



CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL

May 11, 2021

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools
Maryland State Department of Education
karen.salmon@maryland.gov

Robert A. Gorrell
Executive Director
Interagency Commission on Public School
Construction
robert.gorrell@maryland.gov

Dear Superintendent Salmon and Mr. Gorrell,

The Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council (CEHPAC) was established in 2000 pursuant to Chapter 585 of the Acts of 2000. CEHPAC advises the Governor and the General Assembly on environmental issues that may pose a threat to children. CEHPAC seeks to identify environmental hazards that may affect children's health and to recommend solutions to those hazards through interdisciplinary problem solving and coalition building.

At CEHPAC's April 20th, 2021 meeting, a motion was adopted requesting from MSDE and the Interagency Commission on Public School Construction the following:

- 1) Prompt school district-based public information and open data reporting, itemized per school, of:
 - a) District-specific measures taken to increase ventilation and filtration to reduce exposure to COVID-19 and other air-borne viruses;
 - b) District- specific existing HVAC systems MERV filter ratings;
 - c) Effective air changes per hour (eACH) averages, verified by an independent third party IAQ expert or firm; and
 - d) Verification of effective mitigation strategies, such as CO2 monitoring, in high-risk spaces by an independent third party IAQ expert or firm.
- 2) Each school in Maryland to be provided with a method of measuring CO2 that is recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- 3) Confirmation from each school district in Maryland that all portable air filters throughout the school district are HEPA only and do not have any other technologies that can impact the indoor air chemistry of the classroom. ¹

¹ For example, the Price RAP manual posted on the MCPS Facilities website states that some models use UV and bipolar ionization. Confirming the use of models without the use of those technologies is necessary to prevent adverse impacts on IAQ.

- 4) Based on the COVID-19 pandemic information and guidance provided by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP):
 - a) provide information regarding the proposed distribution of Maryland's portion of the Federal HR 1319 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (and other available funds), including confirmation that school-level IAQ data i.e., CO2 levels etc., will be considered to ensure that schools with the greatest needs, including environmental justice disparities, are adequately addressed and prioritized;
 - b) provide state-level guidance to Maryland school districts regarding prompt, transparent communication to parents/guardians and staff on the safety, health, and welfare of students, staff, and teachers, especially with respect to measures such as increased ventilation and filtration, COVID testing, surveillance and contact tracing protocols, science-based quarantining protocols, safer cleaner and disinfecting and water filtration, flushing and testing for contaminants such as lead and legionella; and
 - c) provide state-level guidance to address the airborne transmission route of COVID-19, exposure risk as a function of time and concentration, by mandating policies that target maximizing time outdoors, such as breaks, gym, music classes and lunch, which help reduce and reset indoor air concentrations.

CEHPAC notes that this initiative to gather and share information is relevant to upcoming decisions related to the use of anticipated funds being made available to address indoor air quality (IAQ) concerns in Maryland schools, as well as to providing guidance for existing operations.

We invite you to attend our next CEHPAC **meeting scheduled for June 20, 2021** or another upcoming meeting so we can discuss these concerns. Meeting dates and details are available at <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OEHFP/EH/Pages/children-environmental-health.aspx>. If there are questions about this request, please let me know by email (cliff.mitchell@maryland.gov). Please note this request is being made on behalf of CEHPAC and is not a request by the Maryland Department of Health or any other State agency.

Sincerely,



Clifford Mitchell, MS, MD, MPH
Chair, Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council

cc: Devon Dodson
Co-Chair, Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council

Fred Mason
Chief, School Facilities Branch
Maryland State Department of Education