

From: Sunil Dasgupta, Chair, Health and Safety Committee  
To: MCCPTA Board of Directors  
Sub: Health and Safety Committee Monthly Report  
Date: 2018-04-09

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This report is divided into parts. The first addresses H&S Committee as a whole. This is followed by subcommittee reports.

### **H&S Committee**

Planning Mental Health and Wellness Forum 4/22.

### **MCPS-MCCPTA Mental Health and Wellness Forum**

**April 22, 1-5 pm, Gaithersburg High School**

1-2 pm **State of Youth Mental Health and Wellness in MoCo**

Ann Mazur, CEO, [EveryMind](#) and Ananya Tadikonda, SMOB Candidate for 2018-19

4-5 pm **Crisis Management and Suicide Prevention**

Dr. Elizabeth Rathbone, OSFSE, [Montgomery County Public Schools](#), and Rachel Larkin, [EveryMind](#)

2-4 pm **Breakout Sessions** on

Coping with Anxiety and Stress

Ending the Silence (NAMI)

Physical Exercise and Mental Health

Mindfulness

Mental Health First Aid (not full training)

Keeping Kids Safe Online

Trauma-informed practice

Child Abuse and Neglect

Spanish language panel led by [Identity](#)

**More information and speaker bios coming on MoCo Mental Health and Wellness Facebook Page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/180171875915731/>

**Online Forum registration form for April 22 Mental Health and Wellness Forum available:** <https://goo.gl/forms/eHVPgj6erLeoXxSW2>

### **School Nutrition**

School Nutrition Committee will be represented at the Mental Health and Wellness Forum at a nutrition resource table. Have invited MCPS DFNS Director Susan McCarron to attend the event. Plan to meet with Susan McCarron one more time before the end of the school year to discuss sharing school-specific a la carte menus with parents, salad bar updates, and any DFNS news to share with delegates.

## **Safe Technology**

- Working with MCPS and BOE to advocate for HB1110 — Devices in Classroom Best Practices
- Planning Screen Schooled Event for May — DATE TBD
- Held Subcommittee Meeting March 9
- Attended School Security Meeting on March 20
- Met with SMOB Candidates
- Lisa Cline invited onto MCPS Common Sense Education Team

## **School Climate**

March focused the following:

1. Reviewing/communicating serious incident protocols and procedures (following incidents at Clarksburg HS, Magruder HS, etc.)
2. Physical safety drills and communications (following threats against schools, lockdowns, etc.)
3. Preventing and responding to child sexual abuse (following incidents at Cloverly and Stedwick). Sunil Dasgupta attended the Cloverly ES Community meeting organized for MCPS responding to child sexual abuse of children
4. Communication re planned walkouts related to gun violence and school safety
5. MCCPTA signed on to the [Call to Action to Prevent Gun Violence](#) and recommended to MCPS that the experts' recommendations addressed and incorporated in MCPS' final report on school safety and security.

The top three were discussed at MCPS HQ on March 20th, see attached notes.

Looking forward:

- BOE discussion on school safety and security 4/12
- Magruder follow up 4/13
- County Council Meeting addressing MCPS and child sexual abuse 4/25
- MCPS final report on school safety and security, due to be released mid-month

**Notes on MCCPTA Health and Safety Committee Meeting with  
MCPS Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement  
March 20, 2018 - 1:00-2:30 PM**

### Participants

Jennifer Alvaro, LCSW-C, MD

Tracy Anderson, Assistant to Associate Superintendent

Dr. Jonathan Brice, Associate Superintendent, Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement

Lisa Cline, MCCPTA Sub-Committee on Safe Technology, Co-Chair

Dr. Sunil Dasgupta, MCCPTA Committee on Health and Safety, Chair

Susan Gorant, Bell Elementary School MCCPTA Delegate

Dr. Darlene Harris, Supervisor, Office of the Chief of Staff

Dr. Michael Harting, Supervisor, Department of School Safety and Security

Dr. Donna Hollingshead, Associate Superintendent of School Administration

Gillian Huebner, MCCPTA Subcommittee on School Climate and Safety, Chair

Sharon Karayianis, Churchill HS parent

Joel Michael Schwarz, Ashburton ES parent

### Agenda and notes

#### **Serious incident protocols and procedures**

- Recent incidents at Magruder HS point to a need to clarify and communicate protocols regarding “serious incidents”, including threat made on social media.
- A request was made to review the recent Magruder incidents and the response. [This request was acted upon immediately by MCPS. An after-action review will be conducted with the appropriate stakeholders.]
- Clear communication to the MCPS community regarding threat assessment protocols is critical. How are threats assessed and deemed to be credible or not? This is a growing concern, particularly following the threats that were not attended to prior to the Parkland and St. Mary's school shootings. When an incident meets the definition of a “serious incident”, is the student who has levied a threat evaluated and cleared as “non-threatening” by a mental health professional before they return to school? Maryland law requires a standard response in the case of children who threaten to hurt themselves. MCPS follows a strict protocol in such instances, involving communication with parents and ensuring that the child is promptly evaluated by a mental health professional (even if the child denies any intention to hurt themselves). If the school does not think the parent will get the child to a crisis center/therapist, MCPS is required to contact social services. Similar protocols need to be followed when threats are made towards other students or members of the MCPS community. The protocols need to be clarified and communicated as soon as possible.
- MCCPTA recommends that MCPS prepare a FAQ document to clarify safety and security protocols, including how “serious incidents” and threat assessments are handled. The document should include key points of contact within and outside MCPS for matters related to school safety and security. It would be helpful to include a MCPS climate, safety and protection organizational chart with contact information for key stakeholders.
- MCCPTA has signed on to the [Call to Action to Prevent Gun Violence](#) and would like to see the experts’ recommendations addressed and incorporated in MCPS’ final report on school safety and security.
- Discussion points we did not manage to cover:

- When are [restorative practices](#) employed vs [suspensions/expulsions](#)?
- Is or will gun violence prevention be incorporated into the curriculum?

## Physical safety

- Drills
  - The State of Maryland mandates 5-8 fire drills in addition to 6 emergency drills each academic year. The emergency drills include 1) lockdown, 2) shelter, 3) evacuation, 4) reverse evacuation, 5) drop, cover, hold (earthquake), and 6) severe weather. Lockdown and shelter in place drills are currently used as preparation for active shooter situations.
  - MCPS continues to review best practices in safety/security drills, including [ALICE training](#).
  - Parents are welcome to watch in-school safety drills in coordination with the school administration and PTA.
  - Parents recommended increased safety training for teachers. In-service training opportunities are limited due to the decreasing number of staff development days. This may be an area in which MCCPTA advocacy could be important.
  - Attention needs to be paid to the mental health side of safety and security drills. Parents suggested incorporating [restorative practices \(classroom circles\)](#), already used within some schools, following drills to allow students and staff to process the events.
- [MCPS-MCPD MoU](#): Parents have expressed concern re part-time SRO coverage and discrepancies in security coverage for elementary, middle and high schools. The forthcoming MCPS report on school safety and security (due mid-April 2018) will likely recommend increased security staff.
- The MCPS report on school safety and security (due mid-April 2018) will also recommend other security infrastructure improvements.
- Emergency communication systems need to be improved and consistent. Schools still use various methods. Parents encouraged the use of emergency text messaging systems.

## Preventing and responding to child sexual abuse

- Jennifer Alavaro, a MCPS parent and expert in preventing child sexual abuse shared a 19-page document outlining 10 recommendations to prevent child sexual abuse within MCPS on March 14. MCPS will respond to the recommendations before April 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Parents expressed concern regarding recent events at Cloverly ES and Churchill HS, particularly concerning information/communication processes and support resources for affected children and families.

Partnership meetings between the MCCPTA Health and Safety Committee and the MCPS Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement take place once per month. For information on these meetings and the work of the Committee and Sub-Committees, please join the Health and Safety listserv by emailing [MCCPTA-health-and-safety-new-subscribe@yahooogroups.com](mailto:MCCPTA-health-and-safety-new-subscribe@yahooogroups.com)

