

# Change of School Assignment Information Booklet

2009–2010



## INTRODUCTION

Students in Montgomery County are assigned to public schools based on their place of residence or in accordance with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and are expected to attend their assigned school. Paired schools are considered as one school for school assignment purposes. Changes from one's assigned school to another school are permitted for students who are exempt or who have documented a unique hardship. Requests for a change in school assignment will be granted for the following:

- A. Documented, unique hardship
- B. Exemptions
  - Sibling: Older sibling attends requested school.
  - Continuation: Middle school students on an approved change of school assignment may continue to that school's feeder pattern high school, except when affected by boundary change or consortium choice guidelines. To continue in the feeder pattern from middle school to high school, a new change of school assignment form must be submitted to the home school. Elementary school students transitioning to middle school are not exempt and must document a unique hardship.
  - Exempt Programs: Student selected for an exempt program. (See listing of these programs on page 2 of this booklet.)
  - Family Relocation: When a family moves within Montgomery County, preference to remain in the original school will be considered to complete the current school year only.

Please note that by accepting a change of school assignment, the parent or guardian accepts responsibility to provide transportation.

Students who attend a high school in the Northeast or Downcounty Consortia should contact the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Services at 301-592-2040 for information on change of school assignment. For information on the change of school assignment application process for the Middle School Magnet Consortium, contact the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Services, or visit the website at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/schoolchoice](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/schoolchoice).

**Office of the Chief Operating Officer  
Montgomery County Public Schools  
850 Hungerford Drive, Room 149  
Rockville, Maryland 20850**

### How do I apply for a school transfer?

MCPS Form 335-45, *Request for a Change of School Assignment*, is included at the end of this booklet. Fill it out and return it to your home school for review and signature by the principal. The school will forward the form to the appropriate Department of Student Services field office for processing.

**Students new to the school system must be enrolled and registered in their home school prior to submitting a change of school assignment (COSA). Change of school assignment will not be processed until the student has completed the residency verification and enrollment process at the home school.**

### How do I apply for an elementary language immersion program?

There is a separate process to access these programs. To apply to any of the elementary language immersion programs, you must contact the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Services at 301-592-2040. Forms are available at your assigned elementary school and online at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/).

### What if my child is receiving special education services?

Students receiving less than 15 hours of special education services will follow the regular change of school assignment process. Requests for change of school assignment for students receiving more than 15 hours of special education services can be made by writing to the Department of Special Education, Division of School-based Special Education Services. If a voluntary change of school assignment is approved, no transportation is provided, and the student will not be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for one year.

### When do I apply?

Change of school assignment requests are accepted between February 2 and April 1 for the following school year, unless there is a *bona fide* emergency or an event that could not have been foreseen prior to April 1. **Final decisions on requests submitted after April 1 may not be made prior to the beginning of the school year.**

### What happens to my change of school assignment request after it is submitted?

After residency verification and signature by the principal of your home school, the request is forwarded to the appropriate field office where basic information on the form is put into a computer program and used to monitor the three to four thousand requests typically received each year. The information is entered as requests are received and an investigation is completed prior to decisions being made.

### When will I hear whether my request has been approved or denied?

Every effort is made by the appropriate Department of Student Services field office staff to notify parents and students by mail of the decision made on their change of school assignment requests in May. Special education change of school assignment requests for students receiving

more than 15 hours of special education services will be processed after all annual reviews are completed.

### **What is a hardship situation?**

By definition, hardship depends on the family's individual and personal situation. Problems that are common to large numbers of families, such as issues involving provision of day care, do not constitute a hardship, absent additional compelling factors. Documentation that can be independently verified must accompany all hardship requests.

### **What type of documentation do I need to submit with my request for a change of school assignment?**

It will depend on your individual situation; however, the documents must represent facts that can be verified independently. Financial records, letters from health care professionals, and letters from employers are the kinds of documents that can be verified by staff investigating the request.

### **Are there programs exempt from the change of school assignment criteria?**

Yes, the following programs are exempt from the student change of school assignment process; however, other selection criteria may apply. (See [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/enriched](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/enriched).) It should be noted that the sibling preference does not automatically apply when an older sibling is enrolled in one of these application programs, absent a unique hardship.

- The Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School.
- The Visual Art Center at Albert Einstein High School.
- The International Baccalaureate Magnet Program at Richard Montgomery High School.
- Magnet Programs at Poolesville High School.
- The Upcounty Center Programs at Roberto Clemente Middle School.
- The Humanities and Communication Magnet Program at Eastern Middle School.
- The Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program at Takoma Park Middle School.
- Elementary Centers for the Highly Gifted.
- The early identification program for the highly gifted at Takoma Park Elementary School. (If the number of qualified applicants exceeds program capacity, admission will be determined by lottery.)

Also exempt are:

- Students assigned to Poolesville Elementary School for kindergarten who wish to attend Monocacy Elementary School.
- Students accepted into all elementary language immersion programs.
- Language Immersion students continuing a partial immersion program into middle schools at Gaithersburg Middle School, Herbert Hoover Middle School, Silver Spring International Middle School, and Westland Middle School.

### **Are change of school assignments approved to signature programs or unique courses?**

No. Signature programs and unique courses have been designed for the school in which they are located. Change of school assignments to these schools must meet the same criteria as all other change of school assignments. See page 1 of this booklet.

### **Is transportation provided to the new school?**

No. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent when a change of school assignment is approved. For information on transportation provided for MCPS Application and Choice Programs, see Options booklet at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/enrichedinnovative/options.shtm>.

### **Will my child be eligible to play interscholastic sports at the new school?**

A student who receives an approved change of school assignment out of his/her current feeder pattern must attend the new school for one calendar year before being able to participate in athletics. Middle school students who received a change of school assignment to a new secondary feeder pattern and wish to remain in that pattern for high school also are required to reapply, but athletic ineligibility is automatically waived.

### **Once my child has been approved for a change of school assignment, do I need to reapply each year?**

Unless your child has been granted a change of school assignment for one year only, it is not necessary to reapply each year. Once a change of school assignment has been approved, the student may remain at that school until the student is ready to articulate to the next education level; e. g., *elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school. A change of school assignment request must be submitted at these points.* (See "Continuation" in the Introduction section). A student who is attending a school on an approved change of school assignment whose family changes addresses within the county will be allowed to remain in the school he or she is attending until the end of the current school year, but a change of school assignment request must be submitted immediately for record keeping purposes.

### **My change of school assignment was denied. How do I appeal?**

If your change of school assignment has been denied by the field office director, you may appeal the decision to the **Office of the Chief Operating Officer, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 149, Rockville, Maryland 20850**. The chief operating officer serves as the superintendent's designee. The appeal must be made in writing and received in the chief operating officer's office no later than 15 calendar days following the date of the field office decision. The appeal should state the reason(s) for seeking review of the decision. It is not necessary to provide additional information in order to appeal, but if there is additional information you wish to have considered, it should be included.

### **All appeals are reviewed on the basis of the documents submitted and telephone conferences.**

If your appeal is denied by the chief operating officer, you may appeal to the **Board of Education, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20850**, within 30 calendar days of the date of the chief operating officer's decision letter, although you are strongly encouraged to submit any appeal as soon as possible. All appeals are heard on regularly scheduled Board meeting dates. Please note that the Board of Education is in recess during the month of August. Again, it is not necessary to repeat or add information in order to appeal, but if there is additional information, it should be included.

**NOTE:** Final decision on appeals received in the chief operating officer's office before June 30, 2009, will be decided prior to the beginning of school. Final decisions on appeals received after June 30, 2009, may not be made until after the school year has begun.

# REGULATION

# MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Related Entries:** ACD, JEE, FAA  
**Responsible Office:** Chief Operating Officer

## Transfer of Students

### I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures concerning the within-county transfer of students

### II. BACKGROUND

Students are expected to attend the school within the established attendance area in which they reside (home school) or are assigned in accordance with an IEP. A request for a student to attend a school outside such attendance area may be initiated by the parent/guardian/eligible student (18 years of age or older), student services staff, or the principal of the home school.

### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. The *home school* is the school to which a student is assigned based upon the Board of Education geographical boundary decision. Absent any other considerations, this will be the assigned school. In addition, should the student be reassigned through the transfer process, he or she may elect at any time to return to the home school.
- B. The *base school* is, within a Consortium, the school to which the student is assigned absent an approved choice to attend another. The school is assigned a catchment area, which includes the student's residence.
- C. The *assigned school* is the school to which the student has been assigned for a given school year. This is the home school in the absence of an approved change of school assignment, or the base school in the absence of an approved preferred choice. When a student is granted a preferred choice or a change of school assignment, the requested school becomes the assigned school.

### IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Only documented hardship situations will be considered for a change in school assignment.
- B. Exemptions
  - 1. An older sibling attending the requested school at the same time
  - 2. The student is ready to move from middle school to high school, except for boundary change
  - 3. The student has met the criteria for and been admitted to a countywide program
- C. Timetables and Deadlines
  - 1. Change of school assignment requests for the next school year will be accepted only between February 2 and April 1 for the following school year.

2. Every effort will be made to notify parents and students in May.
3. Some programs, such as elementary language immersion programs, admit students by lottery when there are more requests than spaces allotted.
4. Change of school assignment requests submitted after April 1 will not be accepted unless the student is a new resident of Montgomery County or there is a bona fide emergency or event that could not have been foreseen prior to April 1. Documentation supporting this situation must be supplied. Students must enroll in and attend their home school while a change of school assignment request is being processed.

#### D. Process for Change of School Assignment

##### 1. General

- a) Paired elementary schools are considered one school for change of school assignment purposes. However, when a student on an approval COSA matriculates from the primary grades to the new school, a form must be submitted.
- b) A student who transfers to another school without a change in residence of his/her parents or legal guardian shall attend the new school for one calendar year in order to be able to participate in athletics. A waiver from this restriction may be requested.
- c) Middle school students who received a change of school assignment, or are reassigned, to a new secondary feeder pattern for high school and wish to remain in that pattern will be required to reapply at the end of middle school. The exemption will be approved and the athletic ineligibility will be waived.
- d) A change in school assignment form must be submitted for any high school student who wishes to change or is reassigned to a high school outside his or her existing feeder pattern or home school. If the change of school assignment is approved, the athletic ineligibility applies. Parents may request a waiver by writing to the director of systemwide athletics explaining the reason for the change of school assignment.
- e) In unique circumstances, change of school assignments may be granted for one year only. Parents/guardians must reapply for change of school assignment or students must return to their home school for the next school year.
- f) Students whose families have moved within the county who wish to continue attending their former home school should request a change of school assignment from the school serving their new neighborhood to the school they have been attending. Such requests will be given preference for the remainder of the current school year only. Continuation in feeder pattern does not apply. Students in Grades 11 or 12 are exempt from this restriction and will be allowed to stay through graduation.
- g) Change of school assignment or exemption requests for younger siblings of students, including step brothers and sisters and half brothers and sisters, for whom changes of school assignment have been approved will be given a preference for change of school assignment, provided that the older sibling will also be in attendance at the receiving school.
- h) Change of school assignment requests after an extended suspension will be addressed by the appropriate field office staff in consultation with the school principals involved. School changes for this reason are not generally approved.

- i) Students who have been given permission to attend schools other than assigned may, with proper cause, have that permission rescinded.
2. Initiated by Parent/Guardian/Eligible Student (18 years of age or older)
- a) If a change of school assignment is desired, MCPS Form 335-45: *Request for Change of School Assignment*, must be obtained from the principal of the home school.
  - b) This completed form must be submitted to the principal of the student's home school by the deadline. The principal's signature signifies verification of residency and knowledge of the request, but does not constitute agreement or disagreement with the request.
  - c) The principal will forward the requests as received to the field office for a decision, or to the division of special education programs and services if the student is receiving special education services other than resource and/or itinerant services such as speech and language.
  - d) The change of school assignment may be approved or denied after considering the reason(s) for the change of school assignment and, for students receiving special education services, whether the IEP can be implemented, considering staffing and services available at the required school.
  - e) Parents accepting an approved change of school assignment or exemption assume responsibility for transportation.
  - f) The parent/guardian will receive written notification of approval or disapproval of a change of school assignment or exemption request from the field office. The student must enroll in and attend the home school while the appeal of a denial is in process. The sending and receiving schools will be notified that the request has been approved or disapproved.
3. Initiated by the Principal
- a) Prior to initiating a request for an administrative change of assignment of a student, the principal and the pupil personnel worker assigned to the student's home school will:
    - (1) Review the student's educational, medical, and behavioral record and consider alternative programs
    - (2) Schedule a conference with the parent/guardian and the student
  - b) If a change of school assignment is indicated, the following steps are implemented:
    - (1) The principal will inform the field office director in writing of the reason(s) for the recommended change of school assignment and the alternatives, if any, which were attempted to maintain the student in the home school
    - (2) The pupil personnel worker will arrange the necessary conferences with the parent/guardian, student, and principal of the receiving school and student services staff and supply written confirmation of the placement, athletic eligibility, and athletic waiver process
  - c) Student Services staff, for the area in which the receiving school is located, is responsible for monitoring the academic progress and social adjustment of the student whose change of school assignment was initiated by the principal.

#### 4. Initiated by Student Services

Change of school assignment may be initiated by Student Services staff, in concert with the parent/guardian and the concerned school's staff, at any time for special circumstances. The approval or denial of Student Services initiated changes of school assignment are the responsibility of the director of Student Services for the area in which the receiving school is located.

- a) Students transferred and assigned under this provision [IV.D.4.a] based on their behavior that raised concerns about the health and/or safety of others in the school setting must attend the assigned school for one calendar year in order to be eligible to participate in athletics. Parents may request a waiver by writing to the director, Systemwide Athletics, explaining the reason for the change of school assignment.
- b) Students transferred and assigned under this provision [IV.D.4.b] based on concerns about their health and/or safety in the school setting must attend the assigned school for one calendar year in order to be eligible to participate in athletics. However, with assistance from pupil services, parents may request a waiver by writing to the director, Systemwide Athletics, explaining the reason for the change of school assignment. In these cases, a waiver will be granted.

#### E. Appeals

##### 1. Superintendent of Schools

If a change of school assignment is denied by the field office director, the parent/guardian may appeal the decision to the superintendent of schools. Appeals must be made in writing and must be received by the Office of the Chief Operating Officer (the chief operating officer serves as the superintendent's designee) within 15 calendar days of the date of the decision letter. The appeal should state the reason(s) for seeking review of the decision. It is not necessary to provide additional information in order to appeal, but the appellant should include any additional information in order for it to be considered. The superintendent, or the chief operating officer as his designee, will review all available information before issuing a decision. Although the matter is usually considered on the basis of the documents and telephone conferences, personal conferences may be arranged by the chief operating officer's hearing officer. Decisions will be made promptly given the number, complexity, and timing of appeals being handled at the same time. Appeals received by the chief operating officer before June 30 will be decided prior to the beginning of school.

##### 2. Board of Education

An appeal after the decision of the superintendent or his designee must be made in writing and received by the Board of Education within 30 calendar days of the date on the superintendent's decision letter, although appellants are strongly encouraged to note any appeal within 10 calendar days of receipt of the superintendent's decision. If there is additional information in the appeal to the Board, the superintendent will be given the opportunity to respond, with a copy sent to the appellant, before the Board considers the appeal. The Board's decision will be rendered in writing.

**Regulation History:** Formerly Regulation 265-2, February 22, 1980, revised January 23, 1992, revised April 25, 1994; revised December 23, 1994; revised December 30, 1997; revised July 20, 1998; revised December 2, 1999; updated office titles June 1, 2000; revised December 6, 2000; revised January 7, 2002; revised January 10, 2003; revised November 29, 2006; non-substantive revision, November 27, 2007.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The parent/guardian is to complete Part I and submit the form to the principal of the assigned home school from which the student wants to transfer no later than April 1. Read carefully the information provided in the *Change of School Assignment Information Booklet* before completing the form. Reference: Regulation JEE-RA: *Transfer of Students*.

**PART I: CHANGE OF SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT REQUEST (please print)**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Sex:  M  F  
*Last First MI*

Receiving Special Education Services No  Yes

Current School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade in School \_\_\_\_ as of Sept. (year) \_\_\_\_

Home School \_\_\_\_\_ Requested School \_\_\_\_\_ Effective Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian:  Dr.  Mr.  Mrs.  Ms.  Miss \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone \_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_  
*Street*

\_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_  
*City State Zip Code*

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_  
*City State Zip Code*

Language spoken at home \_\_\_\_\_ TTY needed

Reason for request:

- Hardship:**  describe in detail—documentation that can be verified must be attached
- Exemption:**  Older sibling attends requested school in grade \_\_\_\_\_; name of sibling \_\_\_\_\_  
 Continue in feeder pattern from middle school to high school, except for boundary change  
 Exempt countywide program \_\_\_\_\_ (see booklet for exempt programs)  
 Family move, completion of this school year only due to family move

*Request forms must be submitted between February 2 and April 1 for the next school year. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, late applications will not be processed.*

**I understand that, unless otherwise indicated, if this request is approved: 1) transportation is not provided by Montgomery County Public Schools; and 2) my son/daughter WILL NOT be eligible to participate for one year in high school interscholastic athletics.**

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature, Custodial Parent/Guardian Date*

**PART II: TRANSFER REVIEW AND AUTHORIZATION**

**SCHOOL REVIEW—To be completed by school from which student wants to transfer**

Residency Verification has been completed Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Student ID # \_\_\_\_\_

I have discussed this request with the parent/guardian Yes  No  School # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature, Principal (Signature does not constitute agreement/disagreement with the request but does verify that residency has been validated.) Date*

**FIELD OFFICE ACTION—To be completed by Field Office Supervisor**

For Cross Field Office request, forward to the appropriate Field Office for final action.

Forwarded: Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
*Initials*

Field Office Decision:

- Approved  Approved, to the end of school year \_\_\_\_  Denied, does not meet guidelines  
 Late, received after deadline without documentation of extenuating circumstances.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature, Field Office Director Date*

**APPEALS:** Must be made in writing (please state reason and any additional information) within 15 calendar days of the date of this decision to:  
**Office of the Chief Operating Officer, Montgomery County Public Schools, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 149, Rockville, Maryland 20850**

**SPRING MILL FIELD OFFICE**

11721 Kemp Mill Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902  
301-649-8018

Serving the following clusters:

**Montgomery Blair**  
**James Hubert Blake**  
**Albert Einstein**  
**John F. Kennedy**  
**Northwood**  
**Paint Branch**  
**Sherwood**  
**Springbrook**

**METRO PARK FIELD OFFICE**

7361 Calhoun Place, Suite 402  
Rockville, Maryland 20855  
301-315-7335

Serving the following clusters:

**Bethesda Chevy-Chase**  
**Winston Churchill**  
**Richard Montgomery**  
**Rockville**  
**Walter Johnson**  
**Wheaton**  
**Walt Whitman**  
**Thomas S. Wootton**

**UPCOUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER FIELD OFFICE**

12900 Middlebrook Road  
Germantown, Maryland 20874  
301-353-0840

Serving the following clusters:

**Clarksburg**  
**Damascus**  
**Gaithersburg**  
**Col. Zadok Magruder**  
**Northwest**  
**Poolesville**  
**Quince Orchard**  
**Seneca Valley**  
**Watkins Mill**

**DIVISION OF SCHOOL-BASED  
SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

Special Education Programs  
850 Hungerford Drive, Room 230  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
301-279-3837

**DOWNCOUNTY CONSORTIUM**

11721 Kemp Mill Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902  
301-592-2040  
**Montgomery Blair, Albert Einstein,  
John F. Kennedy, Northwood, Wheaton**

**NORTHEAST CONSORTIUM**

11721 Kemp Mill Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902  
301-592-2040  
**James Hubert Blake, Paint Branch,  
Springbrook**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL MAGNET CONSORTIUM**

11721 Kemp Mill Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902  
301-592-2040  
**Argyle, Loiederman, Parkland**

International students and parents who may require translation assistance may contact: ESOL Parent Center, 301-230-0674; Spanish Hot Line, 301-230-3073. Language Line: Spanish, 301-230-5403; Cambodian, 301-230-5427; Chinese, 301-230-5428; French, 301-230-5429; Korean, 301-230-5430; Vietnamese, 301-230-5432.

Estudiantes internacionales y sus padres que necesiten servicios de traducción pueden llamar a: Línea Hispana, 301-230-3073; Oficina de Servicios Para Padres de Estudiantes ESOL, 301-230-0674.

**国际學生及家長如需翻譯服務請電垂詢熱線 301-230-5436 或 ESOL 家長服務中心 301-230-0674**

교육에 관한 통역이 필요한 학부모는 301-230-5436. ESOL 학부모 센터: 301-230-0674.

**Các phụ huynh và học sinh ngoại quốc mà cần giúp đỡ về thông dịch có thể liên lạc:** Duong giầy diên thoai A đông: 301-230-5436 trung tâm ESOL: 301-230-0674.

This document is available in an alternate format, upon request, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, by contacting the Public Information Office, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 112, Rockville, MD 20850, 301-279-3391 or 1-800-735-2258 (Maryland Relay).

Individuals who need sign language interpretation or cued speech transliteration in communicating with the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) may contact Interpreting Services in Programs for Deaf and Hard of Hearing at 301-517-5539.

The Montgomery County Public Schools prohibits illegal discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination or Title IX issues such as gender equity and sexual harassment should be directed to the MCPS Compliance Officer, Office of the Deputy Superintendent at 301-517-8265, 1-800-735-2258 (Maryland Relay), or write to that office at 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 170, Rockville, MD 20850.



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