

Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations

MCCPTA

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MCCPTA Statement Regarding the Abuse of East Silver Spring Elementary School Student by MCPD Officers and MCPS Staff

MCCPTA strongly condemns the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) officers and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff seen in body cam footage released on Friday, March 26, 2021, by MCPD. **These officers and MCPS staff repeatedly inflicted psychological abuse, as defined by the Center for Disease Control,¹** displaying a galling lack of regard for the mental and physical wellbeing of the child in question. Whether as instigators or as bystanders, every adult in the room failed the person MCCPTA was created to advocate for: the child.

MCCPTA calls for immediate and appropriate action, up to and including removal, of the MCPD officers and MCPS staff members directly and indirectly involved in the abuse of this child. The officers demonstrated gross misconduct, including explicitly encouraging “beating” this child. As to the MCPS staff, Desmond Tutu put it best when he said, “if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.” **MCCPTA urges MCPS leadership to take action that goes over and beyond merely “ensur[ing] that the school system’s procedures and expectations are clear to all staff.”**

All MCPS staff, MCPD, and any other county officials interacting with children **must** be fully and regularly trained in trauma-informed, culturally-sensitive, resilience-oriented restorative approaches, including de-escalation techniques and positive discipline. **This kind of training should not be optional.** It must be prioritized as a matter of urgency and offered regularly.

As parents and as *people*, our hearts break. We send our children to school trusting our teachers and staff to not only educate them, but to also care for them and keep them safe. Instead, the county watched as MCPD police and MCPS staff traded jokes over the head of a clearly traumatized, wailing child.

We recognize many of our county citizens that work in these institutions—MCPD, MCPS, the Board of Education and the County Council— are embarrassed by the behavior of these officers and school staff. **We ask you to take immediate action as outlined above, as we remain dismayed at the lack of urgency demonstrated by MCPD, MCPS, the Board of Education and the County Council.**

¹ “Intentional behavior that conveys to a child that he/she is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or valued only in meeting another’s needs. Psychological abuse can be continual (e.g., chronic and pervasive) or episodic (e.g., triggered by a specific context or situation). Psychologically abusive behaviors may include blaming, belittling, degrading, intimidating, terrorizing, isolating, restraining, confining, corrupting, exploiting, spurning, or otherwise behaving in a manner that is harmful, potentially harmful, or insensitive to the child’s developmental needs, or can potentially damage the child psychologically or emotionally.” (CDC, Child Maltreatment Surveillance, Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements).