Dear all:

The MCCPTA committee on school climate and safety held a monthly county-wide check-in call on Friday, November 15th from 12:00-1:00 pm.

We are sharing these notes with key staff from MCPS and with our MCCPTA e-lists so as to keep the communication lines open. Sensitive issues that were raised will not be shared through the listservs but will be followed up directly with the appropriate contacts.

**Our next call will be Friday, December 13th from 12:00-1:00 pm.** These calls are open to the parent community. If you have agenda items to add, please email [climateandsafety@mccpta.org](mailto:climateandsafety@mccpta.org" \t "_blank).

**BE WELL 365**

On Friday, November 1st, a number of MCCPTA committees and sub-committee members met with the [MCPS Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement (OSFSE)](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/studentservices/" \t "_blank)to discuss the roll-out of [Be Well 365](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/studentservices/wellbeing/index-new.aspx" \t "_blank). The initiative **is designed to**provide students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities in six essential areas of physical, social, and psychological development that support academic growth and lifelong personal and career success. Each month, MCPS will highlight one of the themes:

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| **Month** | **Theme** |
| **September and October** | **Culturally Responsive Relationship Building** |
| **November** | **Mental and Emotional Health** |
| **January** | **Character Education and Empathy** |
| **February** | **Trauma Informed Practices** |
| **March** | **Restorative Justice and Restorative Practices** |
| **April and May** | **Physical Health and Wellness** |

An update on the implementation of this new initiative is available [here](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1v7x3doPSb971377TPhle6QioAjcAqURifkTQHK-qGxQ/edit?usp=sharing" \o " https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1v7x3doPSb971377TPhle6QioAjcAqURifkTQHK-qGxQ/edit?usp=sharing" \t "_blank). Please feel free to share this within your school communities. Ruschelle Reuben, Associate Superintendent, MCPS/OSFSE will lead a discussion on Be Well 365 at the MCCPTA Delegates Assembly on December 4th at Richard Montgomery High School. All are welcome.

**ATHLETIC CULTURE**

We were in touch with the Director of System-wide Athletics, Dr. Jeff Sullivan, following the release of the [external review of supervision of athletics and extracurricular activities](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/publicinfo/external-review.aspx" \t "_blank). Dr. Sullivan has shared the following updates:

* [The Student-Athlete Leadership Council](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EynD7igDxpM" \t "_blank) met for the first time in September and will meet again in November.  On the agenda is discussing the recommendation of student-led training on hazing, bullying and harassment. MCPS’s goal is to ask students what they feel is the most effective means of delivering information and educating on these important topics.  This will provide some important feedback moving forward, as MCPS aims to effectively educate all students participating in athletics and extracurricular activities.  Ultimately, MCPS wants to identify the most effective and operationally sound method of providing this training.  This is a first and important first step in the process.

* Current student-athlete safety training is [here](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/athletics/health/MCPS_Athlete_SafetyPPT.pdf" \t "_blank). Additional resources are available [here](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/athletics/" \t "_blank). It should be noted the next steps and recommendations include enhancing training for all extracurricular activities, not just athletics.
* Character education programs for athletics and extracurricular activities will be reviewed, consistent with the recommendations in the [report](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/publicinfo/WilmerHale-MCPS-External-Review-Report.PDF" \t "_blank).  There are many opinions regarding the most effective strategy for enhancing character education (MCCPTA has recommended system-wide implementation of [Coaching Boys to Men](http://www.coachescorner.org/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAtrnuBRDXARIsABiN-7D8muTr3Hvb1qAh7y55jf1-I4UqgEdjVSiA6_B7UYcJU63WZWrAdhsaAnj7EALw_wcB" \t "_blank) and [Athletes as Leaders](https://www.athletesasleaders.org/" \t "_blank)). According to Dr. Sullivan, in order for such programs to be successful, there needs to be buy-in from the staff members delivering the training, infrastructure to support the training, and delivery that effectively motivates and educates students.
* MCPS is working to finalize a partnership with the [National Center for Spectator Sports Safety & Security](https://ncs4.usm.edu/home" \t "_blank) (NCS4).
* Afterschool operations teams and operations plans are being further clarified and enhanced.  Staff have been working/meeting to analyze and identify the most efficient organization of central office and school resources to support schools in regard to afterschool safety and security. There will likely be budgetary enhancements regarding afterschool safety and security in the FY21 budget.
* Athletic directors have received additional training from the [Student Welfare and Compliance Unit](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/compliance/" \t "_blank) regarding Tile IX, reporting, and bullying, hazing, and harassment.
* The central Athletics Unit met with booster club presidents in October to provide an update on the program, including discussing the external review. These meetings have occurred annually for the past three years.
* The MCPS Athletics Unit has been working with the Equity Initiatives Unit on equity issues in athletics. [This video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZhZNxTDj1Q&feature=youtu.be" \t "_blank) highlights some of these efforts. On Nov. 25th, athletic directors will be participating in a student-led equity engagement, which will be led by leaders from the Minority Scholars Program.  Outcomes of the full-day engagement include:  
    
  + Be able to **Define** the Opportunity gap and **Distinguish** it from the Achievement Gap
  + Be able to **Understand** how many minority students feel about their school environments, including athletic programs in MCPS
  + Be able to **Identify** strategies to increase African American and Latinx student participation in athletics
  + Be able to **Explain** how stereotypes, microaggressions and sense of belonging play a role in limiting participation in sports.

* Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Jeff Sullivan ([Jeffrey\_K\_Sullivan@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Jeffrey_K_Sullivan@mcpsmd.org" \t "_blank)) with further questions or concerns about athletics in MCPS.

* If you are interested in leading MCCPTA’s work on athletic culture, please contact [climate@safety@mccpta.org](mailto:climate@safety@mccpta.org" \t "_blank). This issue deserves its own point person.

**SUPPORTING NEWLY ARRIVED STUDENTS**

Undocumented and asylum-seeking children are essential members of our communities and schools. It is in the national interest to ensure that all children, including undocumented children, have the

opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive members of society. The right to a free public education is the most effective method of securing this opportunity, and should not be denied to any child. This right is secured under the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in Plyler v. Doe (1982) that undocumented school-aged children are entitled to have access to a high quality and free public K-12 education. The Maryland Dream Act, which supports the education, lawful employment, and legal authorization of immigrant students to drive, was approved overwhelmingly by Maryland voters in a 2012 referendum. Despite these rights, many undocumented and asylum-seeking children face discrimination within our community. MCCPTA is committed to ensuring the rights of and protections for these children. To that end, we are encouraging MCPS to establish a cross-functional, system-wide task force to support this population. If your school is a [METS](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/esol/instruction/mets.aspx" \t "_blank) site or has a significant number of English language learners, please consider how your PTSA can show support for these children and their families. Don’t hesitate to reach out for ideas, resources, and other support: [climateandsafety@mccpta.org](mailto:climateandsafety@mccpta.org" \t "_blank)

**PREVENTING GUN VIOLENCE AND PROMOTING A WHOLE CHILD APPROACH TO SAFETY**

On the heels of yet another horrific school shooting in Santa Clarita, California, the MCCPTA Board has agreed to draft a resolution to encourage the Board of Education and MCPS to close the gap between [what is known](https://everytownresearch.org/documents/2019/02/keeping-our-schools-safe.pdf/" \t "_blank) and what is done to prevent gun violence in schools and ensure that our system-wide approach to school safety is child-centered and supportive of holistic mental health and wellbeing. We have the good fortune of having two national and state experts from Everytown and Moms Demand Action for Gun Safety on our team. Please look out for a draft resolution early next week to share with your local PTAs. We hope to move quickly – with discussion and a vote at the next MCCPTA Delegates Assembly on December 4th. December marks seven years since Sandy Hook. We have to keep doing everything in our power to keep our kids and schools safe – in body, mind, and spirit.

**YOUTH TOWN HALLS**

The Montgomery County Council hosted two youth town halls to learn more about the issues impacting young people in the County on Wednesday, Oct. 30 at Clarksburg High School and Wednesday, Nov. 13 at Wheaton High School. Recurring themes included bullying, limited access to mental health supports, immigration and discrimination, climate change, school safety and pedestrian safety and transportation.

**HANDLE WITH CARE**

Laura Mitchell, MCCPTA Substance Use Prevention Committee Chair, shared that there is some progress toward implementation of Handle with Care. HWC is a partnership between schools and first responders to alert school counselors that a child was present at a scene or in a situation which may have been traumatizing.  
  
When a first responder is called to a scene where they encounter a school aged child, they simply collect the name(s) and school(s) of the child(ren) and pass the "Handle with care" message to the school. The school is not made aware of any details or circumstances of the encounter so there are no privacy or HIPPA issues.   
  
The school counselor and staff are then able to employ a trauma sensitive approach with the child(ren). That may be their trusted adult greeting them at the door in the morning, or having a mindful moment before classes or a lunch with the counselor, etc. A child may or may not share information with the staff but they are made to feel safe to do so, at that time or in the future. It is possible that a student may need a referral to outside resources, depending upon the situation.   
  
The critical components of the program are that   
1) the first responders collect and relay the name and school information, and  
2) the school disseminates that information to the appropriate staff in the appropriate schools in a timely manner. Redundancy is also important. A child should not miss this critical intervention because the person who normally receives and disseminates the messages is out sick or on leave.   
  
Maryland has statewide coordinator for HWC and an informative website where you can see that 7 of the 24 counties have already implemented and 11 more are in the process.   
  
The Substance Use Prevention Committee is pursuing legislation to codify the program at both the County and State levels. Please, talk to you elected officials at every opportunity to ask them to support the program.

Be well and stay in touch!

Gillian Huebner

MCCPTA Committee on School Climate and Safety, Chair