

**Testimony for Jane Lehrman, Poolesville Cluster Coordinator:  
Protective Gear for MCPS Staff/Speaker #17**

Good afternoon,

My name is Jane Lehrman and I am the Poolesville cluster coordinator for MCCPTA. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My goal is to focus attention to the need for protective equipment for all educators when MCPS reopens schools. This is the best way to maintain the health and safety of staff, students, and loved ones at home.

MCCPTA has taken an important leadership role in advocating for students who are now learning at home, and are in need of food and educational equipment. But we need to look ahead to when students return to school. All indications are that wide-spread testing will not be readily available, and a reliable vaccine will not be administered during the 2020-2021 school year. This means that when we finally reopen, we must have equipment to protect all school staff. We all know that acquiring this equipment is very challenging, but this is the time to figure out how to pay for it.

It is a fact that while schools are closed, money is not being spent on utilities and other school operations. I propose that all money saved on school operations be carried over and redirected to the purchase of masks, gloves, and other protective equipment. Also, a massive infusion of money into HHS must be considered if testing kits become available.

We are pretty lucky in Montgomery County. The disease is here, but it not ravaging the community as it is in other parts of the country. My family in Long Island, New Jersey, Brooklyn, and South Florida are afraid to leave their houses.

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On the other hand, our online learning model, while admirable, does not replace school. When kids and teachers go back, we must restrict the transmission of disease between students and staff to keep everyone safe. Moreover, there are students, teachers and school staff who are cancer survivors, diabetics, and live with people who have medical problems. Lives will be lost if they catch this horrible disease. More broadly, protective gear for MCPS staff is part of a larger strategy to prevent Montgomery County from running out of hospital beds and spaces in the morgue. Again, thank you for this opportunity to speak.