

October 19, 2020

Dear Parents or Guardians,

With the 2020 United States Presidential election approaching, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) recognizes the importance of teaching and discussing the democratic process in real-time. As with past elections, the goals of the Maryland State Department of Education and MCPS are to teach students:

- how government and the electoral process works;
- the skills to make informed decisions about political issues;
- how to engage in relevant and current events in a manner that promotes civil discourse, and;
- be responsible citizens who participate in the democratic process.

Schools will be provided with resources to engage in the following:

- Establish ground rules and teach etiquette when engaging in discussions about political issues.
- Focus on the democratic process in America.
- Go beyond the candidates to focus on their platforms, the issues, and the arguments.
- Utilize historical thinking skills of social studies and/or literacy skills to support student understanding of political issues and critical analysis of media and multiple perspectives.
- Incorporate social emotional and psychoeducational strategies and resources to help students work through their emotions as the election unfolds.

We recognize that teaching about the democratic process during presidential elections can elicit strong emotional reactions from our students. MCPS is committed to integrating social emotional activities into instruction and discussion of the election to help support and prepare students to respond respectfully and thoughtfully to the issues and one another.

Teachers and school-based mental health staff (i.e. counselors, psychologists, social workers, etc.) will receive resources and training developed by Curriculum and Instructional Programs and Student and Family Support and Engagement to support students in these discussions. Teacher leaders are being trained to support teachers with the implementation of these strategies. Should you have questions please reach out to your child's school.

Sincerely,

Niki T. Hazel  
Associate Superintendent for Curriculum  
and Instructional Programs

Ruschelle Reuben  
Associate Superintendent for Student and Family  
Support and Engagement

Maryland's Largest School District

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