

MCCPTA Health Committee Update
Susan Young
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I am continuing to actively seeking names of people who would like to stay abreast of MCPS health issues via our email list serve. If you would like to be included, please send your email address to me at susan@youngspa.com.

Update on MCPS School Wellness Committee

MCPS has reconvened a Wellness Policy Work Group, on which I will represent MCCPTA, along with two other parents. Currently, the Committee is working with the MCPS Office of Shared Accountability to develop a survey that will assess the current level of wellness activity in our schools. The Committee is also working toward creating a "toolkit" with resources for schools to use in developing wellness policies and programs at the local school level.

Montgomery County School Health Council

I also represent MCCPTA on the Montgomery County School Health Council. The SHC is comprised of representatives from: MCPS, the Department of Health and Human Services, Linkages to Learning, the Montgomery County Medical Society, the American Cancer Society, the Mental Health Association, and other community members (including 3 student members).

At the October 7, 2008 meeting of the School Health Council, the following items were discussed:

- The effect of public health budget cuts on school health
- The Council's support of Students Against Smoking's effort to encourage MCPS to adopt uniform enforcement of school non-smoking policies.
- MCPS is conducting a formal evaluation of the implementation of BOE Policy JPG (School Wellness). The Office of Shared Accountability will collect data through surveys, focus groups, school visits, document reviews, etc.
- School fundraising using "junk foods" such as candy, cookie dough, restaurant nights, etc.
- MCPS Dept. of Food and Nutrition Services is developing a program to help students (especially high schoolers) make wise food choices. Both in and out of the cafeteria. For example, high school focus groups have asked for a pocket-sized card on reading food labels and dietary guidelines.
- Reminder: nutrition information is on the MCPS website for all school menu items, and posters with this information are posted at the point of sale in cafeterias.
- An update was given on the status of the School-Based Health Center at Northwood HS. Although a major focus is on preventing teen pregnancy and STDs, the SBHC also provides services ranging from sports physicals, to parent education training to support groups. There is also an onsite mental health therapist, and immunizations are also available. There is a plan to expand the SBHC program to other sites, including Watkins Mill, Gaithersburg and Wheaton high schools.
- MCPS has developed a pandemic flu plan, in cooperation with the county Department of Health and Human Services.
- 31 MCPS schools are officially participating in International Walk-To-School Day.

Meeting with Robyn Levy from the Jewish Community Services Center

On October 7, 2008, I met with Robyn Levy, Community Liaison for Child and Family Services at the Jewish Social Services Association (JSSA). JSSA provides emotional and mental health services for people of all denominations across a wide range of issues, including social skills, behavioral challenges, divorce, learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, depression and anxiety, ADHD, etc.

JSSA would like to partner with MCCPTA to inform families of the many services available to all in our community. Possibilities include a presentation at a Delegates' Assembly and/or providing JSSA speakers at local PTA meetings.