

May 2009

MCCPTA Safety Committee Report

Chair: Laurie Halverson

On April 27, the Delegates passed the “MCPS Indoor Air Quality Resolution” which was introduced by the Safety Committee. As the MCPS budget tightens further next year, the Resolution shows MCPS that parents are very concerned about the health and safety of their children. Parents want MCPS to pay attention to and address HVAC and maintenance issues and they want improved transparency in the process, with access to maintenance records. Parents also would like to see a commitment to indoor air quality with an MCPS policy that recognizes that indoor air quality is a health concern that applies to all children.

A draft of the Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Policy has been distributed to MCCPTA Board members and the MCCPTA Safety Committee for feedback. The Bullying Prevention workgroup (which includes county representatives, MCPS staff, and two MCCTA representatives) will gather all feedback and suggest additional changes before it is presented to the public. MCPS will present the policy in the Fall for public comment.

May 11 is the last date for the year for the MCCPTA Safety Committee. As new officers are elected for your local PTAs and you begin planning for the 2009/10 school year, you should consider adding a “Safety Chair” or “Health and Safety Chair” if you don’t already have one. It is important to have a Safety Chair to work with the PTA and school administration on advocacy for safety related issues at your school. Crossing guard needs, pedestrian concerns, lack of recess aides, air quality issues (mold, HVAC or maintenance concerns), gang related incidents, drugs and alcohol awareness, bullying problems, playground equipment safety, water quality, asbestos, etc...there are many issues regarding safety in your schools and it is helpful if a Safety Committee Chair is in place for these important concerns. The MCCPTA Safety Committee keeps in touch with all Safety Committee Chairs who want to be included at the county level--the MCCPTA Safety Committee meets throughout the school year to determine county-wide concerns so input from the local PTAs is very important!

Sometime in the first few weeks of September, MCCPTA is planning to host a meeting with MCPS leaders to address any concerns you may have about portable classrooms at your schools, especially new/used portables that are moved to your schools. We will announce this date to PTA Presidents. The MCCPTA Safety Committee will also be working on adding to the committee’s website a guide in “what to look for” in portable classrooms to help determine if your school’s portables are dry and free from mold.

Several security incidents have occurred in schools the past several months and MCCPTA is keeping in touch with Bob Hellmuth, Director of Safety and Security. As new security cameras are installed and technology improves, we need to recognize the importance of our EFOs (security officers) and the relationship they have with our students.