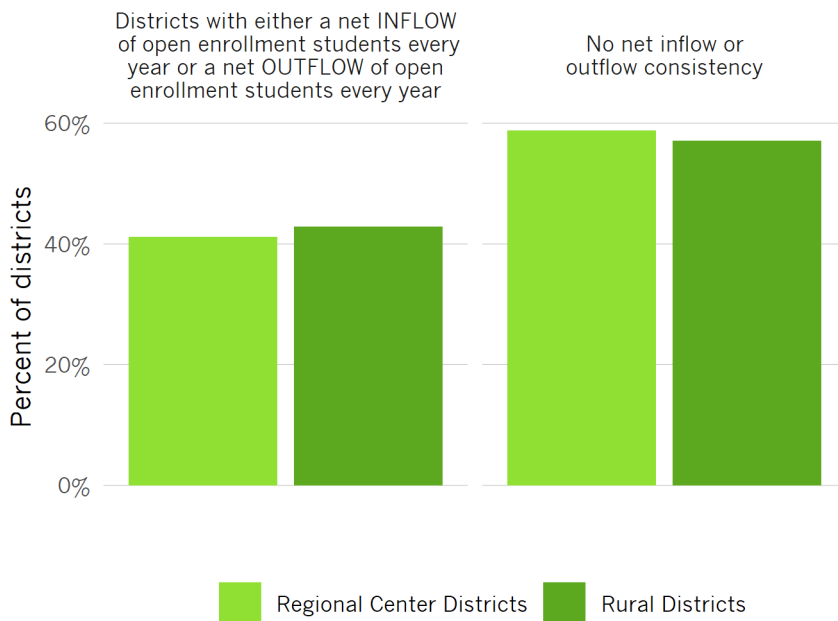


## A Snapshot of Open Enrollment Trends in Rural Minnesota: Patterns



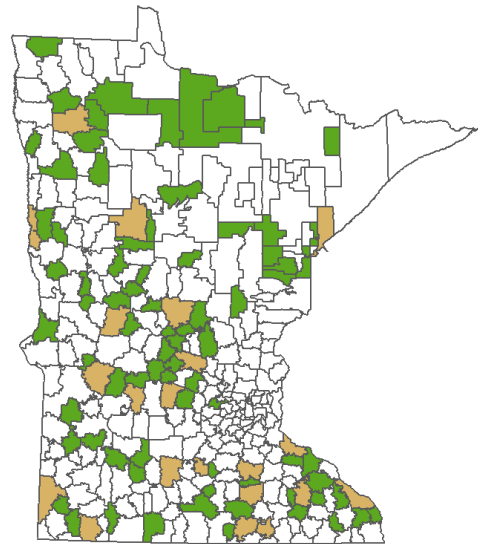
### Majority Either Consistently Gaining or Losing

The number of students choosing to open enroll in Greater Minnesota is increasing and a pattern is emerging. **Nearly half** of school districts outside the seven-county metro area fall into two categories:

- i. Districts that experience a net **gain** in open enrollment students *every year*, or
- ii. districts that experience a net **loss** in open enrollment *every year*.

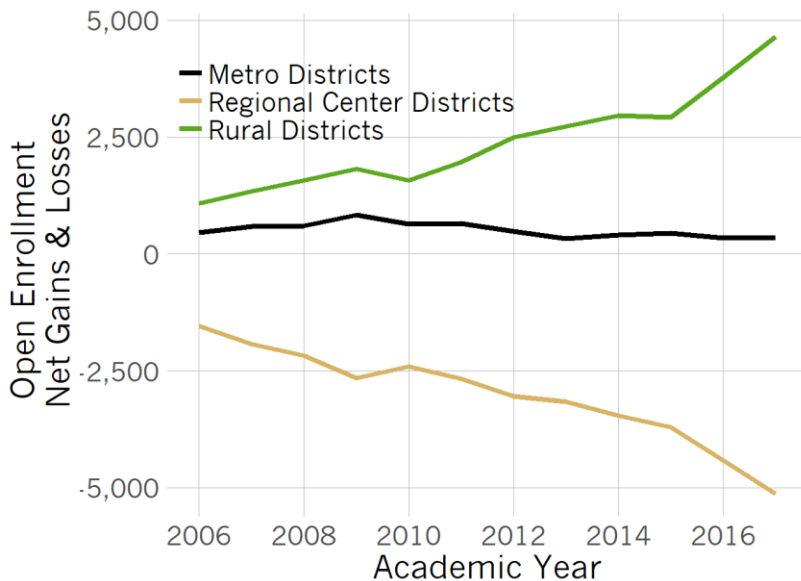
### Regional Center Districts Lose; Adjacent Rural Districts Gain

- Among **regional center districts**, **31%** experience a net **loss** in open enrollment every year compared to only 11% that experience a gain every year.
- **A quarter of rural districts** experience a net **gain** in open enrollment students every year. Many are **adjacent** to **regional center** districts.



Legend: Regional center districts with open enrollment losses every year (orange), Rural districts with open enrollment gains every year (green)

## A Snapshot of Open Enrollment Trends in Rural Minnesota: Impacts



### Open Enrollment Trends As % of Total Enrollment Increasing

- In 2017, open enrollment students made up 16%, on average, of total enrollment students in rural districts that experience gains every year, up from 10% in 2006.
- The loss of open enrollment students equaled, on average, 7% of enrollment in regional center districts that experience a net loss in open enrollment students every year, up from 3% in 2006.

## Current Impacts

**Competition:** A cordial competition is brewing among districts impacting **busing, programming,** and **communications** strategies that encourage the increase of open enrollment in or the decrease of open enrollment out.

## Potential Future Impact

**Local Funding vs. Non-local students:** Despite the opposite open enrollment trends (net loss or net gain) in so many neighboring districts, school officials share a common concern: **Will local households continue to support referendums as more and more students leave the district or outside students come into the district?**

Currently, the data does not reveal any relationship between open enrollment (loss or gain) as a percentage of total enrollment and the passage of referendums. However, superintendents are hearing more concerns from local taxpayers about these trends. If a district experiences a loss every year, the question is:

***“Why should I support tax increases when my child doesn’t go to school here?”***

And, if the district experiences a gain every year, the question is:

***“Why should I support tax increases to support open enrollment students whose parents don’t have to pay more?”***

If these trends continue to intensify, these questions may turn into action resulting in more failed referendums.

To read the full report, visit our website at [ruralmn.org](http://ruralmn.org).