

## **Critical Changes Needed to Correct MCPS' Flawed Response to Prevent & Interrupt Abuse of MCPS Students**

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March 13, 2018

We know anywhere from 1/3 of girls to 1/5<sup>th</sup> of boys to 1/10<sup>th</sup> of all children will be sexually abused before they turn 18. We know childhood sexual abuse is the largest public health crisis affecting our children<sup>i</sup> and we understand the lifelong negative consequences this has for many victims of abuse. This research is well documented thanks to ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) studies<sup>ii</sup>. In this day and age, when the county correctly dedicates so many resources to combat sex trafficking, I would remind them that 90% of children involved in trafficking were abused before they were trafficked. We know for every dollar spent on preventing abuse of children we see a huge ROI (return on investment) in savings over the child's life time for behavioral health care & medical care. We know trauma free children are better learners, better friends, and better citizens.

Beginning in 2012 and continuing to this day, I (along with other citizens of Montgomery County, MD who have been involved longer) have uncovered a long trail of Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) employees who have sexually abused children. To date we are aware of over 50 such cases dating back to 2010. Worse, we uncovered a systemic, longstanding issue of MCPS administrators enabling known abusers to remain in the classroom where they victimized more children. Vocal advocacy and subsequent media attention by me and others, first led to MCPS creating a Child Abuse and Neglect Task force in 2014<sup>iii</sup>. This had some positive impacts in that: MCPS updated its policies and regulations which were 25 years old. MCPS was forced to stop training staff to violate state & federal laws by conducting internal investigations and instead follow the law and report to CPS and Police. They were forced to scrap the illegal database<sup>iv</sup> of over 220 employees they suspected to be a danger to children, who had not been reported to authorities. Additionally, MCPS followed recommendations to provide teacher, parent, volunteer and child focused prevention trainings. After a lengthy struggle, MCPS wrote an Employee Code of Conduct. The new MCPS policies, regulations, procedures, programs, webpage, classes and response are all in direct result of pressure by parents. While it is true MCPS has complied with some of what it was compelled to put into place, it is also equally true, MCPS has failed in many ways to correctly address this issue and as a result we are still seeing cases of preventable abuse occurring in our schools.

I urge MCPS to recognize any work they do to prevent educator abuse will also provide a natural conduit for dramatically and positively addressing abuse occurring outside of school as well.

Preventing and interrupting child abuse is a complex issue which demands a comprehensive response. Attention to detail is critical. Faithful implementation and adherence to protocol must be present at all times. For all these reasons, I urge MCPS to implement the following 10 recommendations with the clear understanding this will be a starting point, but not the end line. As more information becomes available regarding not only what occurred in the past, but also regarding what is still occurring now, additional changes will be necessary.

### **Recommendation 1** **Commission an independent investigation.**

This investigation must document all known cases of child sexual abuse / harassment which have been committed by MCPS staff, contractors and volunteers. This work must not be done by any county employee. It must be completed by an outside entity with expertise in working with youth serving organizations where child abuse & sexual harassment have been allowed to occur for decades.

Their mission should be clear. The children of MCPS are their clients, not the MCPS bureaucracy. They are not there to issue a feel good report. They are there to clearly document via a thorough investigation everything that has gone on.

Recommendations for corrections should be included. Recommendations for holding people accountable must be made. The report issued from this investigation should be made public. Only in this manner can MCPS truly assert they have corrected all systemic flaws moving forward.

#### **Rational:**

To date, MCPS has refused to complete a comprehensive review of what has taken place. This is short sighted and self serving. It has crippled and hindered their response to this issue. It is also another way they are failing to get credit for good work done...if you can't document what you did wrong, how can you document what you have changed?

In the past several years, many stories have been thoroughly documented (via the courts, MPIA requests, meetings and news reports) clearly showing a systemic cover up of abuse, both in individual cases and system wide in MCPS. See illegal data base of

offenders. See the cases of John Vigna<sup>v</sup>, Jose Pineda<sup>vi</sup>, Mark Yantos<sup>vii</sup>, Daniel Picca<sup>viii</sup>, Lawrence Joynes<sup>ix</sup>, Joshua Greenberg<sup>x</sup> and Eric Greco<sup>xi</sup> as just a few examples. This is what makes it so astounding and egregious to see such an ingenuous and offensive quote by Derek Turner in the Post on 3/2/18 when admitting MCPS left a teacher in the classroom for decades sexually harassing (i.e. abusing children): “One of the things we’re trying to figure out is: How did we get here? Where could we have made a better decision or taken more action?” spokesman Derek Turner said. “We want to know how to prevent this from ever happening again.”<sup>xii</sup>

MCPS needlessly inflicts damage upon itself and understandably loses the confidence and trust of the community when Derek Tuner makes them all look like bumbling fools by telling the press they have no idea how they got here.

By making this statement in the media, he is publically admitting what we have long known. MCPS still don’t know what to do and what MCPS is doing is not working.

## **Recommendation 2**

### **Fix problems with the policy and regulations**

Suggestions submitted in 2015 were ignored and thus abuse has continued. These must be corrected.

- See Ellen Mugmon’s full submission to the BOE in 2015. <sup>xiii</sup> which begin with this statement,
  - “I am pleased to be able to provide comments on the proposed child abuse policy. I have taken the liberty to comment as well on the protocols and other related documents. Indeed, it was particularly imperative that I comment on the protocols because most of the provisions in the protocols should actually be in the policy. I understand that the Board of Education only votes to approve or disapprove the policy. This allowed the Department to submit a mostly vague, aspirational child abuse policy with the vast majority of problematic, substantive provisions added in the draft protocols. Even so, the draft policy is not without its own significant problems. In any case, the misplaced provisions are particularly troubling. Handling policy development this way permits staff to change the protocols, which are, in essence, the policy, whenever they wish without proper oversight. This arrangement lacks integrity. While there are a few improvements over 1989 policy and protocols, I have found these proposed documents to have serious flaws apparently as a result of the Department and the unions basically writing their own rules, since

ignoring current laws and regulations, court decisions, and Attorney General opinions etc. was standard operating procedure when educators and other employees were the alleged abusers. In particular, the 1991 Attorney General's opinion was specifically promulgated to stop egregious practices that covered up abuse in the Howard County Public schools that MCPS and MCEA, to this day, 24 years later, still appears to want to retain by drafting loopholes in the proposed policy and protocols. As a Board member, I would be reluctant to be on record approving documents that do not comply with the law. Moreover, it has been my experience that child abuse policies and protocols cannot be evaluated adequately without analyzing other relevant policies, protocols, letters, forms, union contracts, and yet to be drafted relevant documents. An inability to analyze and subsequently conform these documents can only result in inconsistencies, a lack of cross references, and contradictory provisions that would most likely lead to continued violations of the law and the continued questionable practices which have unnecessarily and seriously harmed Montgomery County students for so many years. I am, therefore, requesting that the Board wait to approve this policy until certain sections in the protocols are amended and placed appropriately in the draft policy and until other policies and attendant regulations and documents are written and reviewed by the public. This includes the Employee Conduct Policy (It is certainly unusual for a school system to have operated so long without this necessary policy.), the Memorandum of Understanding, "additional protocols to facilitate prompt notification of the Special Victims Investigations Division of the MCPD" (See section B(a) of the policy) as well as other policies such as the Sexual Harassment policy which needs to be revised to be in conformity with the Child Abuse and Neglect policy. Unless this preliminary work is done, the Board would be evaluating and voting on this critical policy in a vacuum. Moreover, I would recommend that both the policy and protocols be subject to Board approval.

- Recommendations I submitted in 2015 to BOE. <sup>xiv</sup> These comments read in part as follows:
  - "This policy and these procedures, even if corrected regarding the legal aspects, will still only be words on paper unless you demand other action be taken as well. This plan is doomed to failure unless there is an infrastructure to implement, maintain and continue its mission. Parceling aspects of the work out among various departments and people (who have no expertise in this field) is planning for failure. This plan is doomed to failure as long as the system continues to operate in secrecy, not only from

the public but from its own advisory group members as well. This plan is doomed unless other correlating documents / policies / departments / regulations are brought into line and into compliance with these policies.”

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Improve parent & community communication**

- **Letter from the Superintendent to every MCPS parent should be sent out ASAP**
  - This letter should include:
    - An overview of scope of the problem (dozens of arrests and convictions over the past 10 years. Make sure to include data from both abuse and harassment cases.)
    - An apology for knowingly leaving our children in harm’s way
    - His commitment to changing the culture of cover-up and deceit in MCPS
    - His promise to fully implement policies and regulations passed in 2015; and a clear commitment to correcting them with a deadline given.
    - Him urging all adults to take a prevention program
    - Him urging all adults to immediately report all suspicions of abuse to CPS & Police. This should include past abuse and current suspicions.
    - Rational:
      - This letter would be no more and no less than he (and past superintendents) sent on such issues as cyber civility and the sexting<sup>xv</sup>/ snap chat<sup>xvi</sup> issue this year.
  - **Edit the MCPS Website – abuse / neglect page**
    - Add proactive statements
      - On why preventing and responding to abuse is important. ACE studies
      - Preventing abuse / ending it faster when it can’t be prevented leads to healthier, happier students & families.
      - Never too late to tell (true for abuse of students and help for adults w/ trauma histories.)
    - Statement and links to sexual harassment documents
    - Body safety letter / curriculum / resources

- add clear statement on how to report code of conduct violations
  - Add info on background checks
  - Add tip sheet on how to pick a summer camp / after school program (as parents are not aware programs held in the school & by school employees do not fall under MCPS regulations or policies.
  - Add links to nationally recognized programs and resources such as: Darkness to Light<sup>xvii</sup> / Mama Bear Effect<sup>xviii</sup> / The Childhelp national helpline<sup>xix</sup>
- **When there are new allegations / new arrests / firings:**
    1. MCPS must realize in this day and age, when allegations against someone are being made, both children and adults will very quickly find out.
      - Children and parents must be given basic information to help them address their children’s safety and their concerns.
      - Details regarding allegations cannot and should not be shared during an investigation, but information blackouts are not helpful or conducive to maintaining safety and calm.
      - Revamp the way in which information is shared and meetings are held.
      - This again speaks to the need for a competent, trauma informed professional to head all this work. Parents should not be brushed off, stonewalled and dismissed by staff in the child’s school or by central office staff when all they are asking for is basic information on what is being done to keep their children safe.
    2. Stop the Friday evening news dumps
      - When there is a new report of staff being arrested for abuse, the news is usually released after school hours on a Friday
      - This protects the system not the children
      - Parents are left without information, resources or guidance
    3. Change the standard letters that go out – include statements:
      - Of where people can get help.
        - Refer both “in” and “out”.
          - “In” meaning on an improved page on MCPS website AND one number to call to the one person who is leading all this.
          - “Out” meaning give out CPS /police BUT also a national reporting line. Like the ones

previously mentioned, Childhelp or Darkness to Light

- Of where people can get more training – these letters often say “talk to your kids” but most people have no idea how to do that.
  - Again, this info could be on MCPS website
- 4. Include links to the Body Safety Curriculums and information sent to parents.
  - See Body safety section of this report.
- **Improve reports to the Board of Education**
  - These reports are required by policy. Currently they are vague, do not report back on all areas of policy much less the implementation of the regulations linked to the policy. Even the information which is presented is done in a manner that does not allow for a clear understanding of what is being provided. Subsequent questions to MCPS for clarification are never forthcoming.
    - Correct these reports so they are user friendly and comprehensive.
  - When, as in the past, these reports are presented to the BOE and the MCPS employee tells the board, “We are not going to talk about the policy”, that person should be reprimanded and removed from his position. When there is a meeting to present this report, then staff should present the information in a transparent, thorough manner.
- **Assure MCPS employees** (past and present) they will not be discouraged, penalized or retaliated against if they report their suspicions and / or knowledge of abuse and harassment.

#### **Recommendation 4**

#### **Hire an experienced professional with expertise in child abuse and neglect to head all the work on this issue.**

- Currently MCPS is parceling this work out to different people in multiple departments. Those heading the work do not have backgrounds in working on abuse issues. By refusing to fill such a person, MCPS is intentionally allowing these matters to fall through the cracks of their own making.
  - a. See recent NBC 4 story<sup>xx</sup> on lack of background checks and lack of reference checks which allowed a teacher to be in the classroom for a year despite his loss of license in another state due to abuse.

- b. See recent story on high school head of security who was left to work in the school where he had been given written reprimands to stay away from a specific girl; a girl he was later convicted of abusing.<sup>xxi</sup>
- The federally mandated title IX officer should be co-located (or possibly combined) with this same position's office.

## **Recommendation 5**

### **End false separation of child abuse & sexual harassment**

To date MCPS continues to treat child abuse and sexual harassment as separate issues when in fact sexual harassment of child by adults in the schools is also child sexual abuse.

- Despite 6 years of asking MCPS to correct language in their sexual harassment policies<sup>xxii</sup> / regulations / information on website, they have not rectified this.
- MCPS still tells students (and staff) to report crimes to internal schools staff, not to police / CPS. This is in direct contradiction to what they purport their new child abuse policies to be.
  - Currently the harassment policy reads as follows:
    - “Dating or sexual relationships between employees/adult volunteers and students is prohibited.” I would stress again here, an adult having a “sexual relationship” with a child is not a “relationship” it is child abuse which is illegal and thus should be treated for what it is, a crime.
    - "Actions for Students -If you believe that you are the target of sexual harassment or the focus of inappropriate behavior, you should report such incidents to your parents and school authorities. You may report the information verbally or in writing to the principal, a guidance counselor, a teacher, or another staff person."
    - The importance of this being woven into the child abuse policy and regulations was again highlighted with recent articles about long standing sexual harassment / abuse by a Blair math teacher<sup>xxiii</sup> and prior stories about a teacher<sup>xxiv</sup> harassing other adults.
  - Disclose the number of lawsuits MCPS has settled (and are currently facing) due to the abuse of MCPS students by staff for not only child sexual abuse but also for harassment

## **Recommendation 6**



## **Post a list**

List must include all MCPS employees and contractors who have been criminally charged and / or have had their license suspended or revoked due to the mistreatment of children. This list should also include those who are on the “do not sub” list for reasons pertaining to abuse / neglect / harassment

- This list should include a complete accounting of any and all schools, programs, sports etc. the person has engaged in with students. Many MCPS offenders were teachers during the day and also coached teams, ran after school programs, and took students on trips.
  - MCPS only notifies parents of abusive staff in schools where that person is currently & primarily located. So, in the case of John Vigna (who taught for 24 years and abused children for at least 7 of them – that we know of), MCPS only contacted the elementary parents of current students. They did not send letters to the middle and high school. We have also learned Vigna taught a volunteer, before school exercise program. Didn't the parents of those children deserve the same information as the parents of current students?

## **Recommendation 7**

### **Fix flaws - Body Safety Curriculum & its implementation**

- MCPS must dramatically improve letter / communication that goes home / and is offered to parents.
  - Current letter is vague, provides no hotline numbers, no information helpful to parents. Triggers and panics some, doesn't give needed information to others. Parents and guardians will not know what to do if their child comes home and discloses either their own abuse or concern for a friend.
  - See introduction statement to this document on rationale for being more trauma informed when dealing with parents. Yes, you are doing all this because of educator abuse but every communication should go out with the clear understanding that at least 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the families receiving it will have already experienced abuse....both the kids AND the care takers.
  - Other counties in MD are doing this, why aren't we? <sup>xxv</sup>
  - Parent info sessions should be offered. This should not be at the discretion of the principal. It should be mandatory. Can roll this into the normal health curriculum preview night for parents.

- Provide the curriculum for Body Safety classes on the Child Abuse and Neglect page of their website.
  - Actually teach the curriculum to every grade, every single year. Should not be dependent on if high school students are taking health. Should be taught every year to every student.
    - Implementation guidelines should be posted as well.
  - Full curriculum needs to be taught. No exceptions, no “making up lessons for your school”. No combining multiple lessons into one session.
    - Would parents be OK with Fire safety, code red lock down drills etc. were only taught sporadically, with made up lesson plans? No.
  - Consolidate / cross reference / rewrite all aspects of abuse / sexual harassment / consent / dating / sex education curriculum in the system.
    - This is common sense. Elementary schools can’t say the words “sexual abuse” when talking about sex education, but they then teach a separate class on abuse. How does that make sense? If there are state laws forcing this split, at very least tell parents / students when / where they will get the information.

## **Recommendation 8**

### **Improve the multidisciplinary team**

- This is what replaced the Child Abuse Work group (created due to my advocacy, disbanded with no notice or warning).
  - Now no transparency in this process. Only due to transparency were prior changes made to protect our kids.
  - Minutes from meetings should be available.
    - Currently, MCPS will not release meeting minutes even after filing MPIO requests.
- Appoint a parent representative – this is critical. The team does not have an outside voice. Group, insulated thinking is what got MCPS into this situation.

## **Recommendation 9**

### **Fix Employee Code of Conduct:**

Fix glaring loopholes in the Employee Code of Conduct. As currently written these loopholes invalidate the entire purpose of having the code.

- Currently, there is an option to document code violations. Making this optional defeats the entire purpose of the code. The entire point is to document all violations to be able to see and address emerging patterns of behaviors. Until

and unless you document every violation you will continue to allow people to “slip through the cracks” – cracks intentionally created by this loophole. I brought this up in a task force meeting, was dismissed by everyone but the CPS woman who adamantly agreed with me and stressed the importance of this as well.

- Current loopholes which must be changed:
  - MCPS is not documenting all violations.
    - MCPS has written a loophole into this section. Note the word, “may”. “In some circumstances, a supervisor or manager may determine that an employee’s conduct does not warrant formal disciplinary action but does warrant a clarification as to expectations regarding future conduct. In such cases, the supervisor or manager may provide written guidance” page 10.
      - Recommendation: delete the word may. Insert must.
    - Explain how and where every violation is being tracked. In the past, prior to the Code of Conduct, MCPS had an illegal database (an excel sheet) with the names of over 220 employees MCPS thought might be abusing children. These people were never reported to police or CPS. When we found out and it was exposed in the media, MCPS got rid of the list. Where are these violations being tracked now? No one could answer that (as what MPCS was saying in meetings was they had a system to track teachers but not other non licensed employees). What system has been put in place? This again speaks to the need for one person to run an office in charge of all of this subject matter.
  - Sexual Harassment must be written into the section where reporting to police / CPS is mandatory.
    - Currently: Section 3 talks about what to report to police / CPS. Only includes child abuse / drug distribution / use of weapons. Does not mention sexual harassment. This is lumped in a section where reporting to police is optional.
  - Change the “nice guys get a pass and jerks get disciplined” loophole.
    - Currently: “In making a determination as to the appropriate level of disciplinary action in each case, consideration of mitigating factors (such as an employee’s long history of good service with a clean record or an indication of less culpability on the part of the employee) or aggravating

factors (such as placing others at risk of serious injury, demonstrating intentional wrongdoing, or indifference to the effect of an action or the outcome on others) may be considered.”

1. As a Certified Sex Offender Treatment Provider (VA) I can assure you, offenders who are “nice” and have a clean record of good service are inevitably the ones who have a far higher number of victims than the guys who are jerks. This section demonstrates whoever wrote this has no understanding of how offenders groom other adults prior to grooming children for abuse. It is exactly this type of sentiment, “he’s so nice, he was teacher of the year, etc” that allowed so many MCPS offenders to operate for so long. See Vigna & Blair magnate math teacher.

- Amend to add your new policy on self-report for crimes as this was written after code was completed.
- The Code still does not say it covers volunteers. Amend the title to include volunteers or issue a separate one for volunteers.
- Every MCPS parent and student should be notified on an annual basis the Employee code exists (as they do with the student code of conduct).
  - It should be sent home with the student code or at very least a one page notice about it and importance of it should be sent home with student code.
  - Anywhere there are copies of the student code, the employee code should be too
- Parents should be told, in an encouraging manner, how and to whom:
  - To report code violations. Currently, parents have to guess to whom reports should be made. When they report to a principal they are being told “something is being done” but parents have no way of knowing what that means. There should be a very clear path (in writing) instructing parents to report to both the principal and a specific person in central office.

- Clear guidance should be included as to when to report “up” and when to report “out”. IE to MCPS (up the chain of command) or police / CPS (out of MCPS)
  - Social media policy is still missing
    - Since the code was being drafted in 2014, until the current superintendent, I have been told MCPS was working on a social media policy. Where is it? I asked Superintendent Smith in writing over a year ago “Will you investigate why (despite a recent arrest of staff who used social media to groom and assault a teen girl) your staff has still not prioritized much less completed the employee social media guidelines? This is ridiculous , as among the dozens of employee sex offenders MCPS has had on staff over the past years, many of them have used technology to groom and abuse children. Why is MCPS leaving this known flaw in the code?” Superintendent Smith and I met in person last year to discuss these issues. To date, this has not been corrected.

## **Recommendation 10**

### **Close loopholes in Background checks and screening**

- For every type group (listed below) collect, maintain, share much better data. If you aren’t collecting information, you not only have no idea if what you are doing works, you aren’t getting credit for what does work. As I told Superintendent Smith last year, you must be screening people out. Share those numbers, all it does is make you look good. Then when there is a case of abuse that is found, you issue your normal response AND also are able to point out the cases you prevented because of your screening and vigilance. It could be a win / win.
  - Maintain a list of every time a person WAS NOT employed (or allowed to volunteer) due to not complying or failing back ground check or mandatory training.
    - I shared these examples of civil air patrol screening out 70 convicted offenders. One Catholic diocese screening out 300.
- Several categories which each have their own tiered response/ needs:
  1. Employees
    - To date, there is no clear place where a parent can find out what / how / when / how often these checks are done.

- How many MCPS employees have completed full background checks?
  - CPS
  - Criminal
  - Nasdtec
    - MCPS was given the ability August 1, 2016 to check this on their own (don't have to go through the state anymore). They did not apply to do so until the day they were going to be interviewed for NBC story in beginning of 2018. If they had applied to do this as soon as they had the ability, they could have removed Eric Greco months sooner.
  - Reference checks. Absolutely not acceptable in any way, shape or form this is not being done. Unacceptable. Someone should be fired for this. See Derek Turner admission to NBC 4 about how MCPS let a teacher who was fired in another state due to abuse, work for a year in MCPS due to failing to check his references.
  - Rechecking those already fully checked. What is (if it exists yet) the schedule / plan for completing this. If this doesn't exist, implement it immediately
    - Instead of implementing the above, Superintendent Smith implemented a new policy which states employees who commit a crime, have to self report those crimes to MCPS. He was told by me it won't work.
      - This was proven to be the case when 2 teachers were arrested in DC for drug dealing and MCPS didn't find out until reporters told them<sup>xxvi</sup>.
      - If this is working in other cases, then great, please share how many times people have self reported crimes and were dismissed due to this information.
  - Screening measures – how many people have been disciplined for NOT taking the mandatory safety training?
  - How many people have been written up for code of conduct violations?
    - How many were dismissed due to first reports?
    - How many were dismissed after a pattern emerged?
      - How may reports to CPS / police after pattern emerged?

- Is not following self report of crimes policy going to be added to code of conduct violations?
- Clearly state all this (screening / training) must be done BEFORE people come into contact with children. Not during / after / meanwhile.

## 2. Volunteers

- Volunteer screening / background checks. – currently required for only certain groups of volunteers
- Publish / provide info on how many people have taken the online class
- Document and provide info on how many people have NOT been able to volunteer because they haven't taken it. – This shows you are in fact screening out people who think the rules don't apply to them.
- Class itself is poor. Could and should be much better. Could and should be offered in person as well.
  - If you are not going to fix it, then direct participants to use Darkness to Light on their own time as a supplement to what your program is.
- Fix the massive loophole regarding outdoor education. Currently only those who spend the night have to have a background check. Those who spend the whole day in the woods alone with kids but go home at night do not get checked. An offender has a better opportunity to abuse a kid in the woods when they are alone together then they do in a cabin with 14 other rowdy kids.

## 3. Visitors

- Screening is basically nonexistent.
  - Some school teachers don't even know about the license scan visitors are supposed to do
  - It's rare people are asked to scan their license.
  - When it is done, people don't know why it's being done.
    - This is a missed opportunity to educate / support people on the issue of abuse.
      - A small index card sized sign should be put on every computer where people scan in. It could say something like "MCPS requires this as a safety measure in our mission to protect children from abuse. This is checking the sex offender registry. For other ways we protect kids, check the child abuse link on our website". Or something along those lines.

- The majority of times parents go into schools no one is checked. Events, meetings, parties etc.
4. Programs who use MCPS space & market to MCPS children
- Before / after care
  - Chess club / language classes etc often run by teachers /staff
  - Club sports in high school
  - High school / middle school trips run by / marketed by MCPS employees
  - Summer camps / enrichment programs run by staff
- Parents don't realize all of these groups and people are not held to the same standard as those officially run by MCPS. Again, as previously stated, MCPS is missing an opportunity to educate consumers / promote best practice here.
    - A statement should be issued to all parents:
      - Maybe by requiring those who you allow to use your space / market to our children to have to use a statement like: "this is not an official MCPS program and thus MCPS cannot ensure they meet the high standard we require for child safety. Please see here xxxxx for our standards. We urge you to check with individual programs to see what they do to protect children"

### **In Summary**

In 2012, I realized the media had documented 8 cases of MCPS employees sexually abusing students. I naively started making phone calls and writing letters to MCPS to find out what they were doing to prevent and interrupt abuse. I assumed they had systems in place and if they didn't they would quickly work to implement them. Sadly, it became very clear, very quickly, MCPS knew it had a massive problem and was intentionally choosing silence and inaction to protect itself instead of our children. Since 2012<sup>xxvii</sup>, I along with others have continued to work to push MCPS to do the right thing, instead of something. To date we know of over 50 cases of educator abuse since just 2010. While, MCPS has taken some action to better address this issue, I urge them in the strongest possible terms to fully implement the recommendations here. Every recommendation I have made here, I have made many times, to many people over the past 6 years. For reasons I will never understand, all of this has gone unheeded. The result being the continued abuse of our children which could have been prevented.

Judith Lewis Herman, states, *"It is very tempting to take the side of the perpetrator. All the perpetrator asks is that the bystander do nothing. He appeals to the universal*



*desire to see, hear, and speak no evil. The victim, on the contrary, asks the bystander to share the burden of pain. The victim demands action, engagement, and remembering.”*

We are asking MCPS to take the side of victims. We, as parents, will continue to demand action and engagement from MCPS as we remember the victims in our work to prevent new ones.

I respectfully ask for a timely response to the recommendations made in this document.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer Alvaro*

MCPS graduate

Parent of 2 MCPS students

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/global-health-leaders-launch-unique-initiative-to-address-a-growing-public-health-crisis-caused-by-sexual-exploitation-of-children-173696541.html>

<sup>ii</sup> [http://www.preventchildabuse.org/images/docs/anda\\_wht\\_ppr.pdf](http://www.preventchildabuse.org/images/docs/anda_wht_ppr.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.gazette.net/gazettecms/story.php?id=10463>

<sup>iv</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/school-districts-infamous-database-for-suspicious-conduct-scraped/2015/07/04/5e7d2b5e-1aa8-11e5-bd7f-4611a60dd8e5\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.4efc3bf2f040](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/school-districts-infamous-database-for-suspicious-conduct-scraped/2015/07/04/5e7d2b5e-1aa8-11e5-bd7f-4611a60dd8e5_story.html?utm_term=.4efc3bf2f040)

<sup>v</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/he-was-warned-about-getting-too-close-to-students-but-this-maryland-teacher-was-allowed-to-stay-in-the-classroom/2017/08/25/5ac2ad76-7bbe-11e7-a669-b400c5c7e1cc\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.1354364792d1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/he-was-warned-about-getting-too-close-to-students-but-this-maryland-teacher-was-allowed-to-stay-in-the-classroom/2017/08/25/5ac2ad76-7bbe-11e7-a669-b400c5c7e1cc_story.html?utm_term=.1354364792d1)

<sup>vi</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/montgomery-principal-told-7th-grader-not-to-report-abuse-prosecutor-says/2015/04/01/7fd8e882-d882-11e4-8103-fa84725dbf9d\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.9849d748089a](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/montgomery-principal-told-7th-grader-not-to-report-abuse-prosecutor-says/2015/04/01/7fd8e882-d882-11e4-8103-fa84725dbf9d_story.html?utm_term=.9849d748089a)

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<sup>viii</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-teachers-dismissal/2012/09/29/ab272186-09b6-11e2-a10c-fa5a255a9258\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.c79417854f87](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-teachers-dismissal/2012/09/29/ab272186-09b6-11e2-a10c-fa5a255a9258_story.html?utm_term=.c79417854f87)

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<sup>xi</sup> <https://www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/Teacher-Who-Lost-License-in-Fla-Went-on-to-Teach-in-Two-Md-Districts-474223053.html>

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<sup>xiv</sup> <http://parentscoalitionmc.blogspot.com/2015/06/advisory-group-member-tells-boe-to.html>

<sup>xv</sup> <https://patch.com/maryland/potomac/mCPS-superintendent-responds-to-cyberbullying>

<sup>xvi</sup> <http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/publicinfo/community/school-year-2017-2018/safe-online.html>

<sup>xvii</sup> [www.d2l.org/education/](http://www.d2l.org/education/)

<sup>xviii</sup> <http://www.themamabeareffect.org/rock-the-talktrade.html>

<sup>xix</sup> <https://www.childhelp.org/hotline/>

<sup>xx</sup> <https://www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/Teacher-Who-Lost-License-in-Fla-Went-on-to-Teach-in-Two-Md-Districts-474223053.html>

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<sup>xxii</sup> <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/sexualharassment/>

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