



*Leading and Learning... Our Mission*

## **Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals**

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December 1, 2020

Board of Education  
Montgomery County Public Schools  
850 Hungerford Drive, Room 123  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Board of Education:

The Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals (MCAAP) is in FULL support of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program and wishes to keep officers positioned within schools in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). This stance is in alignment with MCPS High School Principals, who are united in retaining the SRO program.

The national conversation regarding the role of police officers in schools and the local debate of the continuance of the Montgomery County School Resource Officer Program has spurred the need for MCAAP to ensure our voice and position as representatives to more than 500 school administrators are acknowledged.

SROs collaborate with school administrators, staff, parents, and students on a daily basis. They serve school clusters by working to ensure safety in every public high school, middle school, and elementary school in MCPS. School administrators agree that the best practice of addressing student misconduct is through school-based comprehensive interventions, which include mentoring, restorative justice measures, and other appropriate common sense actions and consequences, as defined by the MCPS Code of Conduct. School staff collaboratively implement these interventions and strategies that lead to maintaining positive learning environments and allow students to learn from mistakes, correct any harm that stems from their behavior, and restore relationships. SROs are merely a part of this equation; they are not disciplinarians and are not the first stop in the sequence.

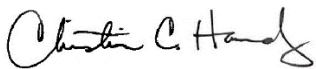
The Safe to Learn Act of 2018 requires all school systems to either have SROs or adequate police coverage for all its schools. This requirement provides safety and security for MCPS schools who rely on SROs to serve as partners when addressing incidents such as fights, drug possession/distribution, and scenarios of active shooting situations. Students that engage in acts which violate a criminal statute within a school are addressed using the Code of Conduct and those instances may require police intervention. If and when these situations occur, an SRO who has made it a point to develop positive relationships with students can and often intervene

appropriately as part of a collaborative team within the school; sometimes this is to deescalate a situation or it may be to prevent a situation from happening. This is important to note as officers who may be called to a school (and who are not a part of the SRO program) most likely do not have that history or a collaborative and positive relationship with the student body. How an individual enters a situation will determine how the individual exits it.

As with any human endeavor, there is always room to improve and grow. This is also true for the SRO program. The answer to the challenges that may exist with the program is not to remove the program all together. Instead, the more reasonable route to take is to view the program comprehensively to locate areas of weakness or define efforts for improvement. The School Resource Officer Program in Montgomery County has greatly benefited the school system. Some of these ways can be quantified with direct, specific examples of how SROs intervened in situations quickly before they got out of hand. In that same vein, their positive impact in times past may be impossible to quantify and know because the proactive measures they took have thwarted serious incidences. We need SROs in our schools. If we are truly a system that builds and appreciates relational community, we need them and their presence in our buildings to show our staff and students that they, our SROs, are a part of our community, too.

We would love to talk to you further to discuss our position to keep officers positioned within Montgomery County schools to continue to provide an additional layer of safety and security measures that are imperative in our school communities.

On Behalf of the MCAAP / MCBOA Board of Directors,



Dr. Christine Handy  
MCAAP / MCBOA President