

Montgomery County School Health Council

March 22, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Gail Warner	Community Member, SHC Co-Chair	Daniel Russ	Community Member, SHC Co-chair
Drew Warner	Student Member	Alana Arorin	Commission on Health
Robin Brannan	Community Member	Sandy Salsberg	Community Member
Victoria Thompson	MCPS OTLS	Liz Elliott	MCDHHS School Health Services
Deborah Merke	Community Member	Peter Park	MCPS Systemwide Safety
Drew Warner	Student Member	Katie Elliott	Student Member
Teresa Shatzer	MCPS Health Education	Joanie Glick	Senior Administrator, SHS
Kirsten Anderson	Linkages to Learning		
Guest:	Heather Dublinske, MCPS Office of Operations		

- The meeting was called to order by Gail Warner. Minutes from the December 2020 meeting were approved as amended.
- Peter Park, MCPS Systemwide Safety, updated members on the return of students to in-person learning. Refer to <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/safety/covid.aspx>
Planning is ongoing for emergency drills in school buildings while maintaining COVID safety precautions. Social distancing guidance is for 6 feet between students. Enhanced cleaning is done in the evening and involves electrostatic processes and chemicals vetted for safety. Procedures are in place to ensure enhanced hand hygiene. Wednesdays continue to be virtual instruction. Plans for athletics are moving forward. COVID information for students and staff is available on the MCPS dashboard.
- Victoria Thompson shared information on general COVID processes. Face coverings are required for all people in school buildings, there are physical distancing floor markings and signs. Lunch is spread out throughout school buildings. Recess is outside with limitations on group size. Cleaning chemicals for high-touch surfaces are EPA approved for use against COVID. If staff or students answer yes to any of the health attestation questions they are not to report to in-person learning.
- Heather Dublinske briefed SHC members on the pooled testing process by nasal swab designed to identify asymptomatic persons. Parent consent is required; expected turnaround time of 2-3 days. If a pool is positive arrangements are identified to test each individual in the testing group; individuals are quarantined for 14 days. MCPS works with DHHS to identify close contacts, determine the need for quarantine and to support contact tracing needs. Currently, vaccinated staff and teen students are required to quarantine.
- Joanie Glick from School Health Services shared that staff will be redeployed back to supporting students in school and health rooms. Staffing will consist of one SHS person per health room as there are number of staff who cannot work in a forward facing role for medical reasons. SHS staff have been given priority for COVID vaccinations. Appropriate PPE, supplies and equipment are in place to ensure safety of students and staff in school buildings. Each school will have two spaces: a traditional health room and a triage room for evaluation of students with COVID-like illness, with enhanced cleaning processes when students are in the triage room. In other jurisdictions in Maryland, there are far fewer health room visits and significantly more staff time addressing COVID concerns. For the next budget year, there are no new SHS positions. Last year 6 School Nurse positions were added. The SBHWC at Seneca Valley HS was built when the new building opened; funding for staff is lacking. More SCHN positions would be helpful to addressed increased needs.
- Mental Health needs were discussed. Some funding is through Linkages to Learning; needs are expected to increase with continued impact of pandemic. DHHS supports mental health needs through Behavioral Health, the Crisis Center and Positive Youth Development programming. Additional therapist positions are expected through Kirwan funding. EveryMind has seen an increase in anxiety and depression in youth and their families. Telehealth services are promising. Planning is underway to support students and families transitioning to in-person learning and evaluation of in-person vs remote therapists. Discussion focused on disparities with return to in-person learning.
- Discussion topics for the May meeting included Mental Health; stakeholder review of the Health Curriculum; and Racial Equity based on work done through the Commission on Health. Efforts in Montgomery County are focused on the equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- School Health Council Meetings will be remotely scheduled on MS Teams until further notice for SY 2020-2021. Next meeting is May 10, 2021.