



Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

FISCAL NOTE

Drafting Number:	LLS 18-1102	Date:	April 11, 2018
Prime Sponsors:	Sen. Hill Rep. Van Winkle	Bill Status:	Senate Education
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Bill Topic: IMPROVING SCHOOL CHOICE IN TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

<input type="checkbox"/> State Revenue	<input type="checkbox"/> TABOR Refund
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Expenditure (<i>workload</i>)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Government
<input type="checkbox"/> State Transfer	<input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Public Entity

The bill requires that school districts modify open enrollment policies. The bill increases state workload in the Colorado Department of Education beginning in FY 2018-19. This workload continues in future years. The bill increases both workload and expenditures for school districts.

Appropriation Summary: No appropriation is required.

Fiscal Note Status: This fiscal note reflects the introduced bill.

Summary of Legislation

Under current law, school districts are required to have open enrollment policies that allow a student to enroll in a district school other than his or her assigned school, or to enroll in a school in another school district. For students who enroll across district boundaries, a receiving school district may only transport students from an adjacent school district, and may only reimburse a parent or guardian for transporting such students, if the adjacent school district consents to the transportation. This bill allows a school district to transport a student from any district and to arrange transportation for enrolled students without seeking the consent of the student's resident district.

This bill requires that a school district's open enrollment application procedures consider giving admission priority to students with academic deficiencies who attend a school accredited with either a turnaround plan or a priority improvement plan. Beginning with the enrollment period for the 2019-20 school year, open enrollment policies must also include:

- an enrollment application period of at least 4 weeks and that does not close before February 15 of each year;
- the ability to apply to at least 5 schools within the district, using a standardized application;
- either in-person or online submission of the enrollment applications; and

- a notification to pupils of enrollment status no later than June 15, with the ability to accept the enrollment until July 5.

School districts are required to annually notify students of open enrollment policies and post the procedures on line. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is required to post an outline of open enrollment laws and a web link to each district's open enrollment policies. Finally, the bill allows a student enrolled in a school in a nonresident district to remain enrolled in the nonresident district school through the highest grade level served in the school.

State Expenditures

The Schools of Choice Unit in the CDE will post school districts' choice and enrollment policies on the department web site with links to individual district sites. Gathering this information requires the Information Management Services Division to add another field to an existing data collection. The workload necessary to create the new field is absorbable within existing appropriations.

School District Impact

The bill potentially increases school district expenditures to adjust open enrollment policies to comport with the bill's requirements. These expenses are primarily for information technology upgrades, and for adjusting workload and hiring time lines to allow for longer enrollment periods and more flexible time lines for students to accept an enrollment slot.

Information technology. School district software and computer applications used for open enrollment and student placement and tracking will either need to be customized, or, where this is not possible, replaced altogether. One large metro school district reported purchasing two enrollment systems, one each for K-12 and early childhood education, for a total cost of \$425,000. The information technology department in this district is not confident that these systems can be customized to implement the bill's modification to open enrollment, and the district might then be forced to purchase a newly developed system.

Enrollment periods. The bill requires that school districts allow open enrollment applications until February 15, notify students of acceptance no later than June 15, and allow students to delay acceptance of an open enrollment slot until July 5. Extending these enrollment deadlines may create additional workload in districts that typically secure enrollment decisions, and related hiring and logistics, much earlier in the school year.

Small rural districts. The enrollment policies in the bill may not be possible to implement for small, geographically isolated school districts that do not typically have alternative school choices available to residents.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect August 8, 2018, if the General Assembly adjourns on May 9, 2018, as scheduled, and no referendum petition is filed.

State and Local Government Contacts

Education

School Districts