

MCCPTA Resolution on School Resource Officers and School Safety and Security

Passed by the Delegates Assembly, 4/7/2021

Whereas: Montgomery County has placed police officers as school resource officers in our public schools since 2002. As recently as 2014, Montgomery County only had six police officers in MCPS schools. Today, MCPS has 26 police officers serving as school resource officers (one in each high school).

Whereas: The Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018 mandates either the assignment of an SRO or adequate law enforcement coverage for each individual school within each of Maryland's 24 local school systems. Since the passage of the Safe to Learn Act, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that a school-based SRO is required to ensure school safety.

Whereas: A recent report by MCPS details the existence of racial bias in policing in our schools. Black and Latino students represent 83% of total arrests over the last three years at MCPS. Black children who make up just 20% of the student body make up almost half of all student arrests.

Whereas: Students with disabilities are also overrepresented in school arrests. These students make up just 12% of the school population but 25% of school-based arrests.

Whereas: Once police are involved and engaged with our children, MCPS and parents no longer have jurisdiction or authority in the referred matter.

Be it Resolved: That the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations urge Montgomery County Public Schools to discontinue placing police officers (SROs) on any high school campus, and, instead, train and assign child-centered, dedicated resource personnel to every high school cluster in compliance with the 2018 Maryland Safe to Learn Act. Such resource personnel should be available to every school's security and administration teams, as needed.

Be it further Resolved: That MCCPTA urge MCPS and the County Council to engage in a broad discussion with students, parents, staff and community stakeholders to solicit input on (a) ways to enhance holistic safety and security in and around schools, and meet the ongoing social and emotional needs of students, without the bias and discrimination against black and brown students and students with disabilities that currently exists in the SRO program and (b) alternative uses for the resources currently devoted to the SRO program, including investments that would advance the holistic safety and well-being of students and staff.

Be it further Resolved: That MCCPTA urge MCPS to implement clear policies and procedures regarding the use of school-based law enforcement, and stronger, ongoing data collection and publication, internal and independent monitoring (including but not limited to annual reviews), and accountability with regard to school-initiated discipline and interventions, with due regard to MCPS' commitment to the elimination of racial bias and discrimination, and the promotion of equity, inclusion and acceptance for all.

Be it further Resolved: That MCCPTA urge MCPS and the County Council to allocate more funds towards evidence-driven programs, including an increased curricular, staff development and programmatic focus on trauma-informed, resilience-oriented, and culturally affirming social emotional learning, mental health and well-being, restorative practices, conflict resolution, and early threat assessments and crisis response, with due regard to the elimination of racial bias and discrimination, and the promotion of equity, inclusion and acceptance for all.

Be it finally Resolved: MCCPTA will advocate these positions with the Board of Education, MCPS and other governmental bodies, such as the Montgomery County Council.