



CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL

July 8, 2025

Dr. Thomas Taylor
Superintendent, Montgomery Public Schools
Thomas_W_Taylor@mcpsmd.org

RE: School Construction and Student Health

Dear Dr. Taylor:

The Maryland Children's Environmental Health & Protection Advisory Council (CEHPAC) respectfully submits this letter requesting your prompt action to protect children from hazards associated with construction.

Established by the Maryland General Assembly pursuant to Health-General §§13-1501—1506, CEHPAC's goal is to enable children in Maryland to grow up in a safe and healthy environment. Our duties include:

- Review and comment on existing rules, regulations, and standards to ensure that they adequately protect the health of children from environmental hazards by considering the special vulnerability of children, which arises because of their developing physiology and because their exposures can differ greatly from those of adults;
- Recommend uniform guidelines for State agencies to follow to help reduce and eliminate children's exposure to environmental hazards;
- Educate others regarding the environmental hazards that impact children's health and the means to avoid those hazards; and
- Provide any other relevant information that will assist in protecting children's health.

The Council has heard that students at a high school in your district have experienced symptoms typical of exposure to poor air quality, harmful fumes, and chemicals. The source of these environmental exposures appeared to be ongoing school construction.

We support the statements made by the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment (MACCHE) in the attached correspondence. CEHPAC agrees with MACCHE's recommendation to "consider an alternate schedule for school construction that does not include when school is in session," and supports the implementation of such an approach for schools currently undergoing construction, as well as for future multi-year projects. Planning and executing school construction projects with children's health at the forefront is essential to preventing the risk of both acute and chronic health problems in Maryland children.

CEHPAC Website: <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/EH/Pages/children-environmental-health.aspx>

As MACCHE pointed out, children are not little adults, and following OSHA laws does not guarantee they will be protected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Megan Weil Latshaw". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Megan" being the most prominent.

Megan Weil Latshaw, PhD MHS
Commission Member

Attachments

cc: Meena Seshamani, MD, PH.D, Secretary, Maryland Department of Health
Serena McIlwain, Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment
Dr. Carey M. Wright, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Joshua L. Michael, President, State Board of Education
Dr. Kisha Davis, Health Officer, Montgomery County

From: Taylor, Thomas W <Thomas_W_Taylor@mcpsmd.org>
Sent: Saturday, July 12, 2025 12:31 PM
To: Megan Weil Latshaw <mlatshaw@jhu.edu>
Cc: Frederick Banks -MDE- <frederick.banks1@maryland.gov>; Subha Chandar -MDH- <subha.chandar@maryland.gov>; Meena.Seshamani@maryland.gov; Serena.McIlwain@maryland.gov; Carey.Wright@maryland.gov; Joshua.Michael1@maryland.gov; Kisha.Davis@montgomerycountymd.gov; Malchodi, Catherine E <Catherine_E_Malchodi@mcpsmd.org>; McGuire, Essie <Essie_McGuire@mcpsmd.org>; Mamoon, Adnan <Adnan_Mamoon@mcpsmd.org>; Kylan Simpson - MDH- <kylan.simpson@maryland.gov>; Mamoon, Adnan <Adnan_Mamoon@mcpsmd.org>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Children's Environmental Health Protection

External Email - Use Caution

Thank you for reaching out, Dr. Latshaw,

We appreciate the partnership and support. Thank you! To be candid, I am a little troubled by some assertions in your letter that are represented as fact, because they are really just based on anecdotal reports. That said, I sincerely appreciate the partnership and recommendations.

To be crystal clear, please know that MCPS would never willingly or knowingly put children in harm's way.

I grew up in Maryland (Montgomery County, specifically) but spent the majority of my professional career across the river in Virginia; I am now just returning to Maryland and getting readjusted to how this state works versus my last one. Just curious because I don't know... does CEHPAC have access to funding to support some of the recommendations outlined on your website and in your letter? Or are these just recommendations? For example, the cost of only doing school construction at collocated site when school is not in session would have multi-million-dollar ramifications (perhaps even hundreds of millions of dollars with the only project we presently have at a collocated site). I looked at the website that you provided but didn't see anything about funding to support recommendations.

Again, I appreciate the recommendations and partnership and would love more information about financial support.

Sincerely,
Thomas W. Taylor, EdD MBA
Superintendent of Schools
Montgomery County Public Schools