

Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

May 22, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education  
From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools  
Subject: Alternatives to Animal Dissection (04-29-19-01)

**Question**

During Public Comments, Mrs. Smondrowski requested information about alternatives to animal dissection, and what the system uses now as an alternative.

**Response**

As part of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) middle and high school science curriculum aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards, laboratory investigations are an important component of scientific inquiry and developing students' understanding of science. Dissections are a part of these laboratory investigations.

However, as published annually in the MCPS High School Course Bulletin (and similarly, in the MCPS Middle School Course Bulletin), there are alternatives to dissection. The High School Course Bulletin states:

*Dissection is one of many instructional methods that may be used in laboratory science courses. Students/parents/guardians may request alternatives to dissection from the teacher. Alternatives may include such materials as videos, computer programs, films, models, transparencies, charts, diagrams, and textbook overlays.*

In addition, as embedded in lessons, teachers are reminded that students have the choice to opt out of animal dissection. Staff also is exploring other technologies such as virtual reality as an additional alternative to animal dissection.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Maria V. Navarro, chief academic officer, at 240-740-3040.

JRS:MVN:NTH:jpm

Copy to:  
Executive Staff  
Dr. Moreno  
Mr. Murphy  
Ms. Webb