64 counties
- 2017 population: 5.6 million
 - ◆ Front range (2016): 4.8 million

Source: Colorado Department of Education

Open Enrollment: State Examples & Context

South Dakota

- Mandatory intradistrict and interdistrict
- 66 counties, 185 school districts
- 2017 population: 869,600
 - ◆ Population Centers:
 - ▶ Sioux Falls: 153,800
 - ▶ Rapid City: 67,900



Source: South Dakota Department of Education

Open Enrollment

Finance

- 50 ways to fund open enrollment.
- Most states: State funding follows student.
 - ◆ District funding, if any, outlined in transfer agreements.
- All or part of district funding follows students: Michigan and Arizona



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Open Enrollment: State Examples & Context

Minnesota



- Mandatory interdistrict open enrollment
- No intradistrict open enrollment

Washington



- Mandatory intradistrict
- Voluntary interdistrict: Districts “strongly encouraged” to allow transfers between districts when requested.

Open Enrollment: State Examples & Context

Arkansas

- Mandatory interdistrict, with limits.
 - ◆ Districts may only allow external choice transfers, up to 3% of previous year's enrollment, minus receiving transfers
- Mandatory interdistrict:
 - ◆ Students in certain low-performing districts.
 - ◆ Districts in facilities distress

New Jersey

- Voluntary interdistrict public school choice program.
 - ◆ Districts apply to participate as choice districts.
 - ◆ Sending districts may limit number of choice transfers out of the district.