

MCCPTA

March, 2012 Committee Reports

Cultural Arts Committee

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Dates have been selected for the annual MCPS Cultural Arts Showcases to be held in October 2012 at the Carver Educational Center Auditorium in Rockville. Please keep in the mind that the dates are subject to change, but for now they will be:

OCTOBER 2nd, 4th, 9th, 11th, and 16th. Although we usually only need four days for the showcases, the fifth date, Oct. 16th, has also been reserved just in case we are “bumped” from one of the earlier dates.

The videos made at this past October’s Cultural Arts Showcases are now available online. Not every performer listed in the MCPS Performing Arts Catalogue is shown on the videos because not all were available to perform on the dates of the showcases; also a few of the tapes that were made were “compromised” so are not shown. However, for schools that wish to book performers, the available videos can be very helpful, particularly if a school did not have a cultural arts rep or staff member attend the showcases. To view the videos, go to the link below:

<http://www.mccpta-epi.org/showcases/showcases.html>

The user name is **culturalarts** and the password is **2011**.

Some of the performers shown were taped in 2010 and some in 2011. The EPI Board, which arranged for the taping, plans to continue with this project at the showcases in October 2012.

ESOL Subcommittee

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Meetings with key people have been performed to help in shaping the best path forward to better support ESOL parents. The ultimate goal is to involve/engage more Latino parents into the scholar activities and local PTA and/or PTSA. Guidance and information is a priority for this purpose.

Since there are several groups working on similar issues, a number of proposals have been made.

First, the group of Multicultural parents sponsored under the MCPS Department of Family & Community Partnerships (DFCP) has been invited to comprise the MCCPTA Multicultural Awareness Committee. A first positive approach has been made and a final decision would be made after a presentation and discussion on March 19, 2012. After this decision, a specific workplan will be drafted.

Second, the MCPS ESOL Bilingual Committee (EBAC) currently sponsored by the MCPS ESOL Program has been invited to comprise the MCCPTA ESOL Subcommittee. A preliminary positive answer has been received from the leader but a meeting for discussion will be held on March 7, 2012. The original workplan of the MCCPTA ESOL Subcommittee could be implemented with the help and input of the new members.

Next, the Latino Civic Association sponsored by the Concilmember Nancy Navarro (D-4) has been created. I am paying close attention to the development of the project to be sure that there is no conflict of interests and that the mission and vision are devoted to the Latino Parents exclusively. If this initiative works, it could be a great source of resources and promotion for MCCPTA activities close related. Next general meeting will occur on March 17, 2012 in the Carver Auditorium of the BoE.

Finally, there have been meetings with PALA (Padres y Alumnos Latinos en Acción-Latino Parents and Students in Action) leaders from several schools. There is a general agreement in the need to work together since now there are isolated and independent groups. After identifying leaders of active groups, a meeting has been called for on March 13, 2012 in Gaithersburg HS. The objective is to formalize the creation of a County-wide organization of Latino

parents, organized with a structure and a common objective. This organization would support the activities and goals of the original workplan of the MCCPTA ESOL Subcommittee.

Gifted and Talented Committee

Michelle Gluck: gluck.michelle@yahoo.com

We urge all interested parents, staff, and students to attend the March 22 Community Forum with Dr. Starr that will address GT education. The forum will be held at Magruder High School from 7-8:30, and represents a historically rare opportunity to engage with the Superintendent on a specialized topic. The Gifted Child Committee would like to see attendance that reflects the fact that every local school enrolls students who need above level instruction.

(Forums will also be held on ESOL, Special Education, and Social and Emotional Development. We hope all the forums are well attended.)

Michelle continues to receive a lot of parent feedback that indicates that the acceleration extensions are being inconsistently implemented in Curriculum 2.0, and continues to talk to MCPS staff about this problem. We also continue to receive feedback indicating a lack of differentiated instruction in Middle School "Advanced" classes. HS Committee Chair Dave Lechner and Michelle are collecting feedback from parents specifically focused on whether any school is delivering multiple levels of instruction within these classes. We'd like to get feedback from as broad a spectrum as possible; if you are willing to participate, contact us at:

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High School Committee

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1. We unfortunately will not be doing the Prom Safety Video contest - last-year's sponsor would never return phone calls, and now it is too late.
I have a call in again to see about 2012/13.
2. Still waiting to updated the Traffic Safety Report with 1 more school of traffic data before finalizing it -
3. Shakespeare Video contest - 1 school asked questions - no other entries so far.
Will try to publicize once more.
4. Continuing report on long-term Strategic options for special High School programs (e.g. IB, Cambridge, etc) in MCPS.
5. Performing Arts Festivals:
Discussions with MCPS< Rockville Town Center, and Silver Spring Town Center all essentially completed and successful. Now moving on to executing an event.
Folk Dance event in Rockville Town Center (all grades) - Approved by MCPS and RTC for May 12, 1pm - 6pm.
Jazz Band/Choir Performance in the plaza at Silver Spring (HS bands and jazz choirs for now, 2012)
Permit **PENDING** for May 13, 1pm - 6pm. MCPS OK'd now.
Working on banners, press releases, invites to school performance groups and principals, insurance, trash, drinks, SSL Volunteers, etc.
6. E-Book support for literary magazines - no action this period -
7. MCCPTA Resolution on how MCPS manages choice in the consortium schools - Approved at the Feb. DA. meeting.

8. Started looking into a remodeling of the HS Committee web page on the MCCPTA site. Of particular interest is the ability to set up some sort of internship matching site for high school students. This was identified as a potential committee project last fall.

9. Significant Email dialogue within MCCPTA on problems facing Middle Schools, and whether MCPS is providing adequate "grading" motivation to students that need extra work in order to succeed - either extra learning to catch-up, or extra challenge because they already know the core material. Problem has become more significant since MCPS allowed MS teachers to eliminate "Honors" level classes and class grouping is now heterogeneous. Potential resolutions and solutions discussed. Currently gathering data in order to assess how significant the problem is.

Operating Budget Committee

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Over the past month, the Operating Budget Committee 1) worked to advance MCCPTA Operating Budget Priorities; 2) coordinated and met with MCCPTA President Tribble and Montgomery County Council President Berliner and Chief of Staff for Vice President Navarro to advocate for full funding of the MCPS Operating Budget; 3) coordinated the Operating Budget Forum at Richard Montgomery High School Auditorium; 4) drafted parent letter to oppose pension shift and 5) monitored local funding developments.

Reflections Committee

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The MCCPTA Reflections Program for the year 2011-2012 will come to a close when we gather for our Gallery and Awards Ceremony on Saturday, March 24 at Clarksburg High School. This year's theme, "Diversity Means..." showcased some very powerful art and statements from our Montgomery County students. We encourage all MCCPTA Board members to attend the Gallery and Ceremony, where all of the artwork will be displayed and celebrated. It is an opportunity to see how our students view a part of the world in which they live. We are delighted that a middle school choral group will perform for us at the ceremony.

As a side note, all of the judges involved were truly invested in their duties. When returning the work they judged, each one took time to discuss various pieces in detail, and they relayed how difficult it was for them to decide on winners. They were so impressed by the skill, passion and nuances of each piece that every single one of them asked to be involved in the program next year. We had wonderful judges who devote their careers to the areas in which they judged. They always do a great job. Last year, 4 students they selected as winners won at the State competition and moved on to the Nationals. This year, 3 Montgomery County students won for Outstanding Interpretation of the Theme in their categories at State and will move on to the National competition. Congratulations to those students, and those who won state Awards of Excellence and Awards of Merit. The list of winners can be found on the MCCPTA website.

This year, 280 student entries were received. This number is about 1/3 lower than last year, which may be due to several factors. We have heard from many school chairs and parents that the theme was somewhat limiting and a difficult one for many students to express in an artistic way. In addition, all of the chairs, local and county, were faced with numerous and copious new rules and guidelines to follow. Many of those rules were clearly off-putting to chairs and parents, both of whom were required to do quite a bit more administrative work than in previous years. The absence of that administrative work results in the disqualification of either a single entry, or worst case scenario, all entries from a particular PTA if that PTA is not in compliance with MDPTA. The MCCPTA Reflection Co-Chairs intend to submit their observations to the state chair as to how some of these issues might be avoided in the future. Our greatest concern is that this program can be the singular engagement a family has with their PTA, and

for their child's art entry to be disqualified because of administrative issues out of their control leaves a very poor impression of the PTA, and this program.

The MCCPTA Reflection Co-Chairs very much appreciate the support we received from our MCCPTA President, Treasurer, Cluster Coordinators and AVPs, and the assistance they provided to local PTAs regarding their MDPTA compliance. As local school Reflection chairs change, many of these compliance issues repeat themselves annually. Thanks to the support of the MCCPTA Board, no PTA was disqualified from the Reflections Program this year. A special thank you goes to Pam Loebach in the MCCPTA Office. Every PTA that entered the Reflections program worked with Pam, and Pam took it upon herself to call presidents and treasurers of PTAs that had compliance issues. Pam did everything she could do to make sure every PTA was in good standing so that every student entry was entered in the competition. Melissa and I are indebted to her and thank her on behalf of all Montgomery County PTAs.

Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to provide the students a forum where they can create amazing art, film, music, photography and literature that is beautiful and inspirational not only to us, but to parents, fellow students and judges. We already look forward to what our students have in store for us next year.

Special Education Committee

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Meetings:

Our last meeting of the school year was on Monday, February 13, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. JR Marghi, Licensed Clinical Marriage and Family Therapist, led a discussion about taking care of ourselves as parents of special needs children. The meeting was very helpful. The flyer that was given out at the meeting was scanned and sent to the Special Education Chairs, via the Yahoo list. A copy is attached to this monthly e-mail report. It is a meaningful reminder to everyone that we need to take care of ourselves as parents.

Activities:

Working on annual recognition ceremony. Sent out another round of "Request for Nominations" on various e-lists. In February the MCPS Staff Bulletin published an article with the nomination information and on line submission link. Created an electronic invitation; I am in the process of sending it to elected officials, Special Education staff members and other ceremony participants. Sent an e-mail to the Bistro catering staff at Rock Terrace school regarding the ceremony.

Continuing to work with Julie Reiley, SPED Chair for Westbrook ES, on proposed resolution regarding burden of proof in special education cases. We are on the agenda for this Thursday's Board of Directors meeting. We would like to move the resolution forward to the Delegates. Another e-mail addressing some questions and concerns will go out shortly.

Working for special needs families via multiple PTA and other advocacy e-lists.

Training Committee

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Spring Training time is near! MCCPTA Spring training has been scheduled for Wednesday evening, June 6, 2012 at Walter Johnson HS, near I-270 and Montgomery Mall. Please have PTAs start putting this on the schedule and sharing with members. Please also volunteer to help train, suggest topics to be covered, or help JoAnn Burl and I make it a great experience for all who attend. This is a good launch for newly elected PTA officers and chairs, a great refresher for experienced PTA volunteers, and a solid beginning to the summer work needed for a successful school year.