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Division of Operations

Decorations - REVISED

To: All Staff

From: Scott W. Washington,  
Chief Operating Officer

A key component of the mission of the Howard County Public School System is to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment. When using decorations, please be mindful of the following Howard County Public School System and Fire Code safety requirements:

- The hanging of wall decorations must be kept to a minimum. No more than 50% of the wall space can be covered in classrooms or offices and no more than 20% of the wall space can be covered in hallways.
- Hanging combustible decorations on doors and painting ceiling tiles are prohibited per the fire code.
- **Hanging decorations from the ceiling is prohibited.** The movement of ceiling decorations may trigger false security alarms in violation of the Howard County false alarm reduction and administration ordinance.
- Decorations shall not interfere with fire protection or security features. For example, they shall not be hung from sprinkler heads nor block a fire alarm pull station.
- Only UL-listed electrical lights and wiring shall be used on decorations. Lights are not to be displayed around or through doorways, or on indoor/outdoor bleachers.
- **The use of highly flammable furnishings or decorations** such as hay bales, live trees, and dried vegetation **AND open flames** outside of approved cooking areas, such as candles, and lanterns, **is prohibited by fire code.**
- **Any material not labeled as flame retardant shall be sprayed with fire retardant spray.** Fire retardant spray can be obtained by contacting your school custodial manager, who will order the spray from the Logistics Center. **Do not treat art displays or other paper displays on walls with fire retardant spray if they are temporary (< 60 days).**

Please review this information with your staff and students. If you need additional information on this matter or have any questions, please contact the Office of Safety and Security at 410-313-6739.