



May 15, 2009

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

Dear Dr. Weast:

On April 28, 2009, the Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) Delegates passed the attached resolution on Indoor Air Quality at MCPS Schools.

MCCPTA is aware that enrollment increases have led to a rise in the number of portables next year from 532 portable classrooms in 2008-2009 to a projected 547 in the 2009-2010 school year. Funding for future capital projects is uncertain. MCCPTA is concerned that there are not enough resources in place to keep our facilities dry and properly ventilated.

MCCPTA wants the school system to focus more on work order backlogs and indoor air quality complaints. These are indicators that the condition of our facilities is worsening. This negatively impacts our children's health and safety. The loss of positions among the maintenance staff and the impact that will have on operations are of great concern. MCCPTA understands the fiscal constraints, but we must push forward in order to address indoor air quality issues.

MCCPTA would like assurances that HVACs are properly maintained with adequate training and supervision to ensure that filters are changed at least three times a year and coils are cleaned and checked for moisture problems. We would like to see proactive measures to catch potential problems before they become late corrections that end up being more costly. MCCPTA supports parents and teachers being able to ask questions freely about the

condition of MCPS facilities (portables and school buildings.) MCCPTA supports parents and teachers getting answers to their questions in a reasonable time frame.

MCCPTA asks that MCPS formulate a policy that states a commitment for children to have safe, secure learning environments to include indoor air quality needs. MCCPTA would like to see additional measures to address existing air quality concerns along with proactive measures which can prevent unhealthy consequences.

MCCPTA appreciates your taking the time to hear and consider our concerns. We look forward to continuing to work in a collaborative manner to support children in all educational settings across Montgomery County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kay Romero".

Kay Romero, President, Montgomery County Council of PTAs

cc: Ms. Shirley Brandman, President, Board of Education
Mr. Joe Lavorgna, Acting Director, Department of Facilities
Management



MCCPTA Resolution on Indoor air Quality at MCPS Schools

WHEREAS The National PTA has urged local units to work with school administrators and boards of education to ensure that school heating, ventilation, and air conditioning operation and maintenance plans comply with the highest current standards supplied by accepted experts.

WHEREAS Children may be especially susceptible to air pollution because the same concentration of pollutants will result in a higher body burden in children than adults because children breathe a greater volume of air relative to their body weight.

WHEREAS Portables are a particular concern because most are stand alone units that are subject to unique challenges. They are vulnerable to weather conditions, water infiltration, security issues, pest infestation, and building pressurization problems that compromise the safety and health of our children.

WHEREAS The poor quality of existing MCPS portables in combination with the limited staff resources at MCPS in completing proactive maintenance goals result in continuous problems with water infiltration, mold growth, pest infestation, and CO2 levels higher than the recommended level (1000 ppm.)

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that MCCPTA requests the following actions be taken by MCPS to move forward in efforts toward providing a safe and healthy environment for our children, staff and administrators. These actions include but are not limited to:

- A two-year carpet removal plan for portables beginning this summer, replacing with tile or other mold resistant material. (Carpets remaining are likely to be infested with mites and may contain mold.)
- For any portable HVACs with a history of being serviced for moisture issues, replacement of any fiberglass lining with Rubberflex or other insulation that can be cleaned. (Some portables include HVACs with fiberglass lining that cannot be cleaned properly when mold spores attach.)
- Annual “walk-through” inspections of all school buildings and portables, as recommended by EPAs “Tools for Schools Program.”
- HVAC staff and/or other staff to help Indoor Air Quality meet demands and increase the number of Building Maintenance Plans (BMPs).
- Disclosure to parents whenever there is an Indoor Air Quality Complaint at their school (in buildings or in portables.) MCPS and school communities need to collaborate and communicate with each other on air quality concerns.
- Maintenance logs must be easily accessible for all parents, staff and administrators.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Board of Education create a policy on MCPS' commitment to "air quality" in all classrooms with measurable performance objectives and recognize "air quality" as a health concern for all children.

National PTA has taken the following position on indoor air quality. MCCPTA supports this position for school buildings and portables:

Resolution - SCHOOL BUILDINGS' AND PORTABLE CLASSROOMS' INDOOR AIR QUALITY (IAQ)

Whereas, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states that concentrations of air contaminants are often found to be 2-5 times higher indoors than outdoors due to the tighter buildings, reduction in outdoor air brought into schools for ventilation, reduced maintenance budgets, and the proliferation of indoor sources of contaminants; and

Whereas, The combined indoor pollution from synthetic building materials and furnishings, cleaning agents, printing and copying devices, science labs, industrial/vocational shops, art and craft materials, combustion and humidification appliances, smoking lounges, and other resources can reduce the health and comfort of building occupants as well as increase absenteeism; and

Whereas, Children may be especially susceptible to air pollution because the same concentration of pollutants will result in a higher body burden in children than adults because children breathe a greater volume of air relative to their body weight; and

Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent bodies inform their members about indoor air quality issues so they may work with their individual school districts and Department of Defense Civil Engineering and Housing, when building or remodeling schools or using portable classrooms, to reduce sources of contaminants, improve maintenance practices, and reduce use of toxic products around school buildings and portable classrooms for cleaning, decorating, in science labs, vocational classes, computer labs, arts and crafts; and be it further

Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent bodies urge its local units to work with school administrators and boards of education, and Department of Defense Civil Engineering and Housing to ensure that school heating, ventilation, and air conditioning operation and maintenance plans comply with the highest current standards supplied by accepted experts; and be it further

Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent bodies work with and urge the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to adopt guidelines to ensure the quality of schools' indoor air; and be it further

Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent bodies seek and support legislation and funding for protection from indoor air contaminants as research continues to reveal sources and for improved ventilation standards and building codes for schools.