

2024–2025

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**—Students may apply for a COSA when extenuating circumstances related to their specific physical, mental, or emotional well-being or their family's individual or personal situation could be mitigated by a change of school assignment.
- **FAMILY MOVE**—Students whose families have moved within Montgomery County who wish to continue attending their former home school may request a COSA without demonstrating a unique hardship. Such requests may be considered for the remainder of the current school year only, with the exception that students in Grade 11 or 12 may be granted a COSA to stay through high school graduation.
- **SIBLINGS**—When a student seeks to attend the school where a sibling will be enrolled in the regular/general school program, or a special education program, during the year the student wants to enroll.
 - » When a sibling attends a magnet, language immersion, or other application program at the elementary level, a COSA may be approved to the regular school program for other 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 does not apply if a boundary change has occurred or if the sibling is in PreK.

REFER TO COSA FORM FOR MORE OPTIONS

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 applying to an MSMC school.
- **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), via email at DCCAPS@mcpsmd.org, located at 11721 Kemp Mill Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20902. For information on changing schools within NEC, DCC, or MSMC, contact the DCCAPS at 240-740-2540, or visiting the website: www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/schoolchoice

PLEASE NOTE: Absent of emergency event, all COSA request must be submitted by April 2, 2024, and by accepting a COSA, the parent or guardian must provide transportation.

DIVISION OF PUPIL PERSONNEL AND ATTENDANCE SERVICES (DPPAS)
240-740-5620 • COSArequest@mcpsmd.org

Maryland's Largest School District

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



VISION

We inspire learning by providing the greatest public education to each and every student.

MISSION

Every student will have the academic, creative problem solving, and social emotional skills to be successful in college and career.

CORE PURPOSE

Prepare all students to thrive in their future.

CORE VALUES

*Learning
Relationships
Respect
Excellence
Equity*

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850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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 www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/transfers/ where it can be found in seven additional languages. Fill it out and return it to your home school for review, residency verification, and signature by the principal. Bring your new proof of residence (Shared Housing form/lease/closing disclosure) in order to update the address. The 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 2024-2025 school year are to be submitted between the first school day in February 2024 and the first school day in April 2024. We will make every effort to notify parents/guardians and students of the decision regarding their COSA request by May 24, 2024. COSA requests submitted after the first school day in April will be accepted only if the student is a new resident of Montgomery County, the student has changed residence, or there is an emergency event that could not be foreseen prior to April. Documentation supporting this situation must be supplied. Documentation could include verification of a family move, or of a significant school or community-related event, which occurred after the April deadline. Students awaiting a decision on a COSA must attend their assigned school until a final decision is made.

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. In the absence of such documentation, evidence of such extenuating circumstances may be obtained through consultation with school staff.

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 preference, 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. In the absence of such documentation, evidence of

such extenuating circumstances may be obtained through consultation with school staff. Examples of such unique hardships include, but are not limited to, the following:

» **CHILD CARE:** Parents/guardians must demonstrate extenuating circumstances in obtaining age-appropriate supervision of school-age students before-and/or after-school because: (a) their work hours extend significantly beyond the typical hours for available child care programs and activities located within the home school or otherwise easily accessible child care programs; and/or (b) significant financial constraints limit the family's ability to otherwise access child care, or other student specified needs. The extenuating circumstances must be extremely significant for students beyond the elementary level.

» **WHEN THERE ARE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES** involving the physical, mental, or emotional well-being of the student. Parents/guardians seeking COSAs for this reason should provide documentation of: (a) ongoing treatment by a health care provider of issues related to the student's physical, mental, or emotional well-being that are directly related to or significantly impacted by the school environment; and/or (b) a significant health issue with unique care requirements (e.g., frequent medical appointments far from the student's home school and/or the parent's/guardian's work location).

What if my child is receiving special education services that are not offered in all schools?

If your student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires them to receive special education services that are not offered in all schools, then you should complete the COSA form, indicating that the student receives special education services, in addition to submitting appropriate documentation indicating the reason for the COSA request. The COSA form should be submitted to the student's school of enrollment. 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 students of MCPS staff members automatically approved for a COSA?

No. However, consistent with MCPS strategic priorities to encourage and support school-based staff who work in Title I Schools, Innovative School Year Calendar Schools, or Focus Schools, staff based in any one of those schools may request a transfer for their own child to attend the school in which they work under the following conditions:

- a. The staff member is assigned to work in one of the above referenced schools for the upcoming school year in a budgeted full-time equivalent (FTE) position that is eligible for leave, retirement, and health benefits coverage; and
- b. The staff member is a Montgomery County resident, and the student is otherwise eligible to enroll in MCPS; and
- c. The request is accompanied by a plan for childcare during all times during the staff member's duty day.

If the student's enrollment in the school in which the staff member works becomes an impediment to the staff member's ability to perform their duties satisfactorily, the student transfer may be rescinded.

MCPS staff who do not work in one of the schools identified in this section may otherwise apply for COSAs for their children in accordance with requirements of this policy and related regulations.

Is the transfer process the same for paired elementary schools?

Yes. If a student attends a paired primary school (Bel Pre, Montgomery Knolls, New Hampshire Estates, Roscoe R. Nix, Rosemary Hills, and Takoma Park elementary schools) on an approved COSA, they must submit a COSA form, which will be approved to the upper elementary grades school automatically.

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

Parents/Guardians must submit a COSA form, which will be approved automatically.

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 4-5 of this booklet for programs exempt from the COSA process

Can students submit a COSA request for an academic transfer?

High school students may request academic transfers to participate in one of the following:

1. A multi-year sequence of related courses, as defined in the district or school course catalog, that is not available at the student's home school. This refers to a sequence of related courses within a **CAREER-RELATED PROGRAM OF STUDY** not offered at the student's home school that culminates with a capstone course and/or program completion.

EXAMPLES:

Professional Restaurant Management Program: Sequence of related courses include Restaurant Management 1, Restaurant Management 2, and Capstone Internship or Dual Enrollment course.

CASE Program: Sequence of related courses include Introduction to Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources; Natural Resources and Ecology; Environmental Science Issues; and Agricultural Research and Development.

2. A multi-year single course sequence, as defined in the district or school course catalog, that is not available at the student's home school. This refers to a multi-year course sequence that results in advanced-level study of a specialized subject not offered in the student's home school.

EXAMPLES:

Arabic 1, Arabic 2, Arabic 3

Tap Dance 1, Tap Dance 2, Tap Dance 3

NOTE: Must be submitted between the first school day in **FEBRUARY 2024** and the first school day in **APRIL 2024**. Applicants will be permitted if space is available. Sibling link does not apply. If the student decides to discontinue with the program, student will return to their home school. Approved students are subjected to MCPS Student Transfer Policy available (See ww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/jee.pdf).

Are there programs exempt from the COSA criteria?

The following are examples of programs that are accessible through an application process and not part of the transfer process; however, other selection criteria may apply.

- Aviation and Aerospace at Col. Zadok Magruder High School
- Communication Arts Program at Montgomery Blair High School
- Regional International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at John F. Kennedy High School
- Regional International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at Springbrook High School
- Regional International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at Watkins Mill High School
- Countywide International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at Richard Montgomery High School
- Leadership Training Institute at Kennedy High School
- Science, Math, Computer Science Program at Montgomery Blair High School
- PLTW Engineering Program at Wheaton High School
- PLTW Biomedical Program at Wheaton High School
- Visual Art Center at Albert Einstein High School
- Healthcare Professions—Biosciences Academy at Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology

- Hospitality and Tourism Management - Global Studies Academy at Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology
- Information Technology & Cyber Security - Academy of Information Technology at Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology
- Construction Management and Engineering - Academy of Engineering at Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology
- Middle College at Montgomery College (MC2) Program at Northwood High School
- PLTW Biomedical Sciences IB Career Programs at Rockville High School
- PLTW Engineering IB Career Programs at Rockville High School
- Hospitality Management IB Career Programs at Rockville High School
- Computer Science IB Career Programs at Rockville High School
- Child Development Associate IB Career Programs at Rockville High School
- Global Ecology at Poolesville High School
- Science, Math, Computer Science Program at Poolesville High School
- Humanities at Poolesville High School
- Healthcare Professions at Seneca Valley High School
- Hospitality and Tourism Management at Seneca Valley High School
- Information Technology & Cyber Security at Seneca Valley High School
- Construction Management and Architecture at Seneca Valley High School
- Project Lead the Way Engineering at Seneca Valley High School
- Middle College at Montgomery College (MC2) Program at Northwest High School
- PLTW Biomedical Sciences at Gaithersburg High School
- Network Operations & Information Technology (PTECH) at Clarksburg High School
- The Humanities and Communication Magnet Program at Eastern Middle School and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School
- The Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program at Takoma Park Middle School and Roberto Clemente Middle School
- Middle School Magnet Consortium (Argyle, Loiederman, Parkland)
- Centers for Enriched Studies
- Students assigned to any elementary or middle school language immersion program
- Other programs as identified by the superintendent of schools
- Leadership of Social Justice at Whitman High School
- Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education at Sherwood High School
- Other programs as identified in the OPTIONS: Guide to Countywide Programs (www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/enrichedinnovative/options)

Students whose COSAs were approved for an academic transfer are required to return to their home school if they discontinue that program: (See ww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/jee.pdf)

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. In cases of requests for academic transfers, the COSA will be forwarded to the Office of Teaching, Learning, and School who will analyze the program request and communicate with the family.

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 no later than **MAY 24, 2024**.

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. Students attending school on a COSA must reapply for a COSA and demonstrate a unique hardship to attend 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 for proper cause. An example may be disciplinary infractions or attendance issues.

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. Please call the Athletics Unit at 240-740-5650 for more information.

Is transportation provided to the new school?

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

My COSA was denied. How do I appeal?

You may appeal to the **OFFICE OF CHIEF OF DISTRICT OPERATIONS**, via email DivisionOfAppeals@mcpsmd.org, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 43, Rockville, Maryland 20850. The chief of district operations serves as the superintendent of schools' designee. The appeal must be made in writing and received by the Office of District Operations no later than 15 calendar days following the date of the decision notification. 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.

If your appeal is denied by the chief of district operations, you may appeal to the **MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOARD), VIA EMAIL boeappeals@mcpsmd.org, 15 WEST GUDE DRIVE, ROOM 100, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850**, within 30 calendar days of the date of the chief of district operations' 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.**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**2024–2025 Request for Change of School Assignment (COSA)**

Request forms must be submitted no earlier than the first school day of February 2024, and no later than the first school day of April 2024, for the 2024-2025 school year. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, late applications will not be processed.

If using paper form, please print and use black ink.

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 2024. 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: To be completed by the Parent/Guardian.

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

Receiving Special Education Services No Yes

Current School _____ Entering Grade ____ in August 2024

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

Parent/Guardian: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Home phone ____-____-____ Work phone ____-____-____ Cell phone ____-____-____

Email address _____ Language spoken at home _____ TTY needed

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 ____/____/____

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—sibling attends requested school in grade ____, name of sibling _____ Sibling's MCPS ID # _____
- For students who entered Grade 3 for the 2021–2022 school year in the Immersion program and intend to continue in feeder pattern from middle to high school, **PLEASE NOTE: Valid through spring 2027 only.**
- Intent to continue in Grade 3–5 paired elementary schools for Bel Pre, Montgomery Knolls, New Hampshire Estates, Roscoe R. Nix, Rosemary Hills, and Takoma Park Elementary Schools. (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)
- MCPS Staff member who works in a Title I School, Innovative School Year Calendar School, or Focus School, requesting a transfer for their own child to attend the school in which they work. Name of school you are employed _____.
- Academic Transfer (High School Only)** Indicate the name of the program _____.
The review process considers space availability at the requested school and program availability at the student's home school.
- If submitted after April 2, 2024, please provide documentation with the reason the request is submitted after the deadline.**

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

Residency Verification has been completed Date ____/____/____ School # _____ MCPS Student ID # _____

I have discussed this request with the parent/guardian Yes No Date submitted to the school ____/____/____

Signature, Principal _____ Date ____/____/____

(Signature does not constitute agreement/disagreement with the request but does verify that residency has been validated.)

FORWARD TO: COSArequest@mcpsmd.org

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—Does not meet criteria

Denied—Submitted after deadline, absent of emergency circumstances

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: Chief of District Operations, Montgomery County Public Schools, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 43, Rockville, Maryland 20850, 240-740-4130, Divisionofappeals@mcpsmd.org.

MCP S N O N D I S C R I M I N A T I O N S T A T E M E N T

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) prohibits illegal discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family structure/parental status, marital status, age, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), 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. The Board prohibits the use of language and/or the display of images and symbols that promote hate and can be reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption to school or district operations or activities. 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. MCPS also provides equal access to the Boy/Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups.**

For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS students*	For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS staff*
Director of Student Welfare and Compliance Office of District Operations Student Welfare and Compliance 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 55, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3215 SWC@mcpsmd.org	Human Resource Compliance Officer Office of Human Resources and Development Department of Compliance and Investigations 45 West Gude Drive, Suite 2500, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888 DCI@mcpsmd.org
For student requests for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	For staff requests for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act
Section 504 Coordinator Office of School Support and Well-being Office of Well-being, Learning and Achievement 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 257, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-5630 504@mcpsmd.org	ADA Compliance Coordinator Office of Human Resources and Development Department of Compliance and Investigations 45 West Gude Drive, Suite 2500, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888 DCI@mcpsmd.org
For inquiries or complaints about sex discrimination under Title IX, including sexual harassment, against students or staff*	
Title IX Coordinator Office of District Operations Student Welfare and Compliance 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 55, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3215 TitleIX@mcpsmd.org	

*Discrimination complaints may be filed with other agencies, such as the following: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Baltimore Field Office, GH Fallon Federal Building, 31 Hopkins Plaza, Suite 1432, Baltimore, MD 21201, 1-800-669-4000, 1-800-669-6820 (TTY); Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR), William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900, Baltimore, MD 21202, 410-767-8600, 1-800-637-6247, mccr@maryland.gov; or U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), The Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East, Suite 515, Philadelphia, PA 19107, 1-800-421-3481, 1-800-877-8339 (TDD), OCR@ed.gov, or www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html.

**This notification complies with the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended.

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 Office of Communications 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) mcpsinterpretingservices@mcpsmd.org, or MCPSInterpretingServices@mcpsmd.org.

Maryland's Largest School District

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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