

March 7, 2008

Dr. Jerry Weast, Superintendent
Montgomery County Public Schools
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Dr. Weast:

As you know, the school system recently made the decision to postpone the administration of the School Climate Surveys to students, staff, and parents until spring, 2009, as a cost saving measure in response to the current fiscal situation. MCCPTA has also been advised that this postponement might be the first step in moving toward a biennial administration of these surveys.

MCCPTA members were disturbed to hear that these important measures of stakeholder input were being postponed and in response the MCCPTA Delegate Assembly passed the attached *Resolution on Reinstatement of 2007-08 Survey of School Environment* on February 26, 2008.

Many local schools use the results of these surveys as a data point in their School Improvement Plans. Local school survey results are used by parents, administrators, and school personnel to identify the comparable strengths and weaknesses of schools in order to promote continuous improvement. The student surveys are critical in identifying school safety issues and are an important tool in making sure that all students attend school in an environment conducive to learning.

While we understand that there are costs associated with the administration of these surveys, these costs vary by school level and by whether students, staff, or parents are being surveyed. MCPS postponed all surveys, even those that could have been administered at very low cost. We urge you to reevaluate this decision and to reinstate the Surveys of School Environment for the 2007-08 school year.

Sincerely,

Jane de Winter

cc. Ms Nancy Navarro, President, Montgomery County Board of Education
Mr. Larry Bowers, Chief Operating Officer, MCPS
Dr. Michael Perich, Acting Director, Department of Shared Accountability