MCCPTA Committee Update – April 2007

Safety Committee: Pam Moommau, Chair, Pammoomau@comcast.net

Lead Mediation Update:
MCPS has finally updated its web information on lead-in-water remediation for each school. You can get to it at the following link:
http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/maintenance/leadinformation/
or by typing "lead" in the MCPS web search engine.

Once at the site, notice the word "list" in blue at two points within the text. This will link you to lists of schools where no remediation was found necessary (first "list") and of schools where remediation has been completed (second "list"). If you click on the blue "available,"
it shows a graph with the status of each school, including those where more work is needed. Notice in the write-up that MCPS has instituted a permanent flushing protocol for all drinking fixtures first thing in the morning in all schools, including those that have been completed
remediated. This because when the water sits in a fixture for a prolonged time period (e.g., overnight), there is enough time for some lead and other minerals to leach into the water.

This status report on all schools may be a little difficult to decipher. You'll notice that most schools show a red bar that goes out to "Post Remediation and Passivation Testing." This means that they have done all the work that was called for in their remediation plan, but some of
the new fixtures are still showing lead levels above the action level (of 20 parts per billion). The environmental subcommittee of the MCCPTA Safety Committee has met with MCPS and Montgomery County officials about the process, including the post-testing and "passivation" procedures. We still need to get a little follow-up information on this, but the figures we were shown indicated that for the most part the readings are not very far above the action level, and the two-step testing procedure they use does seem to indicate that the lead is coming from the new fixtures, not the plumbing.

"Passivation" is the process by which new plumbing fixtures acquire a coating (from additives put in the water at the plant by WSSC for this purpose) to reduce leaching of lead and other minerals from the fixtures into the water. In order for passivation to occur, enough water
containing the additive has to flow through the fixture for a long-enough time period for the coating to build up. This requires "flushing" at the school level every day for every new fixture for prolonged time periods, and MCPS suspects this may not be happening in all cases. The MCCPTA Safety Committee follow-up includes additional research into whether the passivation flushing protocol is, in fact, adequate to the task.

Notice also at the end of the write-up a link to email Lynne Zarate, the MCPS environmental safety coordinator or in charge of this project, so that you can ask her questions directly.

Education Facilities Officers

In response to questions raised about the assignment of Education Facilities Officers, Robert Hellmuth, MCPS Director of Safety and Security provided the following information:
Education Facilities Officers are funded by a federal grant through the budget of the Montgomery County Police Department. While there are 32 funded positions, there are only 28 EFO's because it is difficult to find police officers interested in the position. Although the grant specifies that EFOs may be allocated to public or private schools, all of those in Montgomery County go to MCPS. Each MCPS high school is assigned one EFO, and two middle schools, Argyle and Clemente, also have them. The decision as to which middle schools receive and EFO is made jointly between MCPD and the MCPS Office of School Performance.