

MCCPTA Health and Wellness Committee

December 2020 Report

Health and Wellness Committee Meeting: December 21, 2020

Nutrition Subcommittee update

- Health and Wellness continues to focus on access to healthy meals during Covid.
 - Saturday distribution of produce boxes, and now school lunches, in conjunction with Healthy School Food MD
 - Volunteers are now able to pick up food for those not able to make the meal distribution times with a permission slip from parent.
 - Delivery of 95 meals for Jan 1 as a test run, to be continued.
 - Support of DFNS in expanding operations to remain viable.
- Continued advocacy to maintain nutrition level of food at previous standards in the face of relaxed standards by the Trump administration
- Organized advocacy around DHS plan to recoup money from those with outstanding debt from last year. (in discussion)

Substance Use Committee update

- Laura Mitchell will send an update separately.

Mental Health Subcommittee update

- She and Gayle met with MCPS in December to discuss what efforts were being made with students to promote mental health and wellness. They didn't get too many answers and have since learned that Dr. Elizabeth Rathbone, who led these efforts has resigned. They have a second meeting scheduled for 1/21.

Sandra Landis

- Discussed the later start for school and said she would reach out to others and report back

Gabrielle Czaja

- Discussed a pilot program with a few schools offering holistic PT Programming in the Alexander Technique

Evelyn Chung

- Discussed SROs in schools

Environmental Health Subcommittee

- Advocacy efforts and outreach to MCPS officials and BOE members:
 - Meeting on December 17 with Seth Adams, MCPS Director of the Dept. of Facilities Management, Doug Hollis, Veronica Hill, Gary Mosesman and MCCPS Environmental Health Subcommittee members: Hannah Donart, Laura Stewart, Jeremy Goodman, Deborah Schrab, and Jill Ortman-Fouse, Councilmember Hucker's office
 - The main takeaways from the meeting are below:
 - MCPS staff agreed to meet again to discuss water quality. We are waiting to hear back from them on scheduling.
 - Veronika Hill confirmed that the list of MCPS [SPO approved products](#) was updated. MCPS staff agreed to take a look at resources and updated guidance on safer cleaning and disinfecting that we send to them.
 - Seth said they need more funding for HVAC filter maintenance and replacement.
 - Hannah spoke with Essie McGuire at the Operating Budget meeting re safer cleaning and disinfecting products and handwashing routines.
- After meeting we followed up with the list of committee recommendations based on CDC, EPA, FDA, and AAP guidance for safer cleaning and disinfecting listed below.
- Hannah researched MD law on safer cleaning and disinfecting in schools, [Maryland Code, Education § 5-112](#), and emailed Lynne Harris about updating the MCPS BOE specifications in the [2018 green cleaning plan](#). She emailed back and said she has already shared with Dan Marella her intent to put a review of MCPS procurement practices on the committee's agenda. She also said she'd be happy to meet and discuss strategy.

Resources and current science-based recommendations for safer cleaning and disinfecting:

From: MCCPTA Health and Wellness Committee

To: Montgomery County Public Schools

As COVID-19 requires an increase in cleaning and disinfecting, we are requesting that MCPS implements precautionary measures due to the more frequent, repeated use of disinfectants to use less harmful chemicals in light of the current science. The current list of [MCPS SPO approved products](#) contains products with ingredients known to cause short and long-term health effects for cleaning staff, teachers, and students including triclosan, Quats (quaternary ammonia), and bleach. In consideration of this,

the MCCPTA Health and Wellness Committee requests that MCPS follows up-to-date, science-based best practices outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), EPA, and CDC highlighted below. We look forward to hearing how you plan to update criteria based on the information below for MCPS [SPO approved products](#).

- As recommended by the [AAP](#), we request that MCPS provide SPO approved products that are dually certified under the EPA [Design for the Environment Antimicrobial Product Program](#) (DfE) list AND cross references with the [EPA List N](#). The products on the DfE list are specifically certified by the EPA as [safe for humans and the environment](#) and include safer active ingredients (**citric acid, hydrogen peroxide, L-lactic acid, ethanol, and isopropanol**). These ingredients are less toxic, are not strong respiratory irritants or asthma triggers, and have no known carcinogenic, reproductive, or developmental effects. [This EPA database](#) can be used to find products that are both safer and on [EPA List-N](#).
 - Some examples of products with safer ingredients that are also on the [EPA's List N](#) of products registered for use against SARS-CoV-2 include:
 - Clorox Commercial Solutions Hydrogen Peroxide Disinfecting Cleaner, Disinfectant, and Wipes
 - Diversey's Oxivir TB Ready-To-Use Liquid, Wipes, Five 16, and Diversey's Alpha HP Multi-Surface Disinfectant Cleaner
 - Lysol Disinfecting Bathroom Cleaner
 - GOJO Industries PURELL Multi- Surface Disinfecting Cleaner, Disinfectant, Wipes, and Surface Disinfectant
- Remove products from the SPO approved products which have ingredients known to have harmful health effects including:
 - [Aerogreen Antibacterial Foam Soap](#) approved by MCPS facilities contains triclosan. Triclosan was [banned by the FDA](#) in 2016 due to [adverse health effects](#).
 - Bleach (sodium hypochlorite): Products with bleach can cause acute eye, throat and skin irritant, and causes and triggers asthma. (1) (2)
 - Quats (quaternary ammonia): Products with quats are skin and throat irritants, and have been linked to reproductive harm in animal studies. (will add citation) (3) (4)
 - Fragrances, which are a common asthma trigger. (5)
 - Hand sanitizers that are on the [FDA's do-not-use hand sanitizer list](#). See: [CDC health advisory: Serious Health Problems caused by hand sanitizer containing methanol](#)
- Implement safer disinfecting practices:
 - Per [AAP](#) recommendations, "In general, elimination of high-touch surfaces is preferable to frequent cleaning. For example, classroom doors can be left open rather than having students open the door when entering and

leaving the classroom, or the door can be closed once all students have entered followed by hand sanitizing.”

- Per [AAP](#) recommendations, “Children should not be present when disinfectants are in use and should not participate in disinfecting activities. Most of these products are not safe for use by children, whose “hand-to-mouth” behaviors and frequent touching of their face and eyes put them at higher risk for toxic exposures.”
- If using electrostatic sprayers, experts recommend using safer active ingredients (**citric acid, hydrogen peroxide, L-lactic acid, ethanol, and isopropanol**). Note: Experts warn that the harm from potential inhalation while using these devices may outweigh the benefits and that finding safer EPA approved products to use with this device without quats or bleach is difficult. ([6 time 50:00](#)) There has been no research looking at safety of these devices long-term when people are present. During this past summer 2020 the EPA announced expedited review of certain Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA) submissions for products intended for use against the SARS-CoV-2, including products used with these sprayers. ([6](#)) Studies comparing the efficacy of the spray technology with alternative manual application of disinfectant in school settings are needed. Furthermore, cleaning before disinfecting is required so that a soiled surface does not deactivate the disinfectant.
- Handwashing:
 - Per [AAP](#) recommendations, “Frequent handwashing as a modality of containment is vital.” MCPS established guidelines and implementation of regular handwashing routines throughout the day, but especially after using the bathroom, before and after lunch, before and after recess, and after contact with high touch surfaces.
 - [This toolkit](#) and this [short webinar](#) are two other helpful resource with references to the CDC, EPA, AAP, and other authoritative science-based best practices for safer disinfecting accompanied with additional background information. These resources also provide guidelines from certain states such as [California](#) and [Washington](#), which are leading the way in this area.