

**Minutes MCCPTA Delegates Assembly
February 23, 2010
Carver Educational Service Center**

Call to Order:

President Kay Romero called the meeting to order at 7:43 pm.

Mission Statement:

Jaimie Jacobson, MCCPTA Treasurer, read the PTA Mission Statement.

Approval of Agenda and January 26, 2010 Minutes:

The agenda was amended to add under Old Business, "Election of VP for Administration," and approved as amended by a voice vote.

The minutes from January 2010 were reviewed and approved as submitted by a voice vote.

Treasurer's Report:

MCCPTA Treasurer, Jaimie Jacobson, reviewed the treasurer's report. Some items highlighted were that we are doing a good job of controlling our expenses and our committees are staying within their budgets. He noted that dues are still coming in, and he asked the Delegates to remind their PTAs to send in their dues. We have received dues for 45,000 members, but have budgeted for 51,000.

Our balance sheet is showing strength, which is important because if we can't raise enough donations for the Principals and Presidents dinner it will come from our reserves.

There being no questions, Kay Romero stated that the treasurer's report would be filed.

Kay noted that while we have received dues for 45,000 members, we know from reports from MD PTA that there are 48,000 members from Montgomery County, and so there are some dues outstanding. We will be addressing this difference with the locals to make sure all dues are paid.

At this point, in order to make sure any voted items were take care of before anyone had to leave, Kay asked if anyone objected to the moving of the Old Business items ahead of the Reports on the agenda. No one objected.

Old Business:

Election of VP for Administration

Janette Gilman, Nominating Committee Chair, addressed the Delegates regarding their work in filling the vacant VP for Administration position. A transparency containing the procedure laid out in the bylaws for filling vacant officer position was displayed. The Nominating Committee brought Juan Johnson's name forward to the BOD, which approved him, and now he was being brought forward to the Delegates. His nomination to fill the office was until the end of the year, which will be May 19, 2010. Coming from committee, no second was needed.

Kay asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, she closed the nominations. Juan was elected on a voice vote.

Proposed Resolution-Changes to the definition of "Serious Incidents" in Regulation COB-RA

Laurie Halverson, Health and Safety Committee Chair, brought forward the resolution introduced last month. She gave the Delegates background information on the resolution as a reminder of why this was being proposed. The "Safety at a Glance" report, produced by MCPS, does not record all serious incidents, and this is a concern. The Office of School Performance (OSP) does receive reports of all serious incidents from individual schools, which do keep records, but this information is not tracked countywide. Last year was the first year this report was produced, and there is room for improvement.

Kay reminded the Delegates that the definition of a serious incident that is used comes from the police department, not the school system.

Lynn Perry Parker, Julius West MS Delegate, asked if there was anything in the proposed resolution that obligated principals to report incidents? Kay replied that reports could be submitted by anyone, not just the principal. Laurie added that we want an accurate reflection of what is occurring in the schools, and that bullying is not being reported unless it is considered a serious incident. It is hoped that this resolution will result in more reports being filed.

Yusuf Henriques, College Gardens ES Delegate, asked if we perhaps needed something separate in consideration of the fact that the definition of a serious incident for an elementary school child is different than the definition for a middle school or high school child. He added that his PTA felt that COB-RA did not reflect elementary school needs, which is why they are in favor of a separate document. Laurie replied that they could bring this issue up with MCPS. Kay added that they would work with the school system to develop criteria that speaks to individual school needs.

Jen Pories, Wootton Cluster Coordinator, asked if the College Gardens concern revolved around bullying? Mr. Henriques replied that their school has an ongoing issue, being addressed on a case-by-case basis, but it has never been addressed by reporting it, since bullying is not considered a serious incident.

Laura Siegel, Churchill Cluster Coordinator, stated that this resolution is trying to change the definition of a serious incident and what is included in the report. She further pointed out that what is considered serious in HS is different than what is considered serious at other levels. In her opinion, if the definition is changed, and more incidents are included in the report, then that would address some of the concerns. Kay responded that the County council has stated that the report is still in a fluid state, and thus we are trying to influence it while we are able.

Bart Etter, Rosemont ES Delegate, asked if it was necessary to include legal definitions for incidents, i.e., misdemeanors, felonies, etc.? Laurie replied that the concern was that if we pushed for too much, MCPS might resist. Mr. Etter further added that perhaps using legal definitions might help for incidents that are in violation of the laws on the books, forcing that they be reported. Laurie replied that our goal was to include more than would be concerned by legal definitions, since one goal is to get bullying included in the report. Mr. Etter concluded that he was not seeking to replace what was being proposed, but to augment it.

Andrea Bernardo, AVP Churchill, Richard Montgomery, Rockville, and Wootton Clusters, stated that while in principal the use of legal terms sounded good, she was opposed to their use because our goal was to be overly inclusive to catch incidents not normally reported.

Carol Falk, Wootton Cluster Coordinator, spoke in support of the resolution, stating that incidents are more prevalent than we realize, but we must be careful to not allow it to go too far, because the behavior of kids is an unpredictable variable, with their view of serious incidents and normal behavior possibly different than ours. Kay replied that we are trying to establish a starting point.

Laurie then read the list of what is considered serious, including serious injury, property damage, fire, and assault, among other things.

Cheryl Moss Herman, Ritchie Park ES Delegate, asked about the first resolved, and if we might reconsider making a change there? In her opinion, the word “reevaluate” was not strong enough. She moved to replace the word “reevaluate” with the word “expand:”

BE IT RESOLVED that MCCPTA requests that MCPS expand it's definition of “serious incident” under COB-RA and modify the *School Safety and Security at a Glance Report* to include all incidents of bullying and harassment as defined by policy JHF.

Her motion was seconded.

Rachel Carr, Rosemont ES Delegate, expressed concern that a serious incident could be a burst water pipe, and that it was important to distinguish between facilities issues and student issues. She further stated that the point of the report is to determine how schools are doing, and that by not breaking down the categories, the results could be misleading.

Laura Siegel, Churchill Cluster Coordinator, agreed that we should expand the categories to be more inclusive, but also cautioned that we need to remember we are dealing with children, and we did not want to see the police being called to our schools unnecessarily.

Lee Ann Doerflinger, Blake Cluster Coordinator, made a friendly amendment to correct the grammar and remove the apostrophe from the word “it’s.” The friendly amendment was accepted:

BE IT RESOLVED that MCCPTA requests that MCPS **expand its** definition of “serious incident” under COB-RA and modify the *School Safety and Security at a Glance Report* to include all incidents of bullying and harassment as defined by policy JHF.

Rochelle Hodes, Wootton HS Delegate, spoke in opposition to the amendment. She felt that the term serious incident may be appropriate, and that it was not necessary to change the definition since we want everything reported, and we want to allow for maximum flexibility to allow for a much more open dialog.

Greg Williams, Rock Creek Valley ES Delegate, stated that last year, only three instances of bullying were reported for the entire school system, and finds that unbelievable, so was in favor of this resolution.

Andrea Bernardo, AVP Churchill, Richard Montgomery, Rockville, and Wootton Clusters, called the question on the amendment. Her motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

The amendment passed on a voice vote:

BE IT RESOLVED that MCCPTA requests that MCPS expand its definition of “serious incident” under COB-RA and modify the *School Safety and Security at a Glance Report* to include all incidents of bullying and harassment as defined by policy JHF.

Andrea Bernardo, AVP Churchill, Richard Montgomery, Rockville, Wootton Clusters, called the question on the complete resolution as amended. Her motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

The full resolution, as amended, passed on a voice vote:

Proposed Resolution to Propose Changes to the definition of “Serious Incidents” in Regulation COB-RA

WHEREAS on November 13, 2007, the Board of Education adopted Resolution #548-07 to support the district’s goal of improving school safety and security. This resolution provided for useful data on “serious incidents,” suspensions, and other pertinent school data.

WHEREAS MCPS Regulation COB-RA defines “serious incidents” for purposes of reporting to an appropriate MCPS office. A compilation of “serious incidents” is the data that is provided for each school in the *School Safety and Security at a Glance* publication.

WHEREAS the *Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005* requires MCPS to report to the Maryland State Department of Education incidents of harassment and bullying as defined by a new state mandated policy.

WHEREAS most incidents of harassment and bullying are not shown in the *School Safety and Security at a Glance* report unless an incident qualifies as a “serious incident” under Regulation COB-RA. This does not reflect an accurate

picture of bullying and harassment incidents in a school, nor does it indicate the bullying and harassment incidents that are reported to the Maryland State Department of Education.

BE IT RESOLVED that MCCPTA requests that MCPS expand its definition of “serious incident” under COB-RA and modify the *School Safety and Security at a Glance Report* to include all incidents of bullying and harassment as defined by policy JHF.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that MCCPTA requests that data on the following statement be added to the *School Safety and Security at a Glance Report*: “In this school, students bullying other students is a problem.” This statement is currently reflected in the *Student Survey of the School Environment* but is not shown with the other two safety related questions in the *School Safety and Security at a Glance* Report.

Proposed MCCPTA Bylaws Amendment

Andrea Bernardo, MCCPTA Bylaws Chair, brought forward the proposed changes to the MCCPTA bylaws that were introduced to the Delegates last month. She explained the purpose of the proposed changes was to allow people who lost their membership on the BOD because of the restructure to be able to vote at DAs. Since this amendment came from committee, no second was necessary.

There were no questions or discussion, and the amendment passed on a voice vote.

MCCPTA Bylaws Conforming Amendment

ARTICLE XII: GENERAL MEMBERSHIP (VOTING BODY)

Section 1. The general membership (voting body) of MCCPTA shall consist of the board of directors, executive committee, area vice-presidents, cluster coordinators, standing and non-standing committee chairs, subcommittee chairs and committee points of contact, the presidents of each local PTA or their alternates, and delegates from each local PTA or their alternates as specified in Section 2 of this article.

Section 2. In addition to the local PTA president, each local PTA shall be entitled to be represented by 2 delegates or their alternates, selected by the local PTA according to its own by-laws.

Section 3. Individuals are entitled to one vote, even though they may be serving in more than one position.

Foreign Language Workgroup Update – Request for Feedback

Jen Pories, Wootton Cluster Coordinator, presented a document requesting feedback from locals, which had also gone out via the listserv. She stated that Delegates could give her feedback tonight, or could submit their feedback directly to MCPS. She explained to the Delegates that this workgroup was formed not to discuss the types of language taught, but rather to discuss the purpose of offering foreign language in MCPS, and things of that nature. She directed their attention to page 3 of the document, where the recommendations began, but cautioned them that they were very general, and intentionally so. She said that MCPS was asking the Delegates and locals to prioritize the recommendations, in the order they would like to see them if they had to choose three, and she felt that was hard to do because many of them were intermingled. But, were asked to view it as if there were only funding for three items, and how they would deal with that.

Lee Ann Doerflinger, Blake Cluster Coordinator, stated that she felt there was not much in the way of substance in the recommendations. She further stated that they are too

general to be useful, and was horrified that they were “contemplating textbook purchase,” asking what they are currently doing? She also wondered why there are no goals for the teaching of foreign languages, and stated that there should be a goal of fluency for the students. Jen responded that the MCPS committee felt that this document was sufficient, and while the workgroup worked on the first page, the detailed information was not provided to them by MCPS. She further stated that she agreed with Ms. Doerflinger’s point about fluency, which in fact was discussed but did not make it to the report, of which MCPS also did not provide her a copy. She felt the original document was good, but it had been transformed into this watered down version, that was not very useful.

Kay suggested that we had the option of not accepting the document as presented by MCPS.

Lee Ann Doerflinger, Blake Cluster Coordinator, moved:

The MCCPTA Delegates move to reject the document provided to us by the Foreign Language Workgroup.

The motion was seconded. She felt that it is too general, and thus potentially harmful.

Ted Willard, AVP Watkins Mill, Gaithersburg, Clarksburg, Damascus, and Magruder Clusters, offered a friendly amendment, to have the parents on the foreign language committee prepare a document giving specific reasons for our rejection of said document. This was considered to not be a friendly amendment and would be brought forward as a separate motion.

A vote was taken, and the motion was passed on a non-counted, standing vote:

The MCCPTA Delegates move to reject the document provided to us by the Foreign Language Workgroup.

Ted Willard, AVP Watkins Mill, Gaithersburg, Clarksburg, Damascus, and Magruder Clusters, moved the following:

That the parents who worked on the Foreign Language Workgroup prepare a list of concerns with the Foreign Language Workgroup Request for Feedback and submit those concerns to the Delegates Assembly at the next meeting so they may be endorsed.

The motion was seconded.

Laura Siegel, Churchill Cluster Coordinator, spoke in opposition, stating that she felt this was something MCPS should be doing, not parents.

Paul Scott, Richard Montgomery HS Delegate, spoke in opposition, stating that while this document concerned him greatly, he also felt that the MCPS employees, who should be experts, were best qualified to address the concerns of vagueness.

Bart Etter, Rosemont ES Delegate, asked if the purpose of his motion was to document our reasons for rejecting the Workgroup document?

Laura Siegel, Churchill Cluster Coordinator, stated that she had not understood it that way.

Jen Pories, Wootton Cluster Coordinator, explained to the Delegates that the parents on the Workgroup were not part of any decision making process. They were extremely limited in what information they were allowed to share. MCPS took the work that was done, did not share it with the parents on the workgroup, but rather took it to other groups for feedback. Finally, Kay wrote a letter to MCPS demanding the document we have.

Kay further explained that whenever MCCPTA puts representatives on MCPS Workgroups or Committees, it is done with the upfront statement that we will only participate if we are permitted to share information with our members and get their feedback.

Rochelle Hodes, Wootton HS Delegate, stated that she felt we did need to offer some explanation to MCPS for why we rejected the document. Ted added that his motion would provide a list of reasons.

Jackie Suzich, Maryvale ES, stated that she was one of the four MCCPTA representatives on the Workgroup and felt that everything they did got watered down, and many things that were discussed did not get included in the final document.

Andrea Bernardo, AVP Churchill, Richard Montgomery, Rockville, Wootton Clusters, stated that she felt we needed to give reasons, or else our rejection of the document would be meaningless. She felt the people already involved in this process were the best qualified to provide the reasons.

Paul Scott, Richard Montgomery HS Delegate, withdrew his opposition to the motion.

Lee Ann Doerflinger, Blake Cluster Coordinator, agreed with Ted, stating that we do need to give reasons for our rejection of the document.

Jen Pories, Wootton Cluster Coordinator, stated that the list of shared interests is a separate report that is still being included in the report that is being provided. And it was one of their items to have the children become proficient in a language in their final recommendations.

The motion was read aloud and passed on a voice vote:

That the parents who worked on the Foreign Language Workgroup prepare a list of concerns with the Foreign Language Workgroup Request for Feedback and submit those concerns to the Delegates Assembly at the next meeting so they may be endorsed.

Kay stated that a letter would be sent to MCPS, informing them of our rejection of the document and notifying them that we would be developing a list of reasons for that rejection next month and it would be noted that MCCPTA has not given any formal feedback.

Reports:

Legislative Report

Rebecca Smondrowski, VP for Legislation, reported that MOE is a main topic in Annapolis. There are 5 bills currently, and 4 of them would be curbed tomorrow. The biggest issue with this is that Montgomery County is alone in that we are the only county needing a bill to waive the fine. Our Legislators are currently doing outreach to other counties for support. She would keep an eye on this and report back on it.

She also stated that everything is moving quickly at the moment, due to the backlog caused by the week off with the snowstorms.

She told the Delegates about the Annapolis Trip on Monday night, March 1 with MCEA. She placed a sign up sheet for interested people on the back table.

She reported on the Legislative Coffee she held on Monday, Feb. 22 with Delegate Kaiser and Senator Madaleno, and they learned very valuable information. She is planning another one for March 8, at 8:30 am, and asked that the Delegates help pass the word to their locals. She will be putting information out about it on the listservs. It is not necessary to RSVP, although it is helpful if you do. She hopes that the bullying legislation will be discussed at the upcoming Coffee.

Carol Falk, Wootton Cluster Coordinator, stated that the bus trip to Annapolis was very worthwhile last year and encouraged people to attend. Rebecca pointed out that there were two bus stops, one at Carver and one at Blair HS, and that a box dinner is provided to those that ride the bus. Anyone with questions can contact Rebecca, or the Legislative Committee Chair, Don Mewha.

Officer Reports

Carol Salsbury, VP Programs, announced the winner of the Champions for Children Award – Springbrook HS PTSA, Kathleen Indart and the group PALA (Padres y Alumnos Latinos en Acción). She thanked everyone that submitted nominations.

She reminded the Delegates about the program this coming Thursday, Feb. 25, on The New Middle School Advanced Courses. There is a snow date of March 11. She requests that anyone that has questions for the speakers please submit them in advance, since the program is only one hour long. She is currently working on the March program, which will be on the Phasing out of the Learning Centers. She will get information out on the listserv as soon as she can.

Juan Johnson, VP Administration, thanked the cluster coordinators that provided testimony before the County Council on the CIP budget last week. He said that Operating Budget testimony before the County council would be held between April 5-8, and he

should have a better idea of exactly when we would be testifying around March 4. Concern was expressed that these dates are right at the end of spring break, and in fact, there is no school April 6 due to a professional day for teachers. Juan replied that he will work on getting more info and asked cluster coordinators with preferences to please email him.

He also reminded the Delegates to please ask their locals about fulfilling their good standing requirements – filing IRS 990s, performing audits, etc, and providing copies to Maryland PTA. He said that locals with questions could contact him or Jaimie Jacobson, MCCPTA Treasurer, if they have questions.

Kay explained to the Delegates that locals need to be in good standing, and that all locals have been contacted by Maryland PTA and MCCPTA to remind them of the requirements.

Jaimie Jacobson, MCCPTA Treasurer, stated that locals can find out their incorporation status and if their 990 has been filed by checking on the State website. Laura Siegel, Churchill Cluster Coordinator, clarified that a local cannot find out the status of their audit submittal to MD PTA on that website, which is required this year. Jaimie confirmed that fact.

Kay reminded the Delegates that MD PTA holds the charter for the locals, and has requirements for them in order to be in good standing under that charter.

Kristin Tribble, VP Educational Issues, gave a report on Grading and Reporting. She discussed the new standards based report cards for elementary school. She has emailed all PTA presidents at the schools where the new report cards are being rolled out and is trying to get feedback on the report cards from all schools where they are being used. She will put something out on listserv to the Delegates.

May Delegates Assembly

Kay brought up the issues of a May DA. Normally we do not have on in May since that is the month of the Presidents and Principals dinner, but it is always left up to the Delegates to decide if we should need one.

Andrea Bernardo, AVP Churchill, Richard Montgomery, Rockville, Wootton Clusters, moved that we go ahead and dismiss that date and not have a May DA.

Paul Morrison, Quince Orchard Cluster Coordinator, stated that he thought we should continue to keep the date open, because this year we have been told that the budget would be decided at the last minute, and we may need the May DA to be able to act, if needed.

The motion failed on a voice vote.

Kay reminded the Delegates that a notice had gone out via the Bulletin listserv regarding the waiver of snow days. The MSA exams will not be moved back. She encouraged the Delegates to read the full text on the listserv.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Patti Twigg, MCCPTA secretary for DA.