



MMSD Open Enrollment-Enterer Survey - 2016

Key Findings

1. The most common reason parents chose for open-enrolling into MMSD was *we moved out of the MMSD attendance area and wanted our child(ren) to continue attending the same schools*, 30%.
2. When specified, academic programs that influenced parents' decisions to open-enroll into MMSD were *Advanced learner programming*, 23%, and *Dual language immersion*, 19%.
3. The most common districts in which open-enrolled families currently reside are: *Middleton-Cross Plains*, 21% and *Verona*, 14%.

Background

Madison Metropolitan School District wanted to learn more about parents' reasons for participating in the state's open enrollment program. MMSD last conducted an open enrollment parent survey in 2009. The original parent survey, which included items derived from school selection studies by the National Center for Education Statistics, was reviewed and revised to include questions about current MMSD programs. This report focuses on data from the 2016 open enrollment parent survey.

Data and Methods

Between April 5 - 17, 2016, MMSD emailed links to the electronic survey to 649 parents who open-enrolled their children into the district between 2010 and 2016. A total of 124 parents responded to survey for a response rate of 19%. Demographics in the Table 1 below were self-reported by respondents.

Table 1: Race/Ethnicity of Respondents	(n)	%
African American	10	8%
Asian	4	3%
Hispanic/Latino	8	7%
Multiracial	12	10%
White	81	66%
No response	7	6%

The majority of respondents were white, 66%, followed by multiracial, 10% and African American, 8%. No comparison can be made to the demographics of the district's parents overall as parent race/ethnicity is not collected in student enrollments.

We calculated response distributions for each closed-ended question. No disaggregation of data by race/ethnicity was done at the question level due to the small numbers of respondents in most demographic groups.

Due to the time that elapsed between parents' decisions to open enroll their children into MMSD and the time of the survey – as long as 4 years – the potential for reporting error is greatly increased. Forty-four percent, 44%, of respondents open-enrolled their children into MMSD between 2012 and 2015. Parents were not surveyed about their reasons for open enrollment until 2016. Because research affirms that recent events are reported more accurately than past events (Fowler 93), great caution should be taken when interpreting the survey findings. More complete data on MMSD open enrollment is available on pages 15-24 the [Enrollment Reports 2015-16](#).



Findings

Question 1: Please indicate your family's primary reason for choosing MMSD?

The most common reason parents chose for open-enrolling into MMSD was we *moved out of the MMSD attendance area and wanted our child(ren) to continue attending the same schools*, 30%. *Other reasons*, 20% was the second most common response. Within *Other reasons*, parents most commonly cited the availability of 4K, diversity and the school's location in their responses. The third most common reasons cited for choosing MMSD were: *it was my child's choice and the school is closer to my place of work*, 10% each. Full responses are available in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Primary Reason for Choosing MMSD	(n)	%
We moved out of the MMSD attendance area and wanted our child(ren) to continue attending the same school(s)	37	30%
Other reason	24	20%
It was my child's/children's choice	12	10%
The school is closer to my place of work	12	10%
Better school climate	10	8%
Better academic environment	5	4%
Focus on challenging, well-rounded curriculum	5	4%
My child(ren)'s desire to attend school with a friend(s)	5	4%
The school is closer to where we live	5	4%
Extra-curricular activities (sports, arts, clubs, etc.)	3	2%
Special academic programs	3	2%
After school programs or activities at the school	1	1%

Question 2: Please check the academic programs that influenced your decision to attend MMSD? (Check all that apply)

The nine parents who selected *better academic environment*, *special academic programs* or *after school programs/activities* in Q1, were asked to identify all the academic or after school programs that influenced their choice. The most common response was *Other*, 27%. Within *Other*, most parents referenced MMSD's instruction or curriculum as influencing their decision. The next most common programs parents identified were: *Advanced Placement courses*, 23% and *Dual language immersion*, 19%. The one parent who identified *after school programs/activities* in Q1, did not provide a response to Q2. Full responses are available in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Academic programs that influenced your decision to attend MMSD. Check all that apply	(n)	%
Other	7	27%
Advanced Placement courses	6	23%
Dual language immersion	5	19%
Advanced learner programming	3	12%
Fine arts	2	8%
Multilingual education	2	8%
Special education programming	1	4%



Question 3: In what district do you currently reside?

Parents who open-enrolled their children to MMSD most frequently identified *Other*, 24%, as their district of residence followed by *Middleton-Cross Plains*, 21% and *Verona*, 15%. Thirteen of the parents who specified *Other*, identified Madison as their current district of residence. This is likely the result of the family moving to Madison after the open-enrollment application was approved. Full responses are available in Table 4 below.

Table 4: In what district do you currently reside?	(n)	%
Other (please specify)	29	24%
Middleton-Cross Plains	26	21%
Verona	18	15%
Monona	16	13%
Oregon	8	7%
Deforest	6	5%
No response	6	5%
Sun Prairie	5	4%
Waunakee	4	3%
McFarland	3	2%
Stoughton	1	1%

Question 4: Please share any additional comments you have about your decision to enroll your child(ren) in MMSD.

Thirty-eight parents shared comments about their decision to enroll their children in MMSD. The most common theme among open-ended comments related to *enrolling in 4K only*. The next most common themes, in order, pertained to *diversity*, *curriculum/programs* and *staff*. Comments on *diversity* included “more diversity in student body” and “large diverse high school.” *Curriculum/program* comments referenced the District’s immersion programs, AVID, Gear Up and alterative programs. Comments pertaining to *staff* included “staff are exceptional” and “my kids have relationships with the school staff which makes my kids feel at home and that sense of trust is a must.”

Citations

Fowler, Jr., Floyd J. *Survey Research Methods*. Sage, 2014.