

# K-12 OPEN ENROLLMENT PROPOSALS IN MISSOURI, 2025

## INTRODUCTION

Reason Foundation is a leader in [open enrollment policy research](#), publishing a yearly analysis and rating of each state’s open enrollment laws: [Public Schools Without Boundaries 2024](#).<sup>1</sup>

K-12 open enrollment policies let students transfer to traditional public schools other than those that they are residentially assigned to, so long as the receiving school has vacancy available. Cross-district open enrollment programs allow students to transfer to schools outside of their assigned school districts, while within-district let students transfer to different schools inside their districts.

To date, Missouri is considering three open enrollment legislative proposals: [Senate Bill \(SB\) 215](#)—which also encompasses SB 70—[House Bill \(HB\) 711](#), and [SB 572](#), each of which varies in comprehensiveness.

## OVERVIEW

In accordance with Reason’s *Public Schools Without Boundaries* numerical ranking methodology—which awards points to state policies in proportion to their fulfillment of seven key open enrollment metrics—Missouri’s current policy and legislative proposals are scored as follows:

	Current Policy	SB 215 & SB 70	HB 711	SB 572
Open Enrollment Score (of 100 points) (Change)	35	92 (+57)	44 (+9)	—
Open Enrollment Grade (A–F)	F	A	F	—
Open Enrollment Ranking (of 50 states) (Change)	25 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> (↑21)	23 <sup>rd</sup> (↑2)	—









## CROSS-DISTRICT OPEN ENROLLMENT, STATEWIDE

	Current Policy	SB 215 & SB 70	HB 711	SB 572
Establishes Voluntary Cross-District Open Enrollment Permits school districts to opt-in to the state’s voluntary cross-district open enrollment program.	✱ <sup>2</sup>	—	✓	✓









<sup>1</sup> Jude Schwalbach, “Public Schools Without Boundaries 2024,” Reason Foundation, 2024. [www.reason.org/open-enrollment/2024-public-schools-without-boundaries](http://www.reason.org/open-enrollment/2024-public-schools-without-boundaries) (October 29, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Missouri’s current, voluntary cross-district open enrollment program—Metropolitan Schools Achieving Value in Transfer Corporation—is not statewide; only students assigned to St. Louis school districts may participate.









## **CROSS-DISTRICT OPEN ENROLLMENT, STATEWIDE (continued)**

	Current Policy	SB 215 & SB 70	HB 711	SB 572
<b>Establishes Mandatory Cross-District Open Enrollment</b> Requires school districts to participate in the state's mandatory cross-district open enrollment program.	 <sup>3</sup>			
<b>Allows School Districts to Cap Outgoing Transfers</b> Permits school districts to limit the number of students transferring out of their district.			 <sup>4</sup>	





## **WITHIN-DISTRICT OPEN ENROLLMENT, STATEWIDE**

	Current Policy	SB 215 & SB 70	HB 711	SB 572
<b>Establishes Voluntary Within-District Open Enrollment</b> Permits school districts to allow students to enroll in district schools other than those that they are residentially assigned.				
<b>Establishes Mandatory Within-District Open Enrollment</b> Requires school districts to participate in the state's mandatory within-district open enrollment program.				

## **TRANSFER TUITION**

	Current Policy	SB 215 & SB 70	HB 711	SB 572
<b>Eliminates Open Enrollment Transfer Tuition</b> Prohibits school districts from charging tuition to the open enrollment transfer students that they receive.	 <sup>5</sup>			
<b>Per-Pupil State Aid Follows the Transferring Student</b> Redirects the per-pupil state aid that would be remitted to the transferring student's district of residence to their receiving public school outside of their district.				

## **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROTECTIONS**

	Current Policy	SB 215 & SB 70	HB 711	SB 572
<b>Prohibits Discrimination Against Transfer Applicants</b> Restricts school districts from discriminating against transfer applicants based on their abilities or disabilities.				

<sup>3</sup> Participation in the Missouri's mandatory cross-district open enrollment program is limited; only unaccredited school districts are required to participate.

<sup>4</sup> HB 711 allows school districts to restrict its residentially assigned students transferring to another district to no more than 3% of its prior year enrollment count.

<sup>5</sup> Students transferring from unaccredited districts are not charged transfer tuition.

## STATE TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS

	Current Policy	SB 215 & SB 70	HB 711	SB 572
<b>Requires the State to Collect and Publish District Vacancy</b> Requires the State Education Agency (SEA) to collect open enrollment transfer capacity data (by grade level) for each district and publish it on its website.	—	✓	✓	—
<b>Requires the State to Collect Transfer Application Data</b> Requires the SEA to collect the number of accepted and rejected open enrollment transfer applications by district.	—	✓	—	—
<b>Requires the State to Collect and Publish Transfer Data</b> Requires the SEA to collect and publish—on its website—the number of open enrollment transfers each district receives.	—	—	—	—
<b>Requires the State to Collect and Publish Transfer Denial Data</b> Requires the SEA to collect and publish—on its website—the anonymized rationale for open enrollment transfer denials.	—	—	—	—
<b>Requires the State to Submit a Report to Legislature</b>	—	—	✓	—
<b>Requires the State to Annually Publish Their Report</b>	—	—	✓	—

## SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSPARENCY

	Current Policy	SB 215 & SB 70	HB 711	SB 572
<b>Requires School Districts to Post Their Transfer Policies</b> Requires school districts to annually post their open enrollment policies and procedures on their websites.	* <sup>6</sup>	—	✓	—
<b>Requires School Districts to Post Their Vacancy by Grade</b> Requires school districts to post their available capacity by grade level on their websites.	* <sup>6</sup>	—	— <sup>7</sup>	—





## APPLICATION DENIALS & APPEALS

	Current Policy	SB 215 & SB 70	HB 711	SB 572
<b>Requires Districts to Disclose Rationale for Application Denial</b> Requires school districts to inform denied applicants—in writing—of the reasoning for their decision.	—	—	✓	—







<sup>6</sup> Only approved districts in the same or an adjoining county as an unaccredited school district must post their transfer policies, procedures, and available transfer capacities.

<sup>7</sup> While HB 711 would require school districts to publish the number of transfer students that they are willing to receive, the legislation does not specify where (i.e. the district's website) that the information must be published.

## APPLICATION DENIALS & APPEALS (continued)

	Current Policy	SB 215 & SB 70	HB 711	SB 572
<b>Allows Rejected Transfer Applicants to Appeal to the State</b> Permits rejected transfer applications to appeal the district's decision before the SEA.	 <sup>8</sup>			

## LEGEND

Symbol / Color	Explanation
	Not addressed
	Marginally addressed
	Comprehensively addressed
	Unfavorable
	Needs improvement
	Satisfactory

<sup>8</sup> Although Missouri's current policy allows rejected transfer applicants to appeal the district's decision to the SEA, the statutory language is not sufficiently clear as to how such a process is to be executed.



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