

Montgomery County School Health Council

September 15th, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- 6:30 - Introductions by Carey Dwyer, Nurse Manager, SHS. Hybrid meetings continue.
- 6:40 - Review and approval of March 10th, 2025 meeting minutes
- 6:45 – Beka Urgessa, Senior Administrator of School Health Services (SHS)
 - Ongoing recruitment of School Health Community Nurses (SCHNs) and School Health Room Technicians, creation of new SCHN positions, and working closely with DHHS HR to onboard personnel faster. 2 new nurse manager positions have been created. Working with MCPS for immunizations to be added to Synergy (SHS EHR platform) and for Synergy to communicate with the MCPS cafeteria system, implementation of safety insulin injection needles and pens to reduce the risk of needlestick injuries, roll out of stock inhalers for SY 25-26. SHS had a successful Maryland State site visit.
- 7:00 – Dr. Ritu Sharma, Founder of Head Heart Hands
 - Reviewed prevalence and trends in pediatric-onset chronic conditions in the US, has increased from 1 in 5 pediatrics to 1 in 3 pediatrics. Estimated that 80% of chronic diseases can be prevented, and many chronic conditions can be reversed. Reviewed 6 pillars of lifestyle medicine: healthful eating, increasing physical activity, developing strategies to manage stress, avoiding risky substances, forming and maintaining relationships, and improving sleep. Upcoming kids' book “The Wonder of What We Eat” will help teach kids the essentials of nutrition and develop comprehensive health literacy.
- 7:00 – Dr. Cara Grant, PreK-12 Curriculum Supervisor, Health and Physical Education, MCPS
 - Update on Maryland State Department of Education, Standards and Framework Verification Committee for Health Education and Physical Education Pre-K-12 Content Standards
- 7:40 – Closing remarks
 - Student School Health Council-not present
 - Nomination of new co-chair and filling membership gaps
 - Proposed topics for School Health Council Meetings for SY 2025-2026
 - Increasing student involvement

Participants:

Carey Dwyer, Nurse Manager, SHS, we are having some tech issue
Dr. Cara Grant, PreK-12 Curriculum Supervisor, Health and Physical Education, MCPS, Beka Urgessa, Senior Administrator, SHS, Laura Howard, Thriving Schools Initiative, Kaiser Permanente, Ashley Thomas, Executive Account Manager, Kaiser Permanente, Dr. Luis Ruiz, Physician, Kaiser Permanente,

Dr. Ritu Sharmu, Presenter and Founder of Head Heart Hands, Dr. Cara Grant, PreK-12 Curriculum Supervisor, Health and Physical Education, MCPS, Dr. Nina Ashford, Chief of Public Health Services, Anne Marie Hart Bookbinder, Moco Food Council, Dr. Kisha Davis, Montgomery County Health Officer, DHHS Nick Greer, MCPS Division Food & and Nutrition Services, Debra Bitonti, Nurse Manager, SHS Hope McGuire, Supervisor of Community Schools, MCPS