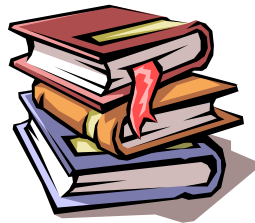


Important Facts About the
Standish-Sterling Community School District

SCHOOLS OF CHOICE PROGRAM

Standish-Sterling Community School District



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SCHOOLS OF CHOICE

The Standish-Sterling Community School District has developed the policies and procedures that will allow students to attend our schools even though they live within contiguous school districts. The overall goal of the program is to ensure that all students continue to receive a high quality education that meets their individual needs. Students will be able to apply to the district they would like to attend, regardless of where they live within contiguous school districts.

The Schools of Choice concept is part of a national and statewide focus on education reform and it represents an exciting opportunity. Whether students decide to attend their home school or go to another school district, the program gives parents and students a greater role in shaping education by choosing the school they think will best serve their educational needs.

How To Make the Best Choice

The Standish-Sterling Community School District provides a quality education. Our school district has placed a priority on smaller class sizes, and many of our graduates go on to either a four-year or two-year colleges and universities.

Making the best choice requires learning about the school district you are considering. There are a number of ways you can learn more about a school, for example:

- Talk with students who attend the school and with their parents.
- Visit the school and meet with the principal and other staff members.
- Ask for a copy of the Student Handbook or Annual Report to learn more about the educational opportunities that are available.
- Review the policies of the district you are considering, including graduation requirements, schedules, course offerings and extracurricular opportunities.
- Talk with the Superintendent and members of the Board of Education.

The Schools of Choice program includes policies that will help ensure that all students get a fair and quality education. The following are some important facts you should know regarding our Schools of Choice program:

- Parents are responsible for transportation of their child to and from school.
- An application must be completed for each student.
- High school aged students in grades ten through twelve who enter the Schools of Choice program are not eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for one full semester.
- Schools of Choice participants in the seventh, eighth and ninth grades may participate in athletics in accordance with Michigan High School Athletic Association guidelines.
- A student must make a one-year commitment to attend the choice school upon entering the Schools of Choice program.
- Participants are required to meet the graduation requirements of the Standish-Sterling Community School District.
- The number of students allowed to participate is determined by space availability and future growth potential. This number is determined by the Standish-Sterling Community School District.
- Students are required to follow all policies and procedures of the Standish-Sterling Community School District.

- The Standish-Sterling Community School District reserves the right to refuse enrollment to a student who has demonstrated disciplinary behavior problems in his/her home district.
- The Standish-Sterling Community School District will make every attempt to place students in the requested building of choice, but final determination will be based on space availability and class size. The school district reserves the right to determine the number and location of all final placements.

Turning Opportunity Into A Reality

To enroll your child in the Schools of Choice program, you must fill out an application and submit it to the Standish-Sterling Community School District. Applications are available from all school buildings and the Administration Office of the school district.

The number of openings available at each school depends on space availability as determined by the Board of Education of the Standish-Sterling Community School District. A school will also consider growth potential of surrounding areas to allow space for students moving into the area. District residents are ALWAYS given first priority. This is followed by any student who would like to attend school in a district other than the one where he/she lives.

All students requesting a transfer into a district will be treated equally. Neither academic standing nor athletic ability will be considered in transfer decisions. If there are more applicants than available space, the selection will be made by a lottery process conducted by the school district.

Important Facts Regarding Schools of Choice

The application process for the Schools of Choice program has been designed to provide all applicants a fair and equitable opportunity to apply. Parents should be aware of the application timelines, length of transfers, sibling transfers, and graduation requirements. Listed below are the guidelines regarding the application process:

1. The district will accept students under the Schools of Choice program during specified timelines at the beginning of the first and second semesters. All transfer acceptance is subject to space availability.
2. The number of transfers allowed under Schools of Choice is determined by the space available at each building. The number of students placed shall not exceed what the district has determined to be its maximum.
3. All participants in the Standish-Sterling Schools of Choice program are required to attend their school of choice for the entire school year. Requests for student transfers during the school year back to the student's home district will be reviewed on an individual basis.
4. The district may refuse to enroll a non-resident applicant if the applicant is or has been a discipline problem at another school, is or has been suspended while attending another school, if the applicant has ever been expelled from another school, or if the application was falsified in any way or is incomplete as determined by the Standish-Sterling Community School District.
5. A student approved under the choice plan is allowed to remain in the receiving district until his/her class graduates. The student does not need to reapply for admission once approved for transfer under the Schools of Choice program. If the student leaves to attend another school, a new application will be required. 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 district for the following year must notify their home school district of their intent to return by May 1.
7. Applications for the Schools of Choice program will be available for the years that the Standish-Sterling Community School District decides to participate in the Schools of Choice Program. Applicants will be notified in writing whether they have been accepted into the program and if their choice school is available. Parents will have an opportunity to accept or reject acceptance into the program.
8. Parents and students desiring to participate in the 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. Schools of Choice applications may allow students to list a first and alternate choice. There is no guarantee that space in the school(s) selected will be available. The school district reserves the right for final placement.
10. Students requesting a transfer into the district are allowed to request which building within the district they would like to attend, but requests for specific teachers will not be allowed. All transfers approved under the Schools of Choice program will be based on space availability.
11. An application form must be completed for each student wishing to participate in the Schools of Choice program. The Standish-Sterling Community School District will make every effort to prioritize families with siblings but there are no guarantees, and final acceptance and placement will be based on space availability.
12. If there are more requests for admission to a building than space available, a lottery will be held to determine which applicants will be accepted for transfer to that school. Standish-Sterling Community School District administrative personnel will conduct the lottery drawing.
13. If a student and his/her parents do not accept the decision regarding their application for transfer under the Schools of Choice guidelines, they may appeal in writing to the Superintendent of Schools. An appeal must be requested within three (3) days after the completion of the assignment process in the event that it is necessary to hold a lottery drawing. The parents must explain, in writing, why they are appealing. The written materials should be thorough and complete. The decision in the appeal will be based solely on the written materials submitted by the parent. A written decision will be provided to the appealing parents within five (5) days of the district's receipt of the appeal. The written response will be final.
14. If a student is enrolled in the district and it is determined that his/her application was falsified, the student may be asked to return to his/her home district.
15. 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 Schools of Choice application, it is suggested that the students and his/her parents meet with a school counselor or school administrator at the school of choice to determine class availability.
16. Applications for the Schools of Choice program should be returned to the Standish-Sterling Community School District, 3789 Wyatt Road, Standish, MI 48658 and clearly marked "Schools of Choice Application".

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AND CURRICULUM ISSUES

Participants are required to graduate with the number of credits determined by the district they are attending at the time of graduation. Before a student transfer actually takes place, it is recommended that the parents and student meet with a counselor/administrator in the new school

district to review all rules, regulations, the grading system and graduation requirements. Parents of high school students will be asked to sign a waiver when accepting a Schools of Choice transfer stating that they have read and agree with the graduation requirements of the new school district.

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.

Upon acceptance into the program, a current listing of graduation requirements will be supplied to participants who are of high school age.

ATHLETIC POLICY

The focus of the Schools of Choice program is based on academics, not athletics. Therefore, students and parents should be aware of the following conditions for transferring.

A high school student participating in a Schools of Choice program is not eligible to participate in an interscholastic athletic contest (as defined and governed by the Michigan High School Athletic Association, MHSAA) at the choice school for one full semester unless the student qualifies under one or more of the following exceptions:

- High school seniors whose families move from their home district prior to the start of their senior year may request a transfer back to their home school (where they attended during their junior year) without penalty of sitting out a semester of athletics.
- In addition, student athletes transferring back to their home school under a Schools of Choice program may be ineligible to participate in an interscholastic contest for a period of time based on the requirements of their home school.
- Schools of Choice participants who will be in the 9th grade will be allowed to participate in athletics immediately. This is in accordance with the MHSAA guidelines.

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

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

- Parents will be responsible for transporting students to and from school in the Schools of Choice program.
- Parents may 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 to provide transportation home for the child. Parents should also be aware that on those rare occasions when school closes early due to inclement weather, or other conditions, it is also their responsibility to provide transportation home for the child.
- Parents will assume the responsibility for the safety of the child at the bus stop.
- Students participating in the Schools of Choice program who are eligible to ride a school bus are required to follow the rules, regulations, and bus discipline policy of the Standish-Sterling Community School District.

- Schools of Choice participants will be expected to arrive at school on time every day. If tardiness before or after school becomes persistent, a participant may be asked to return to his/her home district.
- Participants will follow the new district's attendance and tardy policies, and will be subject to discipline according to those policies.

Summary

There are many factors that will influence the decision to participate in the Schools of Choice Program. Parents will have to consider whether this is right for their children. This document will provide you with information that will help you make that decision.