

## Health Committee

There was a citizen's advisory committee meeting held on Wednesday, Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>. I was unable to attend the meeting but here are some highlights of the recent 8<sup>th</sup> grade sex-ed classes reported by Betsy Brown, MCPS: The new 8<sup>th</sup> grade sex-ed classes have been held in 35 of Montgomery County's 38 middle schools.

Of the 2,263 students who were eligible for the classes, 2,146 or 95 per cent got parental opt-in and took the classes. 117 students took the alternate units; of those, some parents refused to sign and some kids lost their permission slips – unable to tell specifics. (Last spring's pilot test had 88 percent opt-in.)

At parent information meetings, it appears that when more parents showed up at meetings, the opt-in rate at that school was higher. There was a lot of variation among schools re: parent participation.

**MRSA:** The Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> Delegates Assembly information session was devoted to MRSA and Transportation Safety. The MRSA session included presentations from Judy Covich, Head of School Health Services, Mont. County Dept. of Health and Human Services, and Pam Montgomery, Safety Officer, MCPS. They provided information about the MCPS response to MRSA and ongoing efforts to identify cases and take precautionary measure to prevent the spread of MRSA. The pediatrician, Dr. DeBiasi, from Children's Hospital arrived late (traffic) but gave a very concise and clear overview of MRSA. All speakers answered questions from parents. New information has been added to the MCCPTA web site – the main page and under Health Committee, based on some of the materials presented at the DA, specifically; links to some of the photographs of staph infection were added. They are graphic so a cautionary note precedes the links. I have sent this information out to parents via the list serve.

**Vending Contracts:** There was an article in a recent Gazette regarding vending contracts and the funds that are no longer available to schools. MCPS has consolidated all vending contracts and will be providing funds back to schools based on the items that are consumed. While principals and parents from some schools are concerned about the lack of vending funds, there are a number of ways to raise funds that do not promote vending choices – healthy or unhealthy. There are a number of resources and links available on the MCCPTA web site – under Health Committee, that parents are urged to look at for ideas on healthy fundraising and information on vending contracts. I have sent this information out to parents via the list serve.

**MCCPTA Health Committee Web Site:** I have updated the Health Committee information, reorganized, and added additional topics and links (actually, I made suggested revisions and Lin-Lin did all of the work!!).

**Physical Education:** I was asked, along with Susan Loftus, PE Teacher at Burning Tree ES, to meet with Councilman Berliner regarding the status of PE in MCPS schools. He is concerned about the limited opportunities students have – especially at the ES level – to be physically active. He and his staff are looking at different options to urge MCPS to increase PE minutes. This was an informational meeting to discuss the current state of PE. I'll keep you posted on follow up actions.

*Tracy Fox, MPH, RD, Chair Health Committee*

[tracyfox@comcast.net](mailto:tracyfox@comcast.net)