

School security discussed at board meeting

“You made me a happy mother knowing my child will be even safer at school. Seeing those police officers will make not only the children and school staff feel safer, but the parents as well.”

“Thank you for all coming together and making our children’s safety the #1 priority. I for one would like to see a police officer in every school in the county.”

“I hope the rest of the schools and police around the nation follow the lead in what you guys are doing.”

These are a few of more than fifty comments on the school system’s Facebook page following a posting about increased security measures in the district. In response to the tragic massacre at a school in Newtown, Connecticut, the Montgomery County School System, including the Montgomery County School District Police Department, united with City and County law enforcement to reevaluate and strengthen security procedures in our school district.

Dr. Joshua E. Powell, Montgomery County School Superintendent, spoke of the union at the Board of Education meeting on December 18th. “The system we currently have in place is a little unique as in most school systems do not have their own police department on site.” Montgomery County Schools is very fortunate to have this type of system in place.

Local and county law enforcement agencies along with our school resource officers met on Sunday to discuss increasing safety across the district. Dr. Powell stated that we as a district were doing a pretty good job prior to Friday’s event, but there is always room for improvement, especially when it comes to the safety of our most precious commodity, our children.

Currently, the Montgomery County Schools Police Department has 2.5 officers to help with ensuring that our students and staff are safe while at school. County and city law enforcement have dedicated officers to help staff all schools in the district. Sheriff Fred Shortridge stated that his office has received nothing but positive comments from parents and community members. He said that all parents want their children to learn in a safe and secure environment and as a community member and a local Law enforcement officer, it is his job to partner with other local agencies to make it happen.

School Resource Officer, Mike Martin stated that all officers are able to connect to 911 and the police frequency, which is very important to ensure communication between the agencies. Several law enforcement officers along with Shannon White, Mapleton School Administrative Manager, visited schools in the district to review safety procedures and with a “fresh set of eyes.” Mr. White has served on the Safe Schools Committee. One concern was the process for entering our schools. Local agencies will continue to meet on a regular basis to recommend improvements to the increased safety initiative across the district.