

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

July 17, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Safety and Security Update (06-11-19-03-A-B)

During the Safety and Security Update, Board members requested the following information:

Question A

Mrs. O'Neill requested information regarding how neighboring jurisdictions handle the assignment of safety personnel, i.e., what is the ratio in Fairfax County for safety assistants?

Response

Staff in the Department of Systemwide Safety and Emergency Management (DSSEM) gathered information concerning security staffing levels from other school districts in the state of Maryland to better understand how neighboring jurisdictions assign safety and security personnel. We currently are in the process of gathering and processing information from Maryland counties and Fairfax County, Virginia. Highlights of the information collected to date from 17 of our Maryland colleagues follow.

- Six Maryland counties, as well as Fairfax County have a security presence in their schools on a daily basis.
 - One county has security staff that rotate through their elementary and middle schools in their system.
 - One county has security staff members in their high schools only and two others have security staff at the high school and middle school levels.
 - From the information we have at this time, it appears that only one other school district in the state has more than two security staff in any given school.
 - We will contact these jurisdictions to understand how their practices are similar to and differ from those at Montgomery County Public Schools.

- Four counties use School Resource Officers (SROs) in place of safety/security personnel.
 - One district uses Special Police Officers who have arrest powers, while another calls them Investigative Counselors (two per high school); they have the same capabilities.
 - Three have one SRO at each middle and high school.
 - We will contact all school districts to gain a better understanding of the SRO programs in each jurisdiction.
- Twelve counties have a security manager/director only who oversees the safety/security program for the district.

We will continue to follow up with our colleagues in Maryland and in Virginia to gather data on their safety and security personnel practices and to refine our understanding of their deployment and allocation models.

Question B

Ms. Silvestre requested information regarding the flow of information when a counselor suspects that there is a student involved in gang-related activities: What happens with that information?

Response

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Regulation JHG-RA, *Gangs, Gang Activity, or Other Similar Destructive or Illegal Group Behavior Prevention*, establishes procedures in the event of these concerns. If a counselor were to suspect that a student is involved in gang-related activities, their first step would be to contact the principal or designee. The counselor would then complete MCPS Form 230-37, *Gang-Related Incident Reporting Form*, and submit it to the school principal. Next, the principal, or his or her designee, begins an investigation within 24 hours.

- If the concern is of “criminal activity, imminent danger, or disruption,” the investigation “shall be initiated immediately but not later than 24 hours.” A report would be made to the police by way of the nonemergency number.
- If the initial investigation shows no “criminal activity, imminent danger, or disruption,” school officials would call the parents/guardians of the student.

MCPS Form 230-38, *Gang-Related Incident Investigation Form*, is used to investigate all gang-related incident reports. Both forms are kept in a confidential school file. Staff at the school will contact staff in the Office of School Support and Improvement within an hour of discovery to inform them of the event. Finally, supports and resources would be provided for the student and family. These include the *Parents’ Guide to Gangs* from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Crossroads Youth Opportunity Center, Pathways to Services, and the Street Outreach Network. MCPS also offers information about a variety of community resources and internet sites regarding gang prevention and intervention. As part of our ongoing

work in this important area of safety and security, MCPS continues to work collaboratively with our law enforcement, County Government, and community partners to enhance our efforts in the area of gang prevention and intervention.

In the 2019–2020 school year, we will increase our efforts on gang prevention and intervention. Highlights of our recent efforts as well as anticipated actions going forward follow.

- Meetings were held with the Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office and with Mr. Luis Cardona, Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator, Department of Health and Human Services, to discuss collaborative gang prevention and intervention strategies and outreach opportunities. These meetings and discussions will continue to identify best practices.
- Meetings and discussions have occurred with representatives of the Montgomery County Police Department regarding gang prevention and intervention strategies, as well as training opportunities. These meetings and discussions will continue to identify creative ways to better address gang prevention and intervention opportunities.
- Updates were made to the 2019–2020 Gangs and Gang Behavior Districtwide Compliance training module.
- The QUICK REFERENCE: Gang-Related Activity Reporting Procedures document has been updated for the 2019–2020 school year.
- Back-to-school reminders for administrators will highlight the requirements of MCPS Regulation JHG-RA.
- Benchmarking efforts will continue with other local school systems and surrounding school districts regarding training, gang prevention, intervention, and training efforts. Many local school systems’ gang prevention training occurs via Safe Schools online modular training. Fairfax County Public Schools provides gang prevention training for staff via the Fairfax County Police Department.

We will continue to ensure compliance with MCPS Regulation JHG-RA and implementation of best practices in the areas of gang prevention, intervention, and training in conjunction with our school safety partners. We will provide updates to the Board regarding these efforts.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Andrew M. Zuckerman, chief operating officer, at 240-740-3050 or Mr. Edward A. Clarke, chief safety officer, Department of Systemwide Safety and Emergency Management, at 240-740-3066.

JRS:AMZ:sro

Copy to:

Dr. Navarro	Ms. Diamond
Dr. Statham	Mr. Turner
Dr. Zuckerman	Mr. Clarke
Mr. Civin	Ms. Webb
Dr. Johnson	