

Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations



MCCPTA Statement Regarding the MCPS Legal Strategy in the 2018 Damascus Locker Room Proceedings

This statement contains references to physical and sexual abuse and violence that may be disturbing and may trigger reactions for survivors. Resources for help and support are available and listed below.

MCCPTA condemns any MCPS action and strategy that does not reflect a “child-first” approach. The details of the [Washington Post article](#) (posted online August 13, 2021) unequivocally demonstrates that MCPS does not understand what it truly *means* to put children first and, in fact, does not have clear, consistent guidelines regarding violence prevention and response.

MCCPTA is appalled at the severe lack of leadership that led to a legal strategy based on technicalities that make light of the trauma suffered by the victims and their families. We call on the Board of Education to fulfill its oversight duties and hold MCPS accountable by requiring a transparent explanation for the legal strategy employed in court.

No child-focused system should be spending time and resources battling definitions when it comes to the abuse of young people. Time and resources should focus solely on repairing harm, making whole, holding to account, and establishing protocols and practices that ensure the protection of all children from all forms of abuse.

MCCPTA urges MCPS to — and calls on the Board of Education to *require* MCPS to — fully implement the MCCPTA recommendation from 2019 to scale-up the free, evidence-based programs such as [Coaching Boys To Men](#) and [Athletes as Leaders](#), offered by the [Montgomery County Justice Center](#), in *all* MCPS middle school and high school athletic departments. This programming is underway in only 6 of 25 MCPS high schools and in only 1 of the 40 MCPS middle schools.

Sexual assault can take many different forms and be defined in different ways, but one thing remains the same: it’s never the survivor’s fault.

- To make a report of child abuse and neglect or mental injury, call Child Welfare Services (240) 777-4417 (open 24 hours).
- To make a report of child sexual abuse, call Child Welfare Services (240) 777-4417 and the Special Victims Investigation Division of the Montgomery County police Department (240) 773-5400 (open 24 hours).
- The [Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline](#) — 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453) — is dedicated to the prevention of child abuse. The hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with professional crisis

counselors who, through interpreters, can provide assistance in over 200 languages. The hotline offers crisis intervention, information, literature, and referrals to thousands of emergency, social service, and support resources. All calls are confidential.

- [RAINN \(Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network\)](#) is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. RAINN operated the National Sexual Assault Hotline -- 1-800-656-HOPE and works in partnership with more than 1,000 local sexual assault service providers across the country.
- [Darkness to Light](#) – 1-866-FOR-LIGHT (866-367-5444) – provides a toll-free number for individuals living in the United States who need information and resources about sexual abuse. Any individual, child or adult who needs information about sexual abuse can call the Helpline.
- [SafeSport](#) is committed to ending all forms of abuse in sport. This includes bullying, harassment, hazing, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual misconduct and abuse. Both the [SafeSport Trained](#) course and the [Parent Training](#) help you to recognize if an athlete is being abused.
- Washington Post: [Sexual violence against boys is a crisis. It's far more common than we think. Here's why we don't talk about it.](#) (February 2021)