



**DATE:** February 13, 2011

**TO:** Board of Education

**FROM:** Daniel A. Nerad, Superintendent

**RE:** Open Enrollment Leavers Report

**APPENDIX NNN-8-24  
February 27, 2012**

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## I. Introduction

- A. Title/topic:** Report on Open Enrollment to other districts
- B. Presenter/contact person:**  
Andrew Statz
- C. Background information:** Under Open Enrollment, students may transfer into an MMSD school from another district or transfer out to another district – “enterers” versus “leavers.” This report focuses primarily on Open Enrollment leavers. There is also some discussion of the net effect of Open Enrollment, which is the number of leavers minus the number of enterers. This report does not discuss students attending private/parochial schools or home schooled students.
- D. BOE action requested:** Review and acceptance of this report

## II. Summary of Current Information

- A. Summary:** For the 2011-12 school year, MMSD has 913 leavers and 213 enterers for a net effect of 700 students choosing to attend a district other than MMSD.

Of the 913 leavers for 2011-12, 580 were “continuing leavers” meaning they open enrolled outside of the District in previous years. That leaves 333 first time leavers for the current school year.

The growing number of leavers in recent years is the result of a cumulative increase over several years – those who are continuing leavers are still included in our counts in the following years. Because of this, it will take time to reverse the net number of leavers and first time leavers are of particular interest.

First time leavers increased only slightly from 2010-11 to 2011-12. If we discount the one-time bump for the first class of 4K, the number of first time leavers went down for the first time since at least 2005-06.

It is also important to note that nearly half of the students that are leavers never attended MMSD and could be considered “stayers” for other districts.

In terms of why people leave the district, we rely on a 2009 survey of leavers. That survey showed that issues of personal preference made up about a third of the decisions

to leave. About a third of the reasons are based on concerns about safety, drugs and negative peer pressure.

Proximity to other districts' schools accounts for about a quarter of the reasons for attending another district. For example, it is easy to see a clustering of leavers in several elementary attendance areas along borders with other districts. About a quarter were related to curricular, after school or virtual programs.

### **Analysis:**

**HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE LEAVERS?** For the 2011-12 school year, MMSD has 913 leavers and 213 enterers for a net effect of 700 students choosing to attend a district other than MMSD. This is an all-time high for the net effect and both leavers and enterers.

Attachment 1 – Open Enrollment History contains a chart illustrating the number of leavers and enterers from 2000-01 school year through 2011-12. With rare exception, the number of leavers has grown since the 2000-01 school year. For the last five years, the rate of leavers has increased greatly compared to the previous five or more years. The number of leavers has grown from 90 students in 2000-01 to 913 in 2011-12.

The increase in leavers from 2010-11 to 2011-12 is 141 (772 leavers versus 913).

The first year the Open Enrollment state law was in effect was 1998-99. During this year, MMSD had fewer than 20 leavers.

There was an increase of nearly 50% in leavers from 2007-08 to 2008-09, which was the largest percent increase since at least 2000-01. State law regarding open enrollment had directed districts to deny transfers if they changed the racial/ethnic composition of the school. Madison followed this approach and had denied many transfer requests. After a court case, this practice stopped and a larger number of leaver requests were granted. This is reflected in this percent increase for 2008-09.

Since 2008-09, the percent increase in leavers has declined. From 2010-11 to 2011-12, the percent increase was 18%.

Because MMSD's enrollment has remained fairly stable during this time, net Open Enrollment as a percent of total enrollment has increased from 0.56% in 2000-01 to 4.60% in 2011-12.

The ratio of enterers to leavers has declined from its high in 2004-05 and 2005-06. During these years, the ratio was just under 0.80. In other words, for every ten students that chose another district over MMSD there were eight that chose MMSD over their home district. The current ratio has declined to 0.23 or about one in four.

The advent of 4K has contributed to the recent growth in leavers. Over 45% (64 leavers) of the increase in leavers from 2010-2011 to 2011-12 is due to 4K students, which the District did not have in prior years.

**CONTINUING VERSUS FIRST-TIME LEAVERS.** The total number of leavers is a combination of those students that have chosen to attend another district in previous years and some that are choosing to leave for the first time. Attachment 2 – Continuing versus First-Time Open

Enrollment Leavers, 2006 to 2012 contains a chart comparing the number of continuing leavers to first-time leavers.

The total number of leavers of 913 for 2011-12, is a combination of 580 continuing leavers and 333 first-time leavers. So, the number of continuing leavers is about 64% of the total. From 2006-07 through 2008-09, the proportion of continuing leavers was around 50% to 52%. This has grown to 57%, 59% and 64% in following years. Conversely, while the number of first-time leavers has increased over the last several years, their share of the total leaver count has declined. So, the growing recent number of leavers has been the result of a cumulative increase over several years.

A special subset of first-time leavers that merit additional attention are 4K and Kindergarten students. Combined, these students totaled 138 leavers for 2011-12. Many of the families have had little or no contact with MMSD services yet are choosing to go to another district. More would have to be known about their reasons for doing so and develop strategies that may lead to them choosing MMSD.

Looking strictly at first time and 4K leavers, the exclusion of 4K leavers shows the first decrease in first time leavers since at least 2005-06. The number of first time leavers increase by 15 from 2010-11 to 2011-12 (318 compared to 333). The number of 4K leavers for 2011-12 was 64.

**WHO IS THE TYPICAL LEAVER?** There were 1,419 leavers in the MMSD database as of April 2011. This total is based on any student who had an Open Enrollment leavers' code in 2010-11. So, this number includes historical and recent student information. That is, each student in this count is either a current leaver or was a leaver in the past.

Because many of the students choosing to go to another district have never been MMSD students, there is limited data available. The following table compares some key demographic and other characteristics of leavers run in April 2011 to the current composition of MMSD's 2011-12 enrollment for Kindergarten through Grade 12.

	Open Enrollment Leavers	Current K-12 Enrollment (2011-12)
White	65%	46%
Black	14%	19%
Hispanic	11%	18%
Asian	6%	9%
Low income	25%	49%
ELL	6%	17%
Homeless	Less than 1%	3%
Parent education less than college degree	46%	51%
Single adult household	33%	32%
Behavior incident	14%	33%
Out of school suspension	9%	3%

The most common achievement measure was the Grade 4 WKCE Reading. Only about 20% of the leavers had this score in the MMSD database. At Grade 4, of those who had scores, 81% were rated as Proficient or Advanced. For the WKCE administered in November 2010, 77.3% of MMSD students rated as Proficient or Advanced.

Overall, leavers are more likely to be white and are less likely to be low income than MMSD's overall population. Achievement levels do not appear to be vastly different, but information on this is limited.

A higher incidence of out of school suspensions may reflect the intention of families to move their students to school environments they see as less disruptive. They may have seen the environment at an MMSD school having contributed to behavior issues for their student.

**LEAVERS VERSUS "STAYERS".** It is also important to note that not all leavers were MMSD's students to lose in the first place. Many are staying in a district they have always attended.

A common example is a family that lives in another district and enrolls their child in Kindergarten there. The family moves to Madison at some point and would like to continue that child's attendance at the original district. This may be due to a number of factors including proximity to work or other family members, continuity for the student with his or her peers, special programming, and so on. These students may choose to attend MMSD at any time or during a natural progression from elementary to middle or middle to high.

So, it is important to consider a portion of MMSD's leavers instead as "stayers" in another district. Attachment 3 – MMSD/Non-MMSD Open Enrollment Leavers, 2006 to 2012 shows that nearly half of the students that are Open Enrollment leavers could be considered stayers (446 students, or 49% of the total of 913 leavers). These are identified in the chart as "non-MMSD cumulative Open Enrollment leavers".


Both the number of leavers and stayers have been increasing at least during the last seven years. The proportion of stayers has generally decreased and has ranged between 45% in 2010-11 to 65% in 2005-06.

**WHERE ARE THEY LEAVING FROM?** Attachment 4 – Open Enrollment Leavers by MMSD School and Grade features two tables. One is simply the number of leavers coming from each MMSD school. The highest number of leavers is coming out of the Memorial and La Follette attendance areas with 105 and 104, respectively. This is not surprising given the relative size of MMSD high schools. East, which roughly the same size as La Follette has half as many leavers (47 compared to 104). Among MMSD middle schools, Sennett and Toki have the highest counts with 56 and 54, respectively.

Among MMSD elementary schools, the number of leavers ranged from 73 for Glendale to five or fewer students for almost a dozen individual schools. Elementary schools with the highest counts of leavers also tended to have the highest percent of students choosing to attend another district: Glendale 14%, Leopold 8%, Allis 8%, Elvehjem 6%, and Kennedy 6%.

The second table breaks these numbers out by school by grade. The table includes a sparkline that shows where each school is experiencing leavers by grade. Each school's sparkline is simply a tool for seeing the grade-by-grade distribution of each school's leavers relative to themselves. For example, Allis has a higher count of leavers in 4K and

Kindergarten with a small increase in Grades 3 and 4 . Chavez sees more leavers in Grades 1 and 2 than other grade levels .

At the bottom of this attachment is a sparkline for the District total. MMSD sees more leavers in early elementary (4K through about Grade 3) with numbers increasing again through middle school and generally leveling off in high school .

**LEAVERS BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION.** Attachment 5 – OEL 2006-12 School Year MMSD is a map of the number of leavers by MMSD planning area. The size of the circle in each planning area represents a count of leavers. It does not represent the location of the leaver or any specific address.

It is easy to see a clustering of leavers in several elementary attendance areas. Some of this is driven, at least in part, by proximity. In the southwest, it is Chavez and Huegel. In the south, it is Leopold attendance area. The southern portion of the Glendale attendance area stands out. Lastly, a lot of leavers are distributed throughout the attendance areas of Allis, Kennedy and Elvehjem.

**WHERE ARE THEY GOING?** Looking at the map and Attachment 6 – Open Enrollment Leavers by MMSD Grade and Destination District, it is clear that leavers' destination districts tend to be in Dane County and may be heavily influenced by proximity, especially in certain clustered areas.

Attachment 6 is a list of districts that MMSD leavers are attending. The most common are Verona with 230 leavers, Monona with 192, McFarland with 176, and Middleton with 114. Not surprisingly, most of the districts with high counts are in the Dane County area but some are as far away as Appleton and Northern Ozaukee, which is actually driven by virtual school offerings. McFarland also offers virtual school. As a result, in 2008-09 eighty students open enrolled to McFarland before virtual school offerings compared to 176 today.

**WHY ARE THEY LEAVING?** Many of MMSD's leavers are likely driven by proximity to other districts' schools. This is especially true for clusters of leavers in certain geographic areas. For example, 72% of the students living in the Glendale attendance area that are choosing to go to another district are attending McFarland, which reflects a large housing development that is adjacent to the McFarland School District.

Nearly 80% of students living in the Chavez attendance area and 57% of students living in the Leopold attendance area that are choosing to go to another district are attending Verona, which may also be closer or more convenient than an MMSD location especially for families in the southern portion of the Leopold attendance area. Leavers from Leopold may also reflect perceptions of overcrowding at that location or its recent status as a School Identified For Improvement (SIFI).

Leavers in the Allis and Elvehjem areas most often chose Monona Grove, which has some proximity but this may be less of a driver than for other attendance areas.

Among high school leavers, there has always been a lot of back and forth between La Follette and Monona Grove as they are practically next to each other. Memorial is close to Middleton, and bus service is available. The East area does not really have a nearby out-of-district high school. DeForest and Sun Prairie are the closest, but there is no bus service to

those districts. This may explain why there is a big difference in leavers between the high schools.

In 2008-09, MMSD conducted a survey of Open Enrollment leavers. Results of this survey were presented to the Board on July 20, 2009. A copy is included here as Attachment 7.

The survey showed that about a third (34%) of the reasons are based on environmental concerns. These were defined as safety, drugs and negative peer pressure.

Personal preference made up about a third 31% of the decisions to leave. These reasons included child's choice, moved – continue at non-resident district, and attend with friends.

Proximity to other districts' schools accounts for about a quarter (24%) of the reasons for attending another district. These included closer to home, closer to work, and closer to daycare. It is easy to see a clustering of leavers in several elementary attendance areas along borders with other districts.

About a quarter (22%) were related to curricular, after school or virtual programs.

Responses could site more than one reason, which allows for a total greater than 100%.

It can be assumed that the reasons for leaving have remained constant since that time. However, with an increase in Open Enrollment activity and new legislation governing the duration of the Open Enrollment application window, the Board may want to consider deploying a similar survey to see if any changes have emerged. This would be a cooperative effort between Research & Evaluation and Public Information and could be conducted by Hanover Research Council.

**FISCAL IMPACT OF LEAVERS.** For the 2012 fiscal year (which is the 2011-12 school year), the amount of state aid going to other districts totaled \$5.5 million. A history of recent aid that was transferred to other districts is below.

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Open Enrollment Leavers Expense</b>
2006	\$1,283,393
2007	\$1,494,556
2008	\$1,941,921
2009	\$2,901,883
2010	\$3,959,737
2011	\$5,071,592
2012	\$5,532,301

The amount of state aid for leavers going to other districts has increased nearly fivefold since 2005-06.

While this is technically recorded as an expense, it is actually an amount of state aid that is paid to another district. Partially offsetting this is a similar payment to MMSD for students open enrolling here from other districts. For the 2011-12 budget, revenue from enterers brought this figure down to \$4,090,360.

**PROJECTIONS FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR.** Based on an average percent change for the last three years, net leavers could be as high as 950 for 2012-13.

However, the percent change in leavers has gone down every year since 2007-08. So, basing a projection on a multi-year average may overestimate the number of leavers next year. If based on the percent change between 2010-11 and 2011-12, the number of net leavers could be around 820 for 2012-13.

Recent legislation expands the window for Open Enrollment applications. Discussion of this change is also on the Planning & Development Committee agenda for February 13. Basing projections on this change would be too speculative at this time.

**NEXT STEPS.** It is recommended that a staff work group convene to review this report and identify strategies that may cause current and potential leavers to choose MMSD over other districts. This work will be informed by the various characteristics of leavers as described in this report and may be informed by another survey of families who choose to send their students to districts other than MMSD.

To keep the Board current, updates of this report will be provided for future school years. Any changes in Open Enrollment volume or characteristics will be highlighted.

**B. Recommendations and/or alternative recommendation(s):** It is recommended that the Board accept this report regarding the Open Enrollment Leavers.

**C. Link to supporting detail:** N/A

### **III. Implications**

**A. Budget:** N/A

**B. Strategic Plan:** N/A

**C. Equity Plan:** N/A

**D. Implications for other aspects of the organization:** N/A

### **IV. Supporting Documentation**

**A.** Attachment 1 – Open Enrollment History

**B.** Attachment 2 – Continuing versus First-Time Open Enrollment Leavers, 2006-2012

**C.** Attachment 3 – MMSD/Non MMSD Open Enrollment Leavers, 2006-2012

**D.** Attachment 4 – Open Enrollment Leavers by MMSD School and Grade

**E.** Attachment 5 – OEL 2005-112 School Year MMSD (map)

**F.** Attachment 6 – Open Enrollment Leavers by MMSD Grade and Destination District

**G.** Attachment 7 – Private/Parochial, Open Enrollment Leave, Open Enrollment Enter, Home Based Parent Surveys