

Health and Safety Committee Report June 2010

Chair: Laurie Halverson

EFOs and Health Room Aide Hours Update

Health Room Aide hours were reinstated by the County Council. However, the County Council voted to keep just 9 EFOs (Educational Facility Officers) in our high schools (there are currently 33 EFOs). The program was almost eliminated entirely, but parent advocacy efforts emphasized the need for EFOs with at least 300 emails to Council members. The Board of Education can decide to fund additional EFOs or eliminate the program entirely. So, if you believe police in our high schools are important at your school, please contact your Board of Education members and Bob Hellmuth, Director of Safety and Security at MCPS. The Board of Education will decide what to cut or not to cut on June 8.

Safe and Drug Free Schools is Being Eliminated

The Department of Safe and Drug Free schools is being eliminated as of July 1. Many of the prevention programs that occur at your schools are supported through this department. There will be no more student assistance team support, alcohol, other drug, violence prevention outreach or trainings, and no interventions. Montgomery County is the only county in Maryland who did not step up to fund Safe and Drug Free Schools. The other counties had assistance from their school system or other local governmental agency.

May Health/ Safety Meeting with Bob Hellmuth

At our May 10 meeting, Bob Hellmuth, the Director of Safety and Security at MCPS was our speaker. We talked about our concern for EFO cuts and the Visitor Management System and CCTV Systems at our schools.

EFOs:

The Police Department (MCPD) is responsible for EFOs. Here are some problems that currently exist with the program:

MCPS has no control over which EFOs are assigned to which schools. MCPS would like to have a say in the hiring process. MCPS wants to see more quality employees as EFOs. Some EFOs do a fantastic job while others do not.

MCPS has no say in the hours the EFOs are assigned. MCPS wants to see EFOs in schools 5 days a week vs the 4 day week currently worked by most EFOs.

EFOs don't cover middle schools any more, though some EFOs will go to a middle school if asked.

MCPS wants more coverage in middle schools.

MCPS is not involved in administrative actions.

There are labor issues involving contracts that MCPS cannot control. Prince George's County is having similar labor issues and is getting around it by creating a police department within its school district.

There is little supervision of EFOs. Some supervisors do a great job while others do not.

The EFOs have no job description. There is one written but it hasn't been finalized and is not yet in force. How can an EFO do their job without a job description? How can an EFO be evaluated without one? It was written two years ago and there is contention with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU.)

There is uncertainty as to how EFOs are evaluated.

The police won't agree to allow sergeants in schools as EFOs. Sergeants serve a supervisory role only.

When cuts are made to EFO positions, MCPS will likely not have input. The cuts could be made on seniority, who applied to what school, etc. The decision will reside with the police department.

Calls to police are counted, but intervention and diffusion are not counted for EFO effectiveness.

Information about Security Personnel, under supervision of MCPS:

60% are retired police.

They receive semiannual training and 16 hours of first aide and CPR training.

Bob hires and screens security personnel. MCPS sets system-wide expectations and there is a reporting system. The team leader must call the office to report a serious incident. Principals can put them on PAR (Peer Assistance Review) if there are performance issues. It is not recommended for security personnel to go off campus (while EFOs often go off campus.) They work 40 hours plus overtime.

Visitor Management System and CCTV System:

The current six year CIP includes the installation of visitor management systems (VSMs) in all elementary schools and a CCTV system in middle and high schools. MCPS is still in the process of installing these new systems.

MCPS is having some glitches with the VSMs in elementary schools. The software is freezing up creating an error message. Cold Spring ES is getting a new system that will have different software. There is a camera at the front and back doors with an intercom. If there is an emergency, the doors can be locked or unlocked centrally.

Portable classrooms: Kids can enter the school with a key card which is shared by the class.

Volunteer hours can be recorded in the VSM which saves the school time since schools without VSMs must record these hours manually.

MCPS is a little behind schedule with installing the VSM systems (26 schools did not get completed as originally scheduled) because the installation coincides with the tech mods, which were on hold for a year to save money in last year's operating budget.

Some schools are not using the VSM and it is taking some time for schools to adjust to the change. If a school runs out of badges, they can order additional badges through the Department of Safety and Security.

MCPS is ahead of schedule with the CCTV system (for middle and high schools) and they will complete the final six schools this July. Holding schools are still being discussed such as Tilden Holding School. Bob Hellmuth gave a tour of the central office room where personnel monitor schools through these cameras. When an emergency occurs, MCPS leaders can see what is happening in real time (and can rewind and view) through these cameras.