

Appeal information in the Northeast (NEC), Downcounty (DCC) & Middle School Magnet (MSMC) Consortia

Each of the high schools in the Northeast and Downcounty and the middle schools in the Middle Schools Magnet Consortium have interesting and engaging programs and courses to meet the academic needs for students. In addition, each school offers students numerous academic and extracurricular opportunities. We believe that our students have multiple interests and talents and can thrive in all of our schools. The *Choice* process encourages parents and students to explore their student's interests and talents and as they consider the opportunities at the middle or high schools, rank order their school choices. Every effort to assign a student to their first choice school is made and when that does not occur, here are other options: parents may have received enough information and decide to remain at the assigned school, they may continue in the *Choice* process (Round 2) if applicable, or submit a written appeal.

Consortia Appeals FAQs

1. What is an appeal?

An appeal is a written letter by the parent/guardian requesting a different assigned school. The appeal should indicate the student's first and last name, the specific reasons why a student's school assignment should be changed to another school. It should include the school that is being requested, a parent signature and a contact number. Parents should include any additional information with the appeal that is to support the appeal request.

Please note that these appeals are only for students entering an NEC or DCC high school or an MSMC middle school. This appeal process does not apply to those requesting a change in a DCC or NEC elementary or middle school or between two MSMC elementary schools.

2. Do I submit a COSA or an appeal?

If you are requesting a change between consortia schools, submit an appeal. If you are seeking a transfer outside of the DCC and/or NEC, submit a Change of School Assignment (COSA) form.

3. When are the appeals due?

Appeals are due April 3, 2020.

4. What happens once I submit an appeal?

The appeal (and supporting documents) is reviewed for a verifiable, unique hardship. A decision is mailed to you within 4 weeks. Incomplete information may delay or impact the outcome.

5. Where will my student attend school during the appeal process?

Students are expected to continue attending their assigned school. A pending appeal is not considered a legal absence.

6. **How do I know if my appeal represents a unique hardship?** Examples of hardships may include medical, mental health issues, and/or unresolvable peer issues. All claims must be supported by evidence such as incident reports, medical letters, meetings with school personnel, and/or other relevant documents. Unfortunately, program preference, limited or unavailable parent transportation, school proximity, staff changes, child care, participation in extracurricular activities, and/or convenience of having siblings together are all examples of family challenges that do not rise to the level of a unique hardship.
7. **What should I include in the appeal?** Please include:
 - a. Your name and contact information (phone and email if available)
 - b. Your student's name (and ID number if known)
 - c. The reason for the appeal (describe the hardship)
 - d. Detailed documentation that can substantiate the appeal (see #5)
 - e. Names of school staff that have been involved (if any)
8. **What should I do while the appeal is pending?** Schedule a meeting with your student's grade level administrator, school counselor and/or pupil personnel worker (PPW) to discuss your concerns. Working with these staff members in advance can be of great benefit. As a general recommendation to parents/guardians who submit appeals, we suggest contacting your school team prior to a decision being rendered.
9. **I've changed my mind about which school I prefer. What do I do?**

Appeals are reviewed for hardships. If you have a preference for a different school in the consortium, you may participate in the *Change of Choice* process. Forms are available in school counseling offices in January and completed forms are due in mid-February. **High school** students are guaranteed to get their base school if requested. To be eligible to participate in the *Change of Choice* process, **middle school** students must be in grade 6. Assignments are made for the following school year.
10. **I have students (siblings) assigned to different schools and I would like them to attend the same school, may I appeal?**

The sibling link is exercised during the lottery process (Round 1) when most seats are available. Requests made for a placement after the lottery will be reviewed for a hardship.
11. **Whom do I contact if I need additional information?** Contact our team at 240-740-2540 or send an email to Laura Johnson, enrollment specialist at Laura_M_Johnson@mcpsmd.org or Miriam Grenidge, registrar at Miriam_J_Grenidge@mcpsmd.org (English or Spanish)