

NOSD sets open enrollment limits

Written by MARK JAEGER

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Administrators estimate they have capacity to add 233 more students who want to come to Fredonia

Open enrollment has changed the way school districts in Wisconsin attract students, but before the welcome mat can be placed officials have to know how many outside students they can comfortably handle.

The Northern Ozaukee School Board approved just such a projection Monday.

According to district administrators, the district has as many as 233 seats available to students looking to open-enroll into the district.

Supt. Blake Peuse explained that the current enrollment is 667 students, and current building capacities and staffing can handle up to 900 students.

“While the number of open enrollment seats seems quite high, the reality is that we have capacity within our buildings to hold this number of students,” Peuse said.

Having excess capacity is one of the determining factors in whether a district is able to accept outside students.

The calculations for capacity were broken down by grade levels.

Ozaukee Elementary School has a capacity for 87 more students. Current enrollments according to grade levels range from 37 to 68.

That would include up to 12 seats in kindergarten, raising the enrollment to 60 students; 13 in first grade; 9 in second grade; 23 in third grade; 7 in fourth grade; and 23 in fifth grade.

The fourth-grade projection is based on a maximum enrollment of 75 students, which would require three classes.

“Should we approach this number in some of our grade levels, we would need to be aware of the need for additional staff to keep class sizes at an appropriate level for the community,” Peuse said.

Ozaukee Middle School has a projected capacity for 80 more students.

That includes 22 seats in sixth and seventh grades, and 36 in eighth grade. At full capacity, each grade level would have 75 students.

According to district administrators, the excess capacity at Ozaukee High School is 66 students.

The ninth grade currently has 61 students, leaving an excess capacity of 14 students. The tenth

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grade has an enrollment of 48, leaving 27 seats available.

The 11th grade has an enrollment of 66, leaving just nine seats. The 12th grade has 16 seats available, with a current enrollment of 59.

Peuse noted the excess capacity could be affected if any of the 175 local students attending outside schools decide to enroll at Northern Ozaukee.

He said if all of those students who are currently enrolling out choose to attend local schools next year there would still be 58 seats available for open enrollment.

“Furthermore, expanding our number of students overall would give us the ability to utilize the additional revenue to augment instructional positions at any grade level,” Peuse said.

“The reimbursement for open enrollment for the 2013-14 school year has not been determined, however we should be able to expect more than \$6,000 per student, making adding 10 to 12 students into our district a viable opportunity for possibly adding staff members in key areas of our district.”

The capacity projections were adopted in advance of the state’s expanded open enrollment period, which runs from Feb. 4 to April 30.

The board also adopted an amended policy governing how open enrollment should be handled, adopting changes that are spelled out in Wisconsin Act 114.

Provisions in the new policy detail when outside students can be accepted beyond the open enrollment period.

According to the Policy Committee, most of the district has already been following most of the procedures spelled out in the updated policy.