

Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

November 10, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Monifa B. McKnight, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Outdoor Lunch Supports (10-05-2021-01-G)

During the *Public Comments* discussion, Board members requested the following information:

**Question G**

Ms. Harris requested information regarding what individual schools are doing about outdoor lunch and whether additional supports are needed.

**Response**

The Fall Design Team's internal [\*Reopening Guidance for Schools & Central Offices\*](#) provided a framework for school administrators to consider when planning for outdoor lunch. This guidance contains a section for principals to explore, *Approaches to Lunch & Recess*, and includes suggestions on how to operationalize reduced cafeteria density using the outdoors and other options. Following are examples of what currently is implemented in schools:

Elementary: Possible Approaches (not an exhaustive list)

- Swapping gym space with lunch space to increase seating capacity and spacing.
- Increase number of tables or desk seats in the cafeteria
- Identifying grade levels to eat in classrooms and to eat in the cafeteria.
- Utilizing safe outdoor seating, such as courtyards, in a rotational model where classes are either indoors or outdoors in a given week.
- Section off the blacktop space to include outdoor seating areas.

Secondary: Possible Approaches (not an exhaustive list)

- Open up all three levels of the building for students who choose to eat in hallways.
- Have students who eat in classrooms check in (QR codes could serve this purpose) to know locations and groups that were together.
- Reduce seating in cafeteria; mark areas of seating and expectations for distancing
- Support and encourage safe open campus lunch options, including use of stadium seating areas.
- If you have an off campus open lunch, that may continue.

Department of Materials Management (DMM) staff has been working with staff in the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Schools, the Office of Finance, and the Department of Facilities Management to support schools with approved outdoor and flexible seating options for lunch. Schools are able to pilot flexible seating items and request tables and tents directly through DMM. Additional items may be procured using school furniture funding or through DMM. Outside organizations, such as Parent Teacher Associations, or community members may wish to donate funding or materials. In these cases, school administrators have been advised to purchase approved items and then seek reimbursement from the outside organization or community member after the purchase. The Montgomery County Public Schools Educational Foundation also has offered small grants, up to \$1,000, for schools to purchase outdoor and flexible seating options. This collaborative process helps ensure our schools are procuring and using what they need for outdoor and flexible seating options for lunch as well as other instructional activities that may take students outside of the traditional classroom setting and into other parts of the building or the outdoors.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Eugenia S. Dawson, chief of finance and operations, via email.

MBM:ESD:MKL:sr

Copy to:

Executive Staff

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Ms. Webb