

2019
2020

Change of School Assignment (COSA)



INFORMATION BOOKLET

INTRODUCTION

Students in Montgomery County are expected to attend the school within the established attendance area in which they reside (home school) or assigned in accordance with their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students may apply for Change of School Assignment (COSA) from the home school, or the school of assignment through the IEP process, based on the following criteria:

- **UNIQUE HARDSHIP**—When a documented unique hardship is shown. Problems that are common to a large number of families do not constitute a unique hardship.
- **FAMILY MOVE**—When a family moves within Montgomery County, preference to remain in the original school will be considered to complete the current school year only, with the exception that Grade 11 and Grade 12 students may be permitted to stay through graduation.
- **SIBLINGS**—When a younger sibling seeks to attend the school where an older sibling will be enrolled in the regular/general school program, or a special education program, during the year the younger sibling seeks to enroll.
 - » When an older sibling attends a magnet, language immersion, or other application program, a COSA may be approved to the regular school program for younger siblings on a case-by-case basis. Such approval requires consideration of available classroom space, grade-level enrollment, staffing allocations, or other factors that impact the schools involved.

The criteria above regarding siblings do not apply if a boundary change has occurred.

THESE STUDENTS DO NOT HAVE TO SUBMIT A COSA IF REQUESTING ANOTHER SCHOOL WITHIN THEIR CONSORTIUM:

- High school students who live in the Northeast Consortium (NEC) or Downcounty Consortium (DCC) areas and are requesting another Consortium school.
- Middle school students who live in the Middle School Magnet Consortium (MSMC) and are requesting another MSMC school or who went through the MSMC Choice process lottery and are appealing to an MSMC school.

IF YOU ARE REQUESTING another Consortia or MSMC school, you must submit a written and signed letter of appeal to the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services (DCCAPS), 11721 Kemp Mill Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20902. For information on changing schools within the NEC, DCC, or MSMC, contact the DCCAPS at 240-740-2540, or visit the website www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/schoolchoice.

PLEASE NOTE: By accepting a COSA, the parent or guardian must provide transportation.

- **Division of Pupil Personnel and Attendance Services (DPPAS)**
301-315-7335 Fax: 301-279-3971

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **How do I apply for a school transfer?**

MCPS FORM 335-45, *Request for Change of School Assignment (COSA)*, is included in this booklet. The form also is available online at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/transfers/ and can be found in six additional languages. Fill it out and return it to your home school for review, residency verification, and signature by the principal. Your school will forward the form to DPPAS for processing.

Students new to the school system must be enrolled and registered in their home school prior to submitting a COSA request. COSA requests will not be processed until the student has completed the residency verification and enrollment process at the home school.

- **When do I apply?**

COSA applications for the 2019–2020 school year are to be submitted between the first school day in February 2019 and the first school day in April 2019. We will make every effort to notify parents/guardians and students of the decision regarding their COSA request by May 31, 2019. COSA requests submitted after the first school day of April will be accepted only if the student is a new resident of Montgomery County or there is an emergency event that could not be foreseen prior to April. Documentation supporting this situation must be supplied. Students awaiting a decision on a COSA must attend their assigned school until a final decision is made.

- **What happens to my COSA request after it is submitted?**

After residency verification and signature by the principal of your home school, the COSA request is forwarded to DPPAS, which receives 3,000 to 4,000 requests each year. DPPAS completes an investigation prior to making a decision.

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

DPPAS staff makes every effort to notify parents/guardians and students by mail by May 31, 2019.

- **What is a unique hardship?**

A unique hardship depends on the family's individual and personal situation. Problems that are common to large numbers of families, such as issues involving day care or program/course preferences, do not constitute a hardship, unless there are other compelling factors. Documentation that can be independently verified must accompany all hardship requests, or the request will be denied.

- **What documentation do I need to submit with my request for a COSA?**

It will depend on your individual situation; however, the documents must represent facts that can be independently verified. Examples include financial records, letters from health care professionals, and letters from employers.

- **Is the transfer process the same for paired elementary schools?**

Yes. If a student attends a paired primary school on an approved COSA, they must submit a COSA form, which automatically will be approved to the upper elementary grades school.

- **What is the process for students who are assigned to Poolesville Elementary School who wish to attend Monocacy Elementary School?**

They must submit a COSA form, which automatically will be approved.

- **What if my child is receiving special education services?**

If your student is receiving special education services that are available in all schools (for example, Speech and language, Home School Model, Hours Based Staffing, or Learning and Academic Disabilities Services) you should follow the regular COSA process. If the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires special education services that are not offered in all schools, then you should indicate on the COSA form that the student receives special education services in a specialized program, in addition to submitting appropriate documentation indicating the reason for the COSA request. Decisions regarding requests for students receiving special education services that are not available in all schools will be made after July 1. For more information, please contact the Department of Special Education Services at 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 230, Rockville, Maryland 20850, at 240-740-3900.

- **Are COSAs approved to academies, signature programs, or unique courses?**

No. Signature programs and unique courses have been designed for the school in which they are located. COSA requests to these schools must meet the same criteria as all other COSA requests. See page 2 of this booklet for programs exempt from the COSA process.

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

No. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

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

High school students who receive a COSA out of their current feeder pattern must attend the new school for one calendar year before being eligible to participate in athletics, unless they apply for an athletic waiver. Middle school students who received a COSA to a new secondary feeder pattern and wish to remain in that pattern when transitioning to high school also are required to reapply, but athletic ineligibility is automatically waived. Please call the Athletics Unit at 240-453-2594 for more information.

- **Once my child has been approved for a COSA, do I need to reapply each year?**

The student may remain at the school on a COSA until the student is ready to matriculate to the next education level, unless a COSA was approved for one year only. Although submission of a new COSA form is required, a middle school student on an approved COSA will be automatically approved to attend high school in the middle school's feeder pattern high school. Elementary students on a COSA must submit another COSA application and demonstrate a hardship to attend a middle school other than their home school.

- **Once my child has been approved for a COSA, can it be rescinded?**

A principal may request to have a COSA rescinded if, for example, there are ongoing disciplinary infractions or attendance issues.

- **Are there any programs exempt from the COSA process?**

The following are examples of programs that are exempt from the COSA process; however, other selection criteria may apply.

- Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School
- Visual Art Center at Albert Einstein High School
- International Baccalaureate Magnet Program at Richard Montgomery High School
- Magnet programs at Poolesville High School
- Humanities and Communication Magnet Program at Eastern Middle School and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School

- Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Programs at Takoma Park Middle School and Roberto W. Clemente Middle School

- Centers for Enriched Studies

- Students assigned to any elementary or middle school language immersion program.

- Other programs as identified by the superintendent of schools.

- Other programs as identified in the *OPTIONS: Guide to Countywide Programs* (www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/enrichedinnovative/options).

Students whose COSAs were approved because they were attending a program that is exempt from the COSA process are required to return to their home school if they leave that program. (See www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/enrichedinnovative/.)

- **My COSA was denied. How do I appeal?**

You may appeal in writing to the **Office of the Chief Operating Officer, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 43, Rockville, Maryland 20850**. The chief operating officer serves as the superintendent of schools' 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 decision letter. The appeal should state reason(s) for seeking review of the decision. You do not have to provide additional information in order to appeal, but you should include any additional information you wish to have considered. For more information, call 240-740-4130. *Students awaiting a decision on a COSA appeal will attend their assigned school until a final decision is made.*

All appeals are reviewed on the basis of the documents submitted and follow-up communication with parents/guardians and follow-up as appropriate.

If your appeal is denied by the chief operating officer, you may appeal in writing to the **Montgomery County Board of Education (Board), 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 123, 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 is in recess during the month of August.**

NOTE: Final decision on appeals received in the chief operating officer's office before July 1, 2019, will be decided prior to the beginning of the school year. Final decisions on appeals received after July 1, 2019, may not be made until after the school year has begun.



Request for Change of School Assignment (COSA)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (MCPS)
Rockville, Maryland 20850

MCPS Form 335-45
December 2018

INSTRUCTIONS: The parent/guardian is to complete Part I and submit the form to the principal of the student's home school no later than the first school day of April 2019. Read carefully the information provided in the *Change of School Assignment (COSA) Information Booklet* before completing the form. See Board of Education Policy JEE, *Student Transfers*, and MCPS Regulation JEE-RA, *Student Transfers and Administrative Placements*.

PART I: CHANGE OF SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT REQUEST. To be completed by parent/guardian. (please print)

Student Name _____ Birth Date ____/____/____
Last First MI

Receiving Special Education Services No Yes

Current School _____ Entering Grade ____ in September 2019

Home School _____ Requested School _____ Effective Date ____/____/____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Address: _____ Home phone _____-____-____
Street

_____ Work phone _____-____-____
City State Zip Code

E-mail address _____ Cell phone _____-____-____

Language spoken at home _____ TTY needed

Reason for request:

- Unique hardship—please describe in detail, documentation that can be verified must be attached to this form.
- Family move—completion of this school year only due to family move.
- Siblings—older sibling attends requested school in grade _____, name of sibling _____
- Intent to continue in feeder pattern for paired elementary schools (Automatic approval upon COSA form submission)
- Intent to continue in feeder pattern from middle school to high school, except for boundary change, for previously approved middle school COSA. (Automatic approval upon COSA form submission)
- Student assigned to Poolesville Elementary School who wishes to attend Monocacy Elementary School (Automatic approval upon COSA form submission)

Request forms must be submitted no earlier than the first school day in February 2019, and no later than the first school day of April 2019, for the 2019–2020 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, and the approved school is out of the student's feeder pattern: 1) transportation is not provided by MCPS; 2) if student is in high school, the student must attend the new school for one calendar year before being eligible to participate in athletics (absent a waiver); and 3) the approved school principal may request to have the student's COSA rescinded with proper cause. (See MCPS Regulation JEE-RA).

The information as submitted on this form and on any attachments is accurate, complete and true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that falsification of any information submitted shall be cause for denial of the COSA.

_____/____/____
Signature, Parent/Guardian/Eligible Student Date

PART II: SCHOOL REVIEW. To be completed by the principal of student's home school.

Residency Verification has been completed Date ____/____/____ MCPS 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

FORWARD TO: Director, Division of Pupil Personnel and Attendance Services (DPPAS), 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 211, Rockville, MD 20850

PART III: DPPAS ACTION. To be completed by DPPAS.

Forwarded to: Consortium Office Special Education Date ____/____/____

DPPAS Decision:

Approved Approved, to the end of school year ____ Denied—No unique hardship documented

Comments: _____

_____/____/____
Signature, Director or Coordinator, DPPAS Date

APPEALS: If denied by DPPAS, the appeal 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 43, Rockville, Maryland 20850.

DOWNCOUNTY CONSORTIUM
MONTGOMERY BLAIR, ALBERT EINSTEIN,
JOHN F. KENNEDY, NORTHWOOD, WHEATON

MIDDLE SCHOOL MAGNET CONSORTIUM
ARGYLE, A. MARIO LOIEDERMAN, PARKLAND

NORTHEAST CONSORTIUM
JAMES HUBERT BLAKE, PAINT BRANCH, SPRINGBROOK

11721 Kemp Mill Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902
240-740-2540

DEPARTMENT OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION
SERVICES

850 Hungerford Drive
Room 230
Rockville, Maryland 20850
240-740-3900

MCPS NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) prohibits illegal discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family/parental status, marital status, age, physical or mental disability, poverty and socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations. Discrimination undermines our community's long-standing efforts to create, foster, and promote equity, inclusion, and acceptance for all. Some examples of discrimination include acts of hate, violence, insensitivity, harassment, bullying, disrespect, or retaliation. For more information, please review Montgomery County Board of Education Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*. This Policy affirms the Board's belief that each and every student matters, and in particular, that educational outcomes should never be predictable by any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics. The Policy also recognizes that equity requires proactive steps to identify and redress implicit biases, practices that have an unjustified disparate impact, and structural and institutional barriers that impede equality of educational or employment opportunities.

For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS staff *	For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS students *
Office of Employee Engagement and Labor Relations Department of Compliance and Investigations 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 55 Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888 OCOO-EmployeeEngagement@mcpsmd.org	Office of School Administration Office of School Administration Compliance Unit 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 162 Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3215 OSSISchoolAdministration@mcpsmd.org

**Inquiries, complaints, or requests for accommodations for students with disabilities also may be directed to the supervisor of the Office of Special Education, Resolution and Compliance Unit, at 240-740-3230. Inquiries regarding accommodations or modifications for staff may be directed to the Office of Employee Engagement and Labor Relations, Department of Compliance and Investigations, at 240-740-2888. In addition, discrimination complaints may be filed with other agencies, such as: the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Baltimore Field Office, City Crescent Bldg., 10 S. Howard Street, Third Floor, Baltimore, MD 21201, 1-800-669-4000, 1-800-669-6820 (TTY); or U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Lyndon Baines Johnson Dept. of Education Bldg., 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100, 1-800-421-3481, 1-800-877-8339 (TDD), OCR@ed.gov, or www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html.*

This document is available, upon request, in languages other than English and in an alternate format under the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, by contacting the MCPS Department of Public Information and Web Services at 240-740-2837, 1-800-735-2258 (Maryland Relay), or PIO@mcpsmd.org. Individuals who need sign language interpretation or cued speech transliteration may contact the MCPS Office of Interpreting Services at 240-740-1800, 301-637-2958 (VP) or Interpreting_Services@mcpsmd.org. MCPS also provides equal access to the Boy/Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups.



Published by the Department of Materials Management
for the Office of the Chief Operating Officer