

Maryland's Largest School District

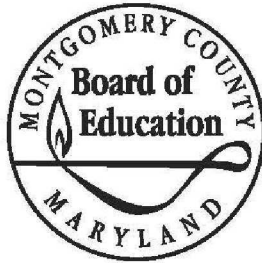
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

Action Plan Update

A Framework for Change at MCPS

October 2023



VISION

We inspire learning by providing the greatest public education to each and every student.

MISSION

Every student will have the academic, creative problem solving, and social emotional skills to be successful in college and career.

CORE PURPOSE

Prepare all students to thrive in their future.

CORE VALUES

*Learning
Relationships
Respect
Excellence
Equity*

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Mr. Brian S. Stockton
Chief of Staff

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Ms. Elba M. Garcia
Senior Community Advisor

Dr. Patricia E. Kapunan
School System Medical Officer

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The recent independent investigation by the law firm Jackson Lewis highlights issues of critical concern that Montgomery County Public Schools intends to address, especially in the areas of investigations into sexual harassment allegations and the promotions process reported in the media in August.

Investigation Findings:

- The Investigation process — MCPS' investigation process into allegations lacked vital elements that would have ensured for all allegations to be processed appropriately.
- Promotions process — MCPS' promotions process lacked reporting structures that would fully inform decision-makers.
- Information sharing — MCPS' promotion processes did not allow for the Board of Education or superintendent to be automatically notified if a candidate for promotion is under investigation.

While we work to develop a full comprehensive plan, action in nine key areas will be initiated over the next 60 days and will be informed by:

- **Communities of Practice:** Panels of experts who will come together to recommend specific actions MCPS must take in the key areas listed below to form a comprehensive corrective action plan.
- **“Listening to Lead” Sessions:** Engagement with staff about how to enhance culture, improve staff morale, and create great working and learning environments
- **Inspector General Investigation:** Findings and recommendations from the Inspector General regarding misconduct as well as “whether MCPS has effective procedures for the receipt, assignment, investigation, referral, resolution, documentation, and retention of allegations of misconduct by its employees.”

KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION

1 Reporting Mechanisms for Named and Anonymous Complaints: Through the reporting hub, individuals can access a range of independent, secure and confidential reporting mechanisms, including Safe Schools Maryland, The Lighthouse Hotline and the Montgomery County Office of the Inspector General's Hotline. Posters featuring these resources have been distributed to district offices and schools alongside posters from the Montgomery County Office of the Inspector General. Every report, named or anonymous, will be reviewed and appropriately investigated.

2 Investigating Named and Anonymous Complaints: We must have an integrity-driven investigations unit, benchmarked against best practices and models from various sectors. During a transition period, temporary leadership has been assigned to the unit. Aligned with Board of Education policies, this unit will be revamped and restructured to efficiently examine and investigate named and anonymous violations. The skills, knowledge and expertise required of personnel to conduct the investigations will be required along with training. A streamlined reporting process will ensure the swift handling of allegations.

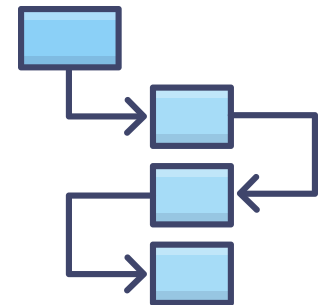


3 Policies, Regulations, and Practices: The Board and superintendent will collaborate to develop a comprehensive policy that reflects the Board's priorities for recruitment, promotion and hiring of administrators within the school system and update or create new regulations to align with the new policy that establishes the process for implementation of the administrative and supervisory hiring process. Effective immediately, administrators will not be considered for promotion while under investigation. Robust required background checks, prior to making a preliminary recommendation for appointment, will be implemented.

KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION

4 Employee Support: Employees in need of support should reach out to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which provides professional, confidential counseling to employees and eligible family members on a variety of life issues. The EAP can connect employees who need more intense support. Through listening to employees, we will learn what resources are needed.

5 Promotions Process: To ensure that highly qualified and fully vetted individuals lead our schools and offices, we are updating the promotions process. Effective immediately, a multi-faceted background check will be put in place to ensure that all decision-makers are fully informed about each candidate, beyond information in the resume, interview, references and criminal background check already in place. We will fully review any investigations, conduct a thorough review of personnel files, an internet search, a Maryland Case Search and more. Only candidates who have been cleared of this background check will be eligible to proceed to the Appointments Committee. The Board and superintendent will receive attestations verifying that the information about the candidate is “true, accurate and complete.”

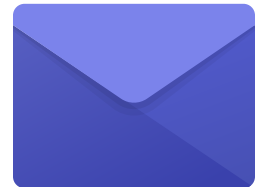


6 Professional Development for Supervisory Staff: Comprehensive training on sexual misconduct and sexual harassment, workplace bullying and appropriate workplace conduct will be required of all supervisory staff, equipping them to recognize, address and prevent such behavior in the workplace.

KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION

7 Staff Climate and Culture: Schools are expected to utilize the climate survey data in the development of their improvement plans for the climate and culture goal. In January, MCPS will fully deploy the surveys for staff, students and families. The results will be provided by early spring to engage school and central office leaders in action planning, in collaboration with staff, based on the results.

8 Email Retention: The investigation has brought into question MCPS' email retention practices. MCPS retains all employee emails for one year, a change made in 2019 from a previous retention period of 30 days. We will be benchmarking for best practices to determine whether to extend email retention periods for some or all staff.



9 Risk Analysis: Scheduled risk analysis is important for reviewing and improving processes that allow organizations to proactively identify and address emerging threats, inefficiencies and workplace misconduct. MCPS must be agile, compliant with regulations and responsive to challenges that affect operations, ultimately safeguarding the well-being of employees and students, and protecting the ability of the district to ensure a successful teaching and learning environment.

HELPFUL REPORTING RESOURCES

Safe Schools Maryland: An ANONYMOUS and FREE reporting system available to students, teachers, school staff members, parents, and the general public to report any school or student safety concerns, including mental health concerns. Safe Schools Maryland is Maryland's only official anonymous reporting system. Safe Schools Maryland operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. Your anonymous report can be submitted by calling the tip line (1-833-MD-B-SAFE / 1-833-632-7233), completing an online form [\](#), or downloading the free Safe Schools Maryland app from the App Store or Google Play.

[Reporting Form](#)

Call 1-833-MD-B-SAFE / 1-833-632-7233

The Lighthouse Hotline for waste fraud and abuse: a mechanism by which any concerned individual can submit an alleged incident of fraud, waste, or abuse to an independent service provider.

Employees can make a report anonymously 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Reports can be received in more than 140 languages, including Spanish.

Call 877-268-8620 (toll free)

[Send an email](#)

[Submit a tip online](#)

Montgomery County Office of the Inspector General's Hotline to report fraud, waste, or abuse related to activities in county government

Ombudsperson: Employee can contact the school system ombudsperson, an independent or neutral party who seeks to resolve school-related problems, to make a complaint at Ryvell_D_Fitzpatrick@mcpsmd.org

Hotline: 240 777 7644

Email: IG@montgomerycountymd.gov

[Envíe el formulario de queja en español](#)

[Submit a tip online](#)

Department of Compliance and Investigations: Employees can call DCI or email DCI@mcpsmd.org to make a complaint.

Direct report to supervisor: Employees can report complaints to their supervisor, who should then refer them to the Department of Compliance and Investigations.