

**MONTCALM AREA INTERMEDIATE
SCHOOL DISTRICT
(MAISD)**

**SCHOOLS
OF
CHOICE**

Open Enrollment Program

Montcalm Area ISD
621 New Street
PO Box 367
Stanton, MI 48888
989-831-5261
www.maisd.com

Overview and Background About Schools of Choice

Historically, American citizens have been allowed freedom of choice in most aspects of their lives. For some, educational choices or options may be equally important in the lives of their children. Schools of Choice, or the open enrollment plan, may provide the next step in a natural progression of democracy in our educational systems. Choice is not a solution for all of the problems facing public education today. It is, however, a small positive step toward overall school improvement and quality education for all. The benefit of choice for some students cannot be ignored.

During the period 1992-1995, the efforts of the Montcalm Schools of Choice Planning Committee were supported with a grant from the Michigan Department of Education under Section 91 of the State School Aid Act. This broad based committee of parents, educators and non-school people developed a pilot schools of choice open enrollment program which became effective in the 1993-1994 school year. Changes have been made in the policies and procedures each year as experience dictated. This brochure is the latest effort to help parents learn how to participate in the program and to share the policies and procedures which will help students be successful.

Information is included in this brochure about the application process, the transportation, graduation requirements and athletic policies.

Please call the Montcalm Area ISD at (989) 831-5261 for further information or to receive a copy of the Schools of Choice application. The deadline for applications is the fourth Wednesday of September of the current year.

What Parents or Guardians Need to Know About the Montcalm area ISD Schools of Choice Program

The Application Process

The application process for the Montcalm Area Schools of Choice program has been designed to guarantee all applicants a fair and equitable opportunity. Parents or guardians should be aware of the application timelines, length of transfers, graduation requirements and commitments. Listed below are the guidelines regarding the application process.

1. Transfers under the MAISD Schools of Choice program will take place twice yearly; at the beginning of the school year and at second semester. Transfers that occur at points other than the start of each semester are discouraged, but may be allowed only upon discussion and mutual agreement of the superintendents involved. The deadline for application return is the fourth Wednesday in September and the second Wednesday in February of the current year.
2. The number of transfers allowed under the MAISD Schools of Choice program is determined by the space available in each participating district and the space available at each building grade level. Once a grade level is closed, only then can a special education transfer request in that specific grade be denied.
3. Requests for Schools of Choice transfer by students who are residents in another district, but who already attend the choice school through another transfer option, will have priority over other student requests for transfer through the MAISD Schools of Choice program.
4. All participants in the MAISD Schools of Choice program are expected to attend their school of choice during the entire school year. Requests for student transfers during the school year back to the student's home district will be granted only under extenuating circumstances.
5. The criteria for accepting or rejecting students must be made known to parents or guardians. No student shall be refused entrance into a non-resident district based on previous academic achievement, athletic or extra-curricular ability, disability or English proficiency. The non-resident district may reject applications based on last of space available in specific grades, programs, schools, or the district, or in accordance with local contractual agreements and State guidelines, or in cases where a student has been a serious discipline problem.

The Application Process continued...

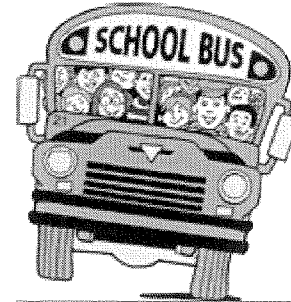
6. A student approved for transfer to a choice district is allowed to remain in the choice district until his/her class graduates from that school, unless overcrowding or redistricting occurs. In cases where return to the resident district would cause extreme hardship to a student, the choice district superintendents may waive this policy. The student does not need to reapply for admission to the same choice school each year once approved for transfer under the MAISD Schools of Choice program
7.
 - a. Students participating in the Schools of Choice program who wish to return to their home school for the following year should notify their home school district of their intent to return by April 1st.
 - b. Students who must return to their district of residence due to overcrowding or redistricting in their choice district (see 6) will be notified as soon as possible by the choice district.
8. Applications for the MAISD Schools of Choice program will be available from buildings in the participating districts and the Montcalm Area ISD. Applications must be returned to the MAISD by the fourth Wednesday of September and the second Wednesday of February of the current year. Applicants will be notified as to whether their application has been approved. Parents or guardians will have an opportunity to accept or reject acceptance into the program.
9. Parents, guardians and students desiring to participate in the MAISD Schools of Choice program are strongly urged to meet with a building administrator or district representative of the choice school to discuss school rules, curriculum, parent involvement, graduation requirements, grade placement and other school-related issues. This should be done before the application form is returned to the MAISD.
10. Schools of Choice applications will allow students to list a first and alternate choice. There is no guarantee that space in the schools selected will be available.
11. A student requesting a transfer is allowed to request which district and building he/she would like to attend, but requests for specific teachers will not be allowed.

The Application Process continued...

12. The number of openings in a particular program for participating district students will be determined by optimum size for a particular program or classroom, which is the number of students that can be accommodated without increasing district expenditures for staff or equipment.
13. An application form must be completed for each student wishing to participate in the MAISD Schools of Choice program. There are no guarantees of any siblings receiving admission into the MAISD Schools of Choice program.
14. Applications from participating district students under an IEP shall not be considered if the district is not currently providing the services called for in the IEP.
15. If there are more requests for admission to a building than space is available, a random drawing will be held to determine which applicants will be accepted for transfer to that school. The random drawing will be coordinated by the Receiving District's Schools of Choice application committee.
16. A student and his/her parents or guardian/guardians may wish to appeal the decision regarding the application for transfer. Such an appeal may be filed only for arbitrary or capricious violation of the MAISD Schools of Choice Policy and must be filed within thirty (30) days of notification, to the MAISD. The parents, guardians, or student must explain the reasons for the appeal, in writing. The appeal will be reviewed by a committee consisting of one representative from the home school, one from the choice school, and one from the MAISD, at a scheduled meeting, of which the student, parents, or guardians will be notified. This appeal review will take place within ten days of MAISD's receipt of appeal.
17. Applications of the MAISD Schools of Choice program must be received by the fourth Wednesday of September and the second Wednesday of February of the current year, at the Montcalm Area ISD, 621 New Street, PO Box 367, Stanton, Michigan 48888.

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

Transportation is a key issue in the MAISD Schools of Choice Program. It is the sole responsibility of parents or guardians to transport their children to and from the choice school. The following is a list of the transportation guidelines for the MAISD Schools of Choice Program:



1. Parents or guardians will be responsible for transporting students to and from school in the MAISD Schools of Choice Program.
2. Parents or guardians have the option to drive their child to a pre-approved bus stop in the school district of choice if space is available on the bus. Once the child is transported from school to the bus stop it is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to provide transportation home for the child. Parents or guardians should also be aware that on those rare occasions when school closes early due to weather, etc., it is also their responsibility to provide transportation home for the child.
3. Parents or guardians will assume the responsibility for the safety of the child at the bus stop.
4. Students participating in the MAISD Schools of Choice Program, who are eligible to ride a school bus, are required to follow rules, regulations and bus discipline policy of the choice district.
5. MAISD Schools of Choice participants will be expected to arrive at the choice school on time every day.

GRADUATION/PROMOTION

Requirements and Curriculum Issues

Each school district in the Montcalm Area ISD has developed a curriculum that is based on the State of Michigan Core Curriculum Model. In addition, each district has its own locally approved grading system and graduation requirements. While there are some similarities if requirements among districts, parents or guardians should be aware of the following conditions of the MAISD Schools.

1. Participants are required to graduate with the number of credits determined by the district they are attending at the time of graduation.
2. Before a student transfer actually takes place, parents or guardians are urged to meet with a counselor/administrator in the choice school district to review all rules, regulations, grading system and graduation requirements.
3. All districts will supply, at the request of parents or guardians, a current listing of graduation requirements for the high school they wish to have their child attend. To receive a copy of graduation requirements, parents of guardians should contact the high school principal of the school of choice.
4. Upon acceptance into the program, a current listing of outcome requirements from that building will be supplied to participants.
5. Schools of Choice students may participate in their choice district's summer programs, pending space availability.

ATHLETIC POLICY

The focus of the Montcalm Area Intermediate School District Schools of Choice program is on academics, not athletics. Therefore, students and parents or guardians should be aware of the following conditions for transferring.

Students will follow the choice district's policies for participation in the district's athletic activities.

A student athlete (junior high/middle school or high school) participating in a Montcalm Area Schools of Choice Program is eligible to participate in an inter-scholastic athletic contest according to the rules and regulations as defined and governed by the Michigan High School athletic Association (MHSAA). For questions about MHSAA rules and regulations, please contact the MHSAA in Lansing, 517-332-5046 or your district athletic director.

MONTCALM AREA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS OF CHOICE

Open Enrollment Program

Participating Districts:

Carson City-Crystal Area Schools
Central Montcalm Public Schools
Greenville Public Schools
Lakeview Community Schools
Montabella Community Schools
Tri County Area Schools
Vestaburg Community Schools

For more information contact:
Montcalm Area Intermediate School District
621 New Street, PO Box 367
Stanton, Michigan 48888
989-831-5261
Leanne Bush, ext. 443
Fax: 989-831-8727

The Board of Education of the Montcalm Area Intermediate School District complies with all federal and state laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination and with all requirements and regulations of the United States Department of Education and the Michigan State Department of Education.

It is also the policy of the Montcalm Area Intermediate School District Board of Education that no person on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, limited English, or handicap shall be discriminated against, excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in any program, employment practice, or activity for which it receives financial assistance from the United States Department of Education or the Michigan State Department of Education.

Auxiliary aides and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. (989) 831-5261, ext. 424.