

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

February 6, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Health Curriculum (01-08-19-04-A-B)

During Board Comments, Mrs. O'Neill requested the following information:

Question A

That staff review the school system's health curriculum regarding what is [sic] says to students about smoking, vaping, etc., and the inherent dangers of these behaviors.

Response

The K-12 Comprehensive Health Education Curriculum includes instruction on tobacco and nicotine products as early as Grade 1. The topics on tobacco and nicotine use are age and developmentally appropriate. Sample topics include the following: identifying how tobacco harms health; looking at the physical consequences of tobacco use; developing and applying skills to resist pressure to use; analyzing the benefits of a drug-free lifestyle; recognizing factors that influence use; and understanding legal consequences of use.

Health educators are provided with the most up-to-date resources on current trends, especially in the area of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Communication to health educators occurs in various ways including direct e-mail communication, required annual online updates, professional development, and ongoing trainings. Teachers are informed and equipped to provide instruction on what information is trending with our youth. Current resources concerning nicotine, including vaping and e-cigarettes, are provided for health educators on the curriculum site as well as the communication platform of a Google classroom. Our health education central services staff work to research, attend conferences, and connect with subject matter experts and the Montgomery County Police Department to stay current with drug trends in the County, state, and community.

Question B

What is MCPS doing with the local health department to educate our students?

Response

The health education supervisor and content specialist are representatives, active members, and in some cases chairpersons, of local and state groups affiliated with our local health department. These groups include, but are not limited to, the Maryland State School Health Council, the Montgomery County School Health Council, the Interagency Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy, the Montgomery County Human Trafficking Committee, the Curriculum Advisory Committee, Choose Respect Montgomery, and the Wellness Committee. These partnerships provide current resources and information from stakeholders including representatives from the local health department to inform the work and enhance resources for schools, teachers, and students. The information obtained from meetings and briefings is communicated to teachers providing health education instruction via e-mail communication, resource teacher meetings, professional development, and curriculum site updates.

In addition, staff in the Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement (OSFSE) collaborates with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to provide school health and behavioral health services, resources, and education to students and their families. Such partnerships include the school health program in which school community health nurses and school health room technicians are present in each school building to provide regular medical care, including medication and diabetes management, to students with school health care plans, and emergency care to students and staff who become ill or injured during the course of the day. OSFSE and DHHS staff provided annual training to school-based staff members on anaphylaxis, diabetes awareness and management, and opioids. School community health nurses are responsible for collaborating with school administrators to provide overview training to all staff members and specialized training to a minimum of three staff members per site on the administration of EpiPens® and Narcan® in the case of a medical emergency. School community health nurses also train staff members on students' school health plans so that students are able to remain safe and access the curriculum appropriately. OSFSE collaborates with DHHS to provide Linkages to Learning services in 29 elementary and middle schools and wellness centers in 4 high schools.

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) also partnered with DHHS, EveryMind, and Family Services, Inc. to launch a team to investigate suicide and substance use prevention strategies that led to the creation of the BtheOne public awareness campaign. OSFSE represents MCPS on the Montgomery County Opioid Intervention Team, County fatality review teams,

the Montgomery County Strategic Alignment Team, the Montgomery County Mental Health Advisory Committee, the Montgomery County Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Council, the School Health Council, and Health Montgomery to advocate for and provide resources to MCPS students and families.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Maria V. Navarro, chief academic officer, at 240-740-3040.

JRS:MVN:JTB:BJC:jpm

Copy to:

Executive Staff

Ms. Webb