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) or other programmatic assignment. Students are expected to attend their assigned school. Paired elementary schools are considered as one school for school assignment purposes.

In order to attend a different school, the student must document a unique hardship or fall within one of the following four exceptional circumstances:

• **SIBLING:** Younger sibling may attend the school of an older sibling in the regular/general program, if the older sibling will be attending the requested school the following school year, absent a boundary change.

• **CONTINUATION:** Although a new COSA form must be submitted, middle school students on an approved COSA will be permitted to continue to that school’s feeder pattern high school, absent a boundary change. However, elementary school students return to their home middle schools, unless a new COSA form is submitted and approved based on unique hardship or one of the stated exceptions applies, absent a boundary change, application program acceptance, or Consortium Choice guidelines.*

• **EXEMPT PROGRAMS:** Students selected for an exempt countywide program do not need to submit a COSA form. (See page 2 of this booklet for additional information regarding these programs.)

• **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.

*The following students are not required to submit a COSA if requesting another school within their Consortium: High school students who reside in the Northeast Consortium (NEC) or Downcounty Consortium (DCC) and are requesting another Consortium school; and middle school students who reside 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.

PLEASE NOTE:

By accepting a COSA, the parent or guardian accepts responsibility to provide transportation.

IF YOU ARE REQUESTING another school within the Consortium, you must submit a written and signed letter of appeal to the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services (DCCAPS) to 11721 Kemp Mill Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20902. For information on changing schools within the NEC, DCC, or MSMC, contact DCCAPS at 301-592-2040, or visit the website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/schoolchoice.

• **Division of Pupil Personnel Services (DPPS)** 301-315-7335
• **How do I apply for a school transfer?**

  **MCPS FORM 335-45: Request for Change of School Assignment**, is included in this booklet. The form is also available online at [http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/transfers/](http://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. The school will forward the form 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 requests should be submitted no earlier than the first school day in February and no later than the first school day in April, unless there is a bona fide emergency, you are new to Montgomery County, or an event that could not have been foreseen prior to the deadline.

  Students awaiting a decision on a COSA will attend their currently 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 request is forwarded to DPPS, which monitors three to four thousand requests typically received each year. An investigation is completed prior to a decision being made.

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

  Every effort is made by DPPS staff to notify parents and students by mail of the decision in May.

• **What is a unique hardship?**

  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, absent additional compelling factors. Documentation that can be independently verified must accompany all hardship requests, or the request will be denied.

• **What type of 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 verified independently. Examples of documents that can be verified by staff investigating the request include financial records, letters from health care professionals, and letters from employers.

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

  Although a COSA form must be filed, paired elementary schools are considered one school for COSA purposes, so students are automatically approved from the lower elementary grades school to the upper grades school. Each pairing has unique characteristics that can impact the implementation of transfers. Check with your school principal for more information.

• **How do I apply for an elementary language immersion program?**

  Elementary language immersion programs are exempt from the COSA process. Younger siblings interested in attending an elementary immersion program with their older sibling may request the program by completing an immersion interest form instead of a COSA. See page 2 for more details. Interest forms to apply for admission to these programs 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 special education services available in all schools follow the regular COSA process. If the requested COSA is approved, no transportation is provided, and the student will not be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for one year. Students receiving all other special education services should not use the COSA form, but should submit their request in writing to the Department of Special Education Services at 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 230, Rockville, Maryland 20850. 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, you may call 301-279-3837.

• **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 1 of this booklet.
• **Is transportation provided to the new school?**
  No. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent/guardian when a COSA is approved. For information on transportation that may be provided by MCPS for MCPS Application and Choice Programs, see the Options booklet at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/enrichedinnovative/options.shtm](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 COSA out of their current feeder pattern must attend the new school for one calendar year before being able to participate in athletics, unless the student applies for an athletic waiver. Middle school students who previously 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. Questions should be referred to the Athletics Unit at 301-279-3144.

• **Once my child has been approved for a COSA, do I need to reapply each year?**
  Unless a COSA was approved for one year only, the student may remain at that school on an approved COSA until the student is ready to matriculate to the next education level (e.g., elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school). A COSA request must be submitted at these points. (See “Continuation” on cover page.) Students in Grades 11 or 12 are exempt from this restriction and will be allowed to stay through graduation.

• **Once my child has been approved for a COSA, can it be rescinded?**
  A student may have a COSA rescinded if, for example, there are ongoing disciplinary infractions or attendance issues. In addition, students whose COSAs were approved because they were attending a special/exempt program must return to their home school if they leave that program.

• **Are there programs exempt from the COSA criteria?**
  Yes, the following programs are exempt from the COSA process; however, other selection criteria may apply. (See [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/enrichedinnovative/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/enrichedinnovative/))
  - 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.
  - Magnet programs at Poolesville High School.
  - The Upcounty Center Programs at Roberto Clemente Middle School.
  - Students assigned to Poolesville Elementary School who wish to attend Monocacy Elementary School.
  - Students assigned to any elementary or middle school language immersion program.

  **NOTE:** The sibling preference does not automatically apply when an older sibling is enrolled in any of the above-mentioned programs, absent a unique hardship.

• **My COSA was denied. How do I appeal?**
  You may appeal to the Office of the Chief Operating Officer, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 156, 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 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. For more information, you may call 301-279-3997. **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 telephone conferences.

  If your appeal is denied by the chief operating officer, you may appeal 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 decisions on appeals received in the chief operating officer’s office before July 1, 2016, will be decided prior to the beginning of the school year. Final decisions on appeals received after July 1, 2016, may not be made until after the school year has begun.
INSTRUCTIONS: The parent/guardian is to complete Part I and submit the form to the principal of the home school from which the student wants to transfer no later than the first school day in April. Read carefully the information provided in the Change of School Assignment (COSA) Information Booklet before completing the form. Reference: MCPS Regulation JEE-RA, Transfer of Students.

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

Student ____________________________________________________________________________________ Birth Date _____/_____/______

Last  First  Ml
MCPS Student ID# _______________ Receiving Special Education Services No □ Yes □

Current School _________________________________________________________________________ Entering Grade____ in August 2016

Home School_______________________________Requested School_______________________________ Effective Date _____/_____/______

Parent/Guardian: □ Dr. □ Mr. □ Mrs. □ Ms. □ Miss ____________________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________________________________

Street
City State Zip Code
Home phone __-____-____ Work phone __-____-____

E-mail address ____________________________________________________________________________

Language spoken at home ___________________________________________________________________________________

TTY needed □

Reason for request:

1. Hardship: □ describe in detail—documentation that can be verified must be attached
2. 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
   □ Family move, completion of this school year only due to family move

Request forms must be submitted no earlier than the first school day in February 2016, and no later than the first school day in April 2016, for the 2016–2017 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; 2) the student WILL NOT be eligible to participate for one year in high school interscholastic athletics; and 3) the COSA may be rescinded for cause.

___________________________ ____________
Signature, Parent/Guardian Date

PART II: 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

FORWARD TO: Director, Division of Pupil Personnel Services, 45 West Gude Drive, Suite 1300, Rockville, Maryland 20850

PART III: DIVISION OF PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES ACTION. To be completed by DPPS.

Forwarded to: Consortium Office □ Special Education □ Date _____/_____/______

DPPS Decision:

□ Approved □ Approved, to the end of school year ___ □ Denied

Comments: _________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________ ____________
Signature, Director or Coordinator, Division of Pupil Personnel Services 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 156, Rockville, Maryland 20850, 301-279-3997
This document is available in an alternate format, upon request, under the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*, by contacting the Department of Public Information and Web Services, at 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 112, Rockville, MD 20850, or by telephone at 301-279-3391 or via the Maryland Relay at 1-800-735-2258.

Individuals who request (need) sign language interpretation or cued speech transliteration in communicating with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) may contact the Office of Interpreting Services in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program at 301-517-5539 or 301-637-2958VP, or send an e-mail message to interpreting_services@mcpsmd.org.

MCPS prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, gender, age, marital status, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical characteristics, or disability. Students pursuing a complaint of discrimination may contact Ms. Lori-Christina Webb, Executive Director to the Chief Academic Officer, Carver Educational Services Center, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 129, Rockville, Maryland 20850, 301-279-3128, or the Student Leadership Office, 301-444-8620, for advice and assistance.
Students and parents who may require assistance may contact ASK MCPS to get the information they need by telephone at 301-309-MCPS (6277). Telephone operators who speak English and Spanish are available 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Parents who speak languages other than English or Spanish who call the ASK MCPS telephone line and identify their language will have their questions answered through a phone interpreter.

Estudiantes y padres que requieran ayuda pueden obtener la información que necesiten comunicándose con ASK MCPS al teléfono 301-309-MCPS (6277). Hay operadores que hablan inglés y español disponibles para responder sus preguntas por teléfono de 7:30 a.m. a 5:30 p.m., de lunes a viernes. Los padres que hablen otros idiomas que no sean inglés o español y que llamen a la línea telefónica de ASK MCPS e identifiquen cuál es su idioma, recibirán respuesta a sus preguntas por teléfono a través de un intérprete.

Les élèves et parents qui ont besoin d’assistance peuvent contacter ASK MCPS par téléphone au 301-309-MCPS (6277) pour obtenir les informations dont ils ont besoin. Les standardistes qui parlent l’anglais et l’espagnol sont disponibles de 7h30 à 17h30, du lundi au vendredi. Les parents qui parlent des langues autres que l’anglais ou l’espagnol, qui appellent la ligne téléphonique de ASK MCPS et identifient leur langue, auront des réponses à leurs questions à travers un interprète téléphonique.

需要協助的學生及其家長可以致電301-309-MCPS (6277)與 ASK MCPS 聯繫，了解所需的資訊。說英語和西班牙語的接線員週一至週五早上7:30至下午5:30為您服務。如果家長使用除英語或西班牙語以外的其它語言，當他們致電 ASK MCPS 並說明自己使用的語言時，我們將通過電話安排翻譯員解答他們的問題。

도움이 필요한 학생 및 학부모님은 ASK MCPS (301-309-MCPS/6277)로 전화하여 도움을 받으실 수 있 습니다. 영어와 스페인어가 가능한 직원이 월요일-금요일, 오전 7시 30분-오후 5시 30분에 여러분을 도와드리며 그 외의 언어로의 문의는 ASK MCPS로 전화하여서 사용하는 언어를 말씀하시면 전화통역을 사용하여 답변해 드립니다.