

# POLICY

## BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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**Related Entries:** GDB-RA, GDC-RA, JPE, JPE-RA, JPE-EA

### **Department of Employee Assistance Services**

*Resolved*, That the following Policy be approved as the official policy for the Department of Employee Assistance Services and for the Montgomery County Public Schools; and be it further

*Resolved*, That copies of this policy be distributed to all MCPS employees.

#### **PURPOSES**

The MCPS Department of Employee Assistance Services (DEAS) works with employees and their families who have problems which can and do frequently affect their job performance. Included are those which are behavioral/medical in nature and may involve physical illness, mental and/or emotional disturbance, and chemical abuse or dependency involving alcohol and/or other drugs. Often there is involvement with marital, family, financial, legal, and/or job-related concerns.

The program provides crisis intervention, pretreatment or prereferral evaluation and counseling, information, referrals and follow-up services. The key function of the DEAS is to serve as a bridge between troubled employee and public and private resources in the community, the metropolitan area, the state, and the nation. Within MCPS, the DEAS often acts in an advocate's role for those clients involved in the program. Staff and client together seek reasonable and acceptable alternatives and sources of help.

#### **POLICY**

The Board of Education of Montgomery County, Rockville, Maryland (BOE); the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA); and the Montgomery County Council of Supporting Services Employees, Inc. (MCCSSE) recognize that a wide range of problems not directly associated with one's job function may have an effect on an employee's job performance. The problems may be behavioral/medical in nature and involve physical illness, mental or emotion illness, alcohol abuse or alcoholism, and/or other drug abuse or dependency; or may involve marital, family, financial, and/or legal concerns. Alcoholism and other chemical dependencies are recognized as being progressive and potentially fatal but treatable illnesses. Mental and emotional problems are recognized as inherent to human existence, frequently disabling, and potentially destructive but treatable illnesses.

Ordinarily, the employee will overcome such personal problems independently, and the effect on job performance will be negligible. At other times, routine supervisory assistance may aid in the resolution of such problems so that an employee's declining job performance will return to an appropriate and acceptable level. However, in some instances, neither the efforts of the employee nor the supervisor will have the desired effect of resolving problems which may be contributing to unsatisfactory job performance either intermittently or on a continuing basis.

The purpose of this policy is to assure employees that if such personal problems are or may be the cause of current and/or future unsatisfactory job performance that they will receive an offer of assistance to help resolve such problems in an effective and confidential manner.

The BOE, MCEA, and MCCSSE agree that almost any human problem can be successfully resolved or treated provided it is recognized in its early stages and the assistance of an appropriate helpful resource such as medical, psychiatric, counseling, and/or self-help service is sought.

This aid will be made available to the employee through the MCPS Department of Employee Assistance Services.

It is the responsibility of any employee who has physical, mental, and/or emotional problems which are or have the potential of affecting job performance to seek early intervention, assistance, and appropriate treatment, or to accept it if offered.

It is the responsibility of any employee who is chemically dependent or who abuses alcohol or other drugs to seek early intervention, assistance, and treatment, or to accept it if offered.

Treatment for mental and emotional illness, alcohol and/or other drug abuse or dependency is covered by the present sick leave policy. Extended leave for treatment and rehabilitation can be arranged using accumulated sick leave, sick leave banks, extension of sick leave, annual leave, and/or leave without pay on the same basis as for other physical and medical problems.

Concerted efforts will be made to assure that mental and/or emotional illness, alcohol abuse and/or alcoholism, and other drug abuse and/or addiction will receive the same employee benefits and insurance coverages provided for other illnesses under established MCPS employee benefit plans.

An employee's work performance can be affected by the problems of an employee's spouse and other dependents. When this is evident, to the families of employees, time and staff permitting.

MCPS retirees may also use the services of the DEAS, time and staff permitting.

Employees and DEAS clients are assured that their job, tenure, future, and reputation will not be jeopardized by utilizing this service.

**PROCEDURES**

Employees with problems for which the DEAS can provide guidance or assistance are encouraged to voluntarily seek information, referral, and related services, on a confidential basis, by contacting the director of the DEAS or any member of the DEAS staff.

Supervisors are encouraged to refer employees to the DEAS for additional assistance when routine supervisory efforts have failed to produce sustained improvement in previously identified job performance problems.

For those employees who have job performance problems that are related to problems for which the DEAS provides assistance, the Board of Education, represented by the Departments of Professional Personnel and Supporting Services Personnel, the Ombudsman/Staff Assistant to the Board, and the Department of Human Relations, will encourage that the services of the DEAS be sought.

MCEA and MCCSSE have agreed to encourage members of their respective organizations who are experiencing personal or on-the-job problems to seek help through the services of the DEAS.

all records pertaining to clients in this program will be maintained with the strictest confidentiality in accordance with the highest medical, legal, and ethical standards. All records will be segregated from an individual's personnel records.

**Resolution No. 822-77, December 13, 1977**