



COUNTYWIDE AND CONTIGUOUS ISDs COOPERATIVE (INTER-DISTRICT) SCHOOLS OF CHOICE PROGRAM

(This "Choice Program" replaces Section 105 and 105c of Michigan School Aid Act
MCL [388.1705 and 388.1705c])

Montcalm Area Intermediate School District's Schools of Choice
policies, guidelines, and highlights.

What Parents Need to Know About the Countywide Application Process

The application process for the Montcalm Area ISD Countywide Schools of Choice Program has been designed to guarantee all applicants a fair and equitable opportunity. Parents should be aware of the application timelines, sibling transfers, and graduation requirements. **The Montcalm Area ISD Cooperative Schools of Choice Program has (2) open window periods for application for schools of choice: The first choice window is open from August 1st through September 15th; The second window is open from December 1st through January 15th** of any given school year. Applications received after this will be rejected. Listed below are the guidelines regarding the application process:

1. All transfers under the countywide Schools of Choice Program take place at the beginning of each semester after each window closes. Once the Schools of Choice window is closed, no more applications will be accepted until the next Schools of Choice window opens.
2. The number of transfers allowed under the countywide Schools of Choice Program are determined by the space available in each participating district and the space available at each building.
3. All participants in the countywide Schools of Choice Program are highly encouraged and in the best interest of the student to attend their school of choice for the entire semester. Students requesting transfers back to their home school during the school year will be reviewed on an individual basis.
4. Students must be in good standing in their resident district to apply for Schools of Choice. For example, a student who has been suspended during the past two years (even for one day) or is not attending another school due to expulsion or has previously dropped out of school may be denied admission under the Schools of Choice Program, or the student has been convicted of a felony. In addition, poor attendance/truancy, poor

academic standing (GPA lower than 2.0), and the number of behavior referrals can also be grounds for rejection. For these reasons, parents must sign a release of information to allow the school of choice to request records from previous schools.

5. Students approved for transfer to a choice district are allowed to remain in the district until graduation or unless otherwise expelled by the choice (enrolling) district. The student does not need to reapply for admission to the district each year, once approved for transfer under the countywide Schools of Choice Program. Should overcrowding or redistricting occur, the Schools of Choice participant will be guaranteed a spot within the choice district.
6. Students participating in the Schools of Choice Program who wish to return to their home school for the following semester, should notify their home school district as well as the choice school of their intent to return ASAP.
7. Applications for the countywide Schools of Choice Program are available from the participating school districts within Montcalm Area ISD boundaries. Applicants will be notified in writing as to whether they have been accepted into the school of choice and if their choice school is available. Parent(s) will have an opportunity to accept or reject acceptance into the school of choice offered. Parents/Guardians will be notified prior to the first day of school of the school year or the first day of second semester depending on which enrollment window is applicable. Parents/Guardians will be allowed (14) days to accept the School of Choice offer, otherwise the offer will be void.
8. Parents and students desiring to participate in the countywide Schools of Choice Program are encouraged to meet with a building administrator to discuss school rules, curriculum, parent involvement, graduation requirements, and other school-related issues.
9. An application form must be completed for each student wishing to participate in the countywide Schools of Choice Program. Schools of Choice applications allow students to list a first and alternate choice.
10. Students requesting a transfer are allowed to request which district and building he/she would like to attend, **but requests for specific teachers will not be allowed**. All transfers approved under the countywide Schools of Choice Program will be based on space availability.
11. Siblings of students already attending the choice district who live in the same household will receive preference over other applicants. **There are no guarantees of any siblings receiving admission into the countywide Schools of Choice Program.**
12. If there are more requests for admission than space available, a lottery will be held by the district to determine which applicants will be accepted for transfer. The school will make a waiting list in each case.
13. Since most high school and middle school class schedules are developed prior to completion of the Schools of Choice application process, students requesting transfers to another school district should be aware that not all class requests may be granted. Prior to submitting a countywide Schools of Choice application, it is suggested that the student and his/her parents meet with a counselor or school administrator at the school of choice to determine class availability.

14. Applications for the countywide Schools of Choice Program should be returned to the local school building or district that you are applying to attend through the countywide Schools of Choice Program.
15. Any applications that contain fraudulent information will be denied.

Graduation Requirements and Curriculum Issues

Each school district in Montcalm County has developed a curriculum that is based on the State of Michigan curriculum standards and benchmarks. In addition, each district has its own locally approved grading system and graduation requirements. While there are some similarities of requirements among districts, parents should be aware of the following conditions of the countywide Schools of Choice Program:

1. Before a student transfer actually takes place, the parent(s) and student should meet with a counselor/administrator in the new school district to review all rules, regulations, grading system and graduation requirements. Any Personal Curriculum Agreement(s) are district specific. If one existed at your previous school, a new Personal Curriculum agreement must be applied for if enrolling in a new school district.
2. Participants in the Montcalm Area ISD Cooperative Choice Agreement are required to graduate with the number of credits determined by the district they are attending at the time of graduation.
3. All districts will supply, at the request of parents, 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 should contact the high school principal of the school of choice.
4. Upon acceptance into the program, a current listing of graduation requirements will be supplied to participants who are of high school age.
5. Schools of Choice students may not be eligible to participate in programs that begin prior to the start of the student's first semester in the choice district. Contact the choice district for eligibility requirements.

Transportation Guidelines

Transportation is a key issue in the countywide Schools of Choice Program. **It is the sole responsibility of parents to transport their children to and from the choice school and parents must provide their own transportation. Transportation is not offered through the Montcalm Area ISD Cooperative Schools of Choice program.** In some cases parents may be given the option to drive their child to a pre-approved bus stop within the school district of choice if space is available on that bus. However, this decision is the sole discretion of the school administration employed by the school of choice. If the district of choice and the parent

have an agreement for transportation to a bus stop within the district, the following guidelines will apply:

1. If transportation can be coordinated between the district and the family, parents will assume the responsibility for the safety of the child at the bus stop.
2. Students participating in the countywide Schools of Choice Program, who are approved to ride a school bus, are required to follow the rules, regulations, and bus discipline policy of the choice district.
3. Countywide Schools of Choice participants will be expected to arrive at school on time every day.
4. Participants will follow the choice district's attendance and tardy policy, and will be disciplined according to those policies.
5. On those rare occasions when school closes due to inclement weather, power outages, etc., it is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation home for the student.
6. Any agreement by the district to allow a student participating in the countywide Schools of Choice program can be terminated/canceled at any time by the school administration. Priority for transporting students will always be given to resident students within any local school district.

Athletic Policy

The focus of the Montcalm Area ISD of Choice Program is based on academics not athletics. Student athletes participating in the Montcalm Area ISD of Choice Program must follow the athletic rules of the choice district and the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA).

Contiguous Intermediate School District Schools of Choice

The State School Aid Act offers nonresident students residing in a district located in a contiguous intermediate school district the opportunity to transfer into a school district in a neighboring county as a Schools of Choice student. All school districts located within Montcalm Area Intermediate School District decide annually whether or not to accept students from neighboring intermediate school districts based on space availability.

The Contiguous Intermediate District Schools of Choice Program is included as part of the Montcalm Area ISD Collaborative Choice Agreement/Program. However, the application timelines and many of the Montcalm Area ISD Schools of Choice guidelines apply to the Contiguous Intermediate School District Schools of Choice Program. Below are some specific guidelines that apply to this program:

1. Transfers are subject to the requirement in the Michigan School Aid Act related to the requirement of a written agreement with the contiguous district for the provision of any special education services and programs. ***The Provisions of Service agreement must be completed before a student's application for contiguous ISD Schools of Choice is approved. In the event the home district and choice district are unable to come to agreement, the student shall remain in their resident district.***
2. Siblings of students already attending the choice district who live in the same household will receive preference over other applicants. **There are no guarantees of any siblings receiving admission into the countywide Schools of Choice Program.**
3. Students must be in good standing in their resident district to apply for 105(c) Schools of Choice. For example, a student who has been suspended during the past two years (even for one day) or is not attending another school due to expulsion or has previously dropped out of school or students convicted of a felony may be denied admission under the Schools of Choice Program. In addition, poor attendance/truancy and the number of behavior referrals can also be grounds for rejection. For these reasons, parents must sign a release of information to allow the school of choice to request records from previous schools.
4. Eligibility to participate in interscholastic athletic contests is subject to the policies and eligibility rules of the enrolling school district and the Michigan High School Athletic Association regulations
5. Applications for enrollment from a contiguous ISD must be on an application form as provided by the enrolling district.
6. Any application which contains fraudulent information will be denied..

Montcalm Area ISD Local School Districts of Choice

- **Carson-City Crystal Area Schools**
115 E. Main St, Carson City, MI 48811 (989) 584-3138
- **Central Montcalm Public Schools**
1480 S. Sheridan Rd, Stanton MI 48888 (989) 831-2000
- **Greenville Public Schools**
1414 Chase St, Greenville MI 48838 (616) 754-3686
- **Lakeview Community Schools**
602 Washington St, Lakeview MI 48850 (989) 352-7221
- **Montabella Community Schools**
1390 North County Line Rd, Blanchard MI 49310 (989) 427-5148
- **Tri County Area Schools**
94 Cherry St, Sand Lake MI 49343 (616) 636-5454
- **Vestaburg Community Schools**
7188 Avenue B, Vestaburg MI 48891 (989) 268-5353

Contiguous Intermediate School Districts

- Clinton County RESA
- Gratiot-Isabella RESD
- Kent Intermediate School District
- Ionia Intermediate School District
- Mecosta-Osceola ISD
- Newaygo County RESA

Non-discrimination Policy

Montcalm Area Intermediate School District and our constituent local districts do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, height, weight, or marital status in its programs and activities. In addition, arrangements can be made to ensure that the lack of English language proficiency is not a barrier to admission or participation.