



June 10, 2009

Ms. Kay Romero, President
Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations
2096 Gaither Road
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear *Kay* Ms. Romero:

Thank you for your letter dated May 15, 2009, regarding the resolution on indoor air quality passed by the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (MCCPTA). As you are aware, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) implemented an exemplary Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Program in the 1990s. The IAQ Program has had tremendous success in addressing and improving air quality in our schools—earning the respect and recognition of the Environmental Protection Agency as early as 2001.

During the past seven fiscal years, the proven successes of the IAQ teams' work have resulted in an approximate 300 percent increase in the number of requests for special air quality evaluations. The teams have established a reputation for high quality customer-driven service that includes an Internet website and a readily available and downloadable complaint/request form for customer use. The evening shift IAQ team operations, while not visible to most customers, continue to maintain healthy air quality for our students.

With regard to relocatable classroom facilities, the IAQ teams performed a thorough inspection of each of these temporary facilities. Necessary repairs are in progress to correct deficiencies related to air quality, such as moisture entry and mold formation. This year, MCPS has specified and contracted for "greener" relocatable classroom units with improved insulation, mold resistant non-wood flooring, and more energy efficient temperature control systems. In the future when older relocatable units at the end of their lease periods are slated for removal from a site, they will be returned to their vendor rather than be relocated to a new site. The new greener units will be used for placements. Despite their flaws, relocatable classrooms remain the most economical and timely way to provide space for enrollment growth and class size initiatives.

I agree with MCCPTA that staff in our divisions of Maintenance and School Plant Operations should be appropriately trained and supervised to ensure that timely preventive maintenance tasks are carried out. A new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning filter ordering process has been implemented this year to assure that proper filters are available at each school in time for each scheduled filter change. Beginning in July 2009, all newly employed building service workers will be required to complete a basic skills course prior to their obtaining permanent employment status. The basic skills course includes training on proper filter replacement

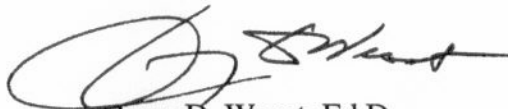
Office of the Superintendent of Schools

techniques. In addition, the Division of School Plant Operations has developed an in-house custodial equipment repair capability to increase the availability of and reduce the time needed to repair equipment needed to properly clean and maintain schools. The Division of Maintenance is working with the vendor of its computer-based work order system to provide automated preventive maintenance work orders for each school.

I appreciate the position and recommendations of MCCPTA regarding proactive measures toward preventive maintenance and improved indoor air quality in schools. Also, I am proud of staff in the Department of Facilities Management for exemplifying a culture of continuous improvement and commitment to provide an optimal teaching, learning, and working environment for MCPS students and staff.

As always, I look to MCCPTA as a full partner in supporting students and staff across the system.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry D. Weast", written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

Jerry D. Weast, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

JDW:vnb

Copy to:
Members of the Board of Education
Mr. Bowers
Mr. Higgins
Ms. Jones
Mr. Layorgna