

# MCCPTA President's Letter

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March 15, 2008

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Greetings,

*I spent the weekend with Maryland PTA and want to pass along the information all council presidents received.*

**Membership:** Membership is down significantly across the state and nationally. Maryland PTA seems most focused on chartering new PTAs in Prince George's County and Baltimore City. We talked for quite a while about encouraging more support for membership campaigns in all the counties. I pushed for more materials to be translated into Spanish but they view this as less of a priority as starting parent groups in other counties. I will continue to press on this. MCCPTA has many good ideas for supporting local membership drives but needs people to make this happen.

We were also informed that National PTA is in the process of making some changes to the Online Membership and Dues Reporting system (OMDR) to make it easier to use. If the changes are completed by the July Summer Leadership Conference, then Maryland PTA will host a presentation on this, otherwise, information on the revised system will be released later in the summer.

**Bylaws:** The Maryland Bylaws Committee has been under new leadership since the November convention and has expanded duties so it has been in flux. At the time of the convention, the outgoing bylaws chair told us that she was up to date on local bylaws approvals, but the

new chair recently uncovered a large box of outstanding bylaws, which they are working their way through. When locals receive their bylaws, there is a cover letter. Locals should read this letter carefully. If your bylaws were acceptable as written, the cover letter will tell you they are approved. If your bylaws had one or two small errors, the cover letter will tell you that your bylaws were approved with the following changes, which will be listed. These changes become a mandatory part of your bylaws and should be included whenever you copy or distribute your bylaws. If your bylaws contain portions that are unclear as written, the letter will ask you to contact the bylaws chair. If you are asked to contact the bylaws chair, it means that your bylaws have not yet been approved—you need to call or email the chair to discuss this. If your bylaws were submitted on the wrong template or have some other significant problem, the letter will tell you that your bylaws were declined and will inform you of why. Your PTA will need to address the problem and resubmit them.

The previous bylaws chair followed the same procedures and many of the old bylaws recently discovered were from locals that had been asked to contact Maryland PTA but never had. Several Montgomery County PTAs fall into this category. The PTAs in question may not have realized that the request to contact the Maryland bylaws chair was important and given the annual change in leadership, current presidents may not realize

that their bylaws were never approved by the state PTA. Because some of these pending bylaws are from two or three years ago, Maryland PTA plans to decline them and notify the locals.

The convention body voted on several bylaws changes, which will affect locals. Maryland PTA plans to get the changes to the local template out in April. At this point they do not plan to change the template, but to issue a list of mandatory changes. Remember that you may not submit retyped bylaws; you must fill in the blanks and include extra pages at the back if you have portions that will not fit in the blanks.

Maryland PTA has the current local bylaws template in Spanish; you must request it by contacting their office. I asked them to post it on their website and will try to get it posted on our website too.

MCCPTA is currently working on some bylaws amendments to submit to the state bylaws committee. Any proposed changes need to be submitted this spring. Maryland PTA has not yet sent out a call for bylaws amendments and has not yet set a deadline. Usually they have done so by now, so if your local is considering proposing a change to the Maryland bylaws, please do so soon, don't wait for the announcement.

**Insurance:** The Maryland Board heard a presentation from another insurance agent, Union Bank. This agent currently insures all PTAs in California and Connecticut with underwriters the Travelers and the Alliance for Non-Profits Insurance. We voted to adopt this carrier as the Maryland Insurance Provider. Per the changes in the local bylaws that were approved in November 2007, this change takes effect for the 2008-09 school year. All local PTAs in the state will be billed directly by Union Bank, probably in late summer. The coverage takes effect October 1, 2008, or upon receipt of payment, whichever is later. This means that if you are late sending in your insurance payment, your PTA will not be insured until your payment is received. This is a

change from the way MCCPTA handled insurance; we prepaid so that all locals were insured immediately and then reimbursed us. MCCPTA is in the process of verifying that our current coverage goes through 9/30/08 so there will be no lapse in coverage. Bridge policies are available if this is not the case.

Union Bank is very familiar with the operation of PTAs because of their experience in California and Connecticut. They will mail each PTA a detailed packet annually, which explains the coverage. They use a program, which they call red light, yellow light, green light. Red light activities are those that are always prohibited. These include Animal Rides, Bungee Jumping, Enrichment programs (clubs) with contact sports, martial arts, skateboarding, etc., fireworks, selling used sports equipment, and many other things. Some of these prohibitions might affect a few PTAs, but overall, the list is made up of things that PTAs in Montgomery County don't usually sponsor. The yellow light activities are things that are allowed under certain conditions that are listed for each event. For example, dunk tanks are allowed if they are rented from a vendor (not homemade) and the vendor must sign a hold harmless form (provided). You must call the agent to discuss some of the yellow light activities. Green light activities are those that are always covered with no additional restrictions. My impression is that this packet will be very helpful for local PTAs.

The bonding insurance limit will be \$25,000 but local PTAs will be able to select a higher level of bonding insurance if they usually have more than \$25,000 on hand. The current estimated cost with the \$25,000 bonding coverage is around \$170 per year. Higher bonding coverage will add to the cost of the premium. Maryland PTA will be sending out more specific information on this change very soon.

**The Maryland Educational Technology Plan:** For a number of years, schools have realized that when they undergo "Tech Mod" which is a complete refreshment of their school's computers and peripheral equipment, they

sometimes end up with fewer computers than they had before. MCPS was providing computers at a ratio of one computer per five students that they acknowledged didn't always replace all the old computers in a school. We were told by the Facilities Department and by then Deputy Superintendent for Information and Organizational Systems, John Q. Porter, that, since the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) set a target of one computer per five students, the County Council was unwilling to fund Tech Mod at a higher level than the state targets. Over the weekend we had a presentation on the Maryland Educational Technology Plan and learned that MSDE set new targets for 2012 last April. They are that all schools will provide one computer per educator for administrative and instructional use; one high performance computer or computing device per student at the secondary level and a 3:1 student to computer ratio at the elementary level. These new targets should certainly inform future advocacy efforts. I have requested enough copies of the report to distribute to delegates; the report is also available on the web at <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde> and clicking on the plan under recent reports. The report has much more information about technology targets in a number of areas.

**High School Assessments (HSAs):** Ron Peiffer, Deputy State Superintendent of Academic Policy at MSDE, gave a presentation on the Bridge Plan, which is the new plan to provide an alternative way for students to graduate if they are unable to pass the four HSA exams. The requirement that students achieve a minimum score on each HSA was dropped last fall, now students may pass by achieving a passing score on all four exams or achieving a combined score of 1602 on all four. Montgomery County was given final permission to use the Government AP exam in lieu of the Government HSA in December. This would affect every student who takes the AP exam at the end of NSL. MCPS will be releasing information on this soon. This might have informed our discussions regarding the plan to eliminate final exams for students who take external exams. The triple whammy of NSL

final, AP, and HSA as the most frequently cited example of exam overload is now no longer relevant.

Across the state, there are 12,000 students in the class of 2009 who still need to take one HSA exam. There are 2,500 students in the class of 2009 who still haven't taken a single HSA exam. 5,800 more students fulfilled the graduation requirement because the minimum score requirement was dropped. Some students with IEPs will immediately be eligible for the modified HSA, some students will be required to fail the regular HSA once and then present a justification for taking the modified HSA. The MSDE may still decide in August 2008, to delay the year when students are required to pass the HSAs for graduation (now 2009). Students passing under the Bridge Program will not count towards a school's or system's AYP targets. Bridge Plan projects will be scored by two trained teachers, paid for by the local school systems, under a pass/fail system. There are scoring rubrics for each subject and students must achieve a certain total of points to pass the project. If a student is an English Language Learner or has an IEP the scorers must have a consultant to determine how the scoring should be adjusted to accommodate learning differences. MSDE projects that approximately 2,500 students statewide will pass the HSAs using the Bridge Program. Many more will be eligible to attempt Bridge Projects but MSDE projects that they will either drop out or retry the exam after completing some of the required Bridge Projects. MSDE estimates that each project will take about 10 hours to complete. The number of projects required in each subject area is a function of the students score on the HSA. It is possible that some students may have to complete up to seven projects in a single subject area. The state has no plans to provide funding for teachers to mentor students completing projects or pay for scoring the projects. Schools are also not supposed to divert money from remediation efforts for students who are still trying to pass the actual exam to mentors/scorers for the Bridge Plan.

**MCCPTA Local Matters:** PTAs should be

checking their records to make sure that they have paid both the state and MCCPTA for all members. We get reports from the State, so we can tell if PTAs have paid MD PTA for more members than they paid MCCPTA or vice versa. You should send in final payments in March and return unused membership cards to the Maryland PTA office. If you have lost your extra cards, please send them a note telling them so or they will continue to bill you for all the cards.

If you do not have a nominating committee in place you should seek out committee members now. We have nominating committee guidelines on our website under Resources which also include a script for conducting elections. If PTAs are unsure about how to handle specific election night issues, contact your cluster coordinator for assistance. If they can't help, they will refer it to us.

**Remember that the March Delegate Assembly will be held on Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, due to spring break.** The program will be on School Improvement Plans. Community Superintendent, Dr. Frank Stetson, will speak to three questions: What are the things that Community Superintendents look for regarding parent involvement when they review school

SIPs? How common is it for local schools to have cluster goals or system-wide goals in their SIPs? And do principals and staff development teachers receive any training in how to make the SIP meetings engaging for all participants, rather than a dry recitation by one person?

We will also have an update on the work group on the Site Based Participatory Management Policy, which has been discussing SIPs all year and I have some additional information on SIPs and parent involvement. Dr. Stetson has another commitment that evening so will present shortly after 7pm; arrive promptly if you want a chance to ask him questions.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the MCCPTA Spring Training on June 4<sup>th</sup> at Blake HS; the Maryland PTA Summer Leadership Conference on Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup> at Anne Arundel Community College; and the Fall Convention on November 14-16, in Frederick, Maryland. Registration expenses are a legitimate PTA expense; so include these events in your 2008-09 budgets.

Have a great break, relax and enjoy your kids.

*Jane*

## March Committee Reports

### Communications Committee Report

March 1, 2008

Patti Twigg, Committee Chair and Listservs Moderator

[LPTwigg@erols.com](mailto:LPTwigg@erols.com)

#### 1) Website:

Website Coordinators:

Sharon Goodall [sharon.goodall@gmail.com](mailto:sharon.goodall@gmail.com)

Lin-Lin Mao [linlinmao@earthlink.net](mailto:linlinmao@earthlink.net)

- Cluster testimonies before the County Council for FY 2009 CIP added to the CIP committee's webpage at <http://www.mccpta.net/cip.html> and Testimonies webpage at <http://mccpta.net/pressReleases.html>

- FY 2009 Budget Questions and Answers from the MCPS Department of Management, Budget, and Planning added to the Operating Budget committee's page at <http://mccpta.net/opbudg.html>

- Award nomination forms for "Maryland PTA Life Membership Award," "Partners for Education Award," "Special Education Recognition Awards," and "Picture PTA Contest" can be accessed from the homepage, <http://www.mccpta.net/>

#### 2) Listservs:

Listsersvs Moderator:

Patti Twigg [LPTwigg@erols.com](mailto:LPTwigg@erols.com)

As of March 1, 2008 membership on the various lists is as follows:

Listserv	# subscribed	Net increase/decrease from last month
MCCPTA Board	93	0
MCCPTA Bulletin	532	-7
MCCPTA Delegates	425	-4
MCCPTA Presidents	284	0

Drafted a document: “Questions and Issues to Discuss and Recommendations to Consider When Starting or Running a PTA Listserv” in December 2007 which was approved by the BOD in January 2008 and distributed to locals via the MCCPTA\_Bulletin and posted to the MCCPTA website on the Listservs Subcommittee webpage.

### 3) Spotlight:

The MCCPTA website has a corner just for your school or PTA and its accomplishments! “Spotlight” is the place for your school or PTA to shine – for the whole county to see! Don't be shy - you know how great you are, here's your chance to let everyone else know it too! If you have news and/or achievements from your school or PTA, please notify MCCPTA (via email to [office@mccpta.com](mailto:office@mccpta.com) and/or [webmaster@mccpta.com](mailto:webmaster@mccpta.com)).

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### Cultural Arts

Chair, Randy Chin, [Chinhaven@aol.com](mailto:Chinhaven@aol.com)

A compilation of Cultural Arts budgets from Montgomery County schools was sent out to the PTArts listserv. If your Cultural Arts chair is not a member of the listserv and would like a copy, please have him/her contact me.

I am planning to attend a meeting of the Arts Education Advocacy Committee on Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup> (in the morning).

If your Cultural Arts Chair(s) is not a member of the PTArts listserv, please suggest he/she/they join. The Listserv is a communications tool among cultural arts chairs throughout Montgomery County and is an excellent place to ask for artist recommendations and keep up with any news. Your chair can join by sending their name, school, & committee position to: [PTArts-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:PTArts-subscribe@yahoo.com). They can also feel free to contact me at the email address below with any questions.

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### Gifted Child

Chair: Holly Gaut, [hollygaut@hotmail.com](mailto:hollygaut@hotmail.com)

Our committee is held its February Meeting with over 40 parents in attendance. We were pleased to have Carolyn K, webmaster of Hoagiesgifted.org speak on the topic of causes of underachievement among gifted students.

We have 1 additional meeting scheduled for this year.

**April 24<sup>th</sup> - Differentiating Instruction: Best Practices in Grouping Strategies & Teacher Preparation** - What does differentiated instruction look like in Reading, Science and Social Studies at each school level? What are grouping strategies MCPS uses in ES and MS? What are the pros and cons of each? Does research support a particular strategy for gifted students? What are some practical strategies teachers can use for students who learn at different rates or bring prior knowledge to the classroom? How are teachers prepared/trained by MCPS to address the needs of gifted students and advanced learners? Is any training required? Does MCPS maintain information on what training each teacher has received? Time: 7:30 – 9:00pm Location: Walter Johnson HS Cafeteria.

We have already started gathering meeting ideas for next year. Some of the topics that have been suggested are:

- Roles of the specialists within our schools: How can the math and reading specialists help address the problems of highly able children within our school?
- Math acceleration: What models are available to address the need for acceleration of high ability math students within MCPS? What is curriculum compacting? What factors should be considered when deciding if I should accelerate my child in mathematics?

- Long term enrichment projects: What is available in MCPS? What programs are available outside of MCPS? Information on National History Day, Science Fairs, Destination Imagination, Montgomery College, Robotics Clubs, etc...
- Above Grade Level Reading Programs for K-5 and how they can be implemented in your school. What is Junior Great Books? Jacobs Ladder? William and Mary?
- Preparing for college and college scholarship information Information/expert guidance on the best strategy to gain scholarships for academically talented students. Many of the college scholarships are for either the extreme top students with lots of academic accolades already, or, more likely, the athletes. What is a good plan in middle school/high school for being a candidate for scholarships

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## Grading and Reporting

Chair, Beth Kennington, [bkenn@starpower.net](mailto:bkenn@starpower.net)

The G/R Committee held its February meeting and hosted Betsy Brown, Director of Curriculum and Instructional Programs. The Committee reviewed the (currently field tested) Grades 1 and 2 Standards-Based Report Cards and viewed its first draft of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Standards-Based Report Card (“SBRC”).

Review of Grades 1 and 2 SBRCs These report cards include a graph of Reading Level by Marking Period (parent feedback shows parents, students and staff like the graph); shaded boxes show range of on-grade level performance per marking period and expected advancement by student for subsequent marking periods (“MP”); marks above the shaded box demonstrate performance above expectations and marks below demonstrate performance below expectations.

Details of Grades:

1. Content areas are shaded
2. Bold text below content areas includes subject area and underlined topics show the standard area of study
3. Bullets represent the essential learnings (“ELs”)
4. Shaded boxes indicate ELs that are not taught in the applicable MP and are reported in the applicable MPs
5. On challenge items, would only report 3s (general understanding) and 4s (complete understanding), but not 1s (minimal understanding) and 2s (developing understanding)
6. Challenge items (shaded areas) can be taught and assessed and would still be shaded with grade reported

1st/2nd online grade book is in field test (only for web-based grade entry - not for grade viewing)

Comments have been obtained from parents and principals over past 2 years from 19 field test schools.

**Introduction of Grade 3 SBRC (as of 1/15/07)** included proposal for new grading system

Proposed Grades to Demonstrate Levels of Proficiency [change from A/B/C/D/E to 4/3/2/1]:

- 4 Student response demonstrates **complete understanding** as it relates to the ELs and criteria statements
- 3 Student response demonstrates **general understanding** as it relates to the ELs and criteria statements
- 2 Student response demonstrates **developing understanding** as it relates to the ELs and criteria statements
- 1 Student response demonstrates **minimal understanding** as it relates to the ELs and criteria statements

Report card is similar in format to Grades 1 and 2 SBRCs, but provides exponentially more information without the Reading Level by Marking Period Graph

Has 3<sup>rd</sup> grade SBRC feedback as it relates to grades of ABCDE; O, S and N; and I, L, F, R and NI

Questions were raised by the Committee as to grades for electives including the Arts, Physical Education, Music, Band electives, etc.

Electronic Grade Book practices: fewer than 4 EL data points results in an averaging of the grade, where more than 4 EL data points results in trending. The grades earned by the student nearest to the end of the marking period are what get reported (the Elementary School Trend). Therefore, the data points attained by a student before the end data point are not necessarily averaged, as happens now, to produce a report card grade.

Areas of content (per topic: i.e., Social Studies, Science, Math, Reading, etc.) stays same across all grades (1<sup>st</sup> through 5th)

### Grading and Reporting Implementation Team (“GRIT”) Update

ISB-RA (Regulation on High School Graduation Requirements): Credits for HS courses taken in MS (no longer required that subsequent course be taken in HS for MS course to be given credit on student transcript). Replacement grades: feedback given at GRIT on whether HS course that is retaken will result in *replacement* grade or *highest* grade being reported on

student transcript

### One-Text Update

Approved Shared Interests and One Text document shared through line 116

### IKA-RA Workgroup

Feedback requested from Committee to be shared at IKA-RA Work Group. The final meeting of IKA-RA Work Group will be held in March.

### Grading and Reporting Liaisons

Montgomery County Public Schools and the Montgomery County Council of Parent and Teacher Associations are facing sweeping changes while MCPS moves to a standards based curriculum and grade reporting system. We are taking this time to reach out to our constituents and request your committee's or organizations representation on the MCCPTA Grading and reporting Committee.

The Committee is looking for adult representation from your committee or organization with children actively enrolled in Montgomery County Public Schools. You do not need to have any knowledge of MCPS policy, regulations or even the current grading and reporting system. All that we ask you to bring is your knowledge and input as to how the MCPS G&R systems can be improved.

Representation is currently being sought from the following geographic and demographic groups: Down County, East County, gifted and talented, special needs, NAACP, African-American, Chinese-American, at-risk youth programs, Hispanic-Americans, children's support and leadership programs, Asian-Americans, Vietnamese-Americans and any organization representing Montgomery County Public Schools. Your input is needed when considering changes in MCPS grading.

A flyer is attached for you to distribute to members of your committee or organization. Please forward it on until at least one representative from your group has agreed to attend the April and May meetings of the Grading and Reporting Committee. We meet on the first Monday of each month at Carver Educational Services Center, (MCPS Central Office/Board of Education Offices), located at 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20850. The Committee's next meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday April 7, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Room 120. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP if you, or a member of your group, will join us.

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### Health Committee

Chair, Tracy Fox, MPH, RD, [tracyfox@comcast.net](mailto:tracyfox@comcast.net)

### Citizens Advisory Committee on Family Life and Human Development

I attended the Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Family Life and Human Development. We reviewed materials for the middle school health curriculum: 2 DVDs, one on teens and sexual behavior *Real People: Abstinence Choosing to Wait*, and *Reality Matters: Deadly Desires*. Most committee members recommended the use of one (2<sup>nd</sup> one) but not the first due to derogatory language. We also reviewed visual aides depicting the male and female reproductive system/anatomy.

CAC members received a copy of the circuit court's opinion published January 31, 2008, in response to oral arguments presented to the court January 16, 2008. The judge ruled in favor of new sex-education lessons in 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades dismissing a legal challenge from Citizens for Responsible Curriculum and 2 other groups. An appeal may be filed within 30 days.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 16<sup>th</sup>, 7-9pm.

### State Legislative Action

Three bills have been introduced at the state level that impact school health as follows:

**SB 473: YRBS Passive Consent:** The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) was developed by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1990 in order to collect data which would assist educational, health, and policy entities in developing approaches to reducing health risks and improving the health and safety of children. It is administered every 2 years. It was first administered in Maryland statewide in 2005, although it has been used in Baltimore City for over 15 years. While CDC recommends the use of passive parental consent for student participation, current Maryland law requires active parental consent except in Baltimore City. SB 473 seeks to amend existing law to allow passive consent statewide.

The YRBS is administered to junior and senior high school students in randomly selected schools, and thus, different schools participate in different years. Student names are not used – the answers are completely anonymous. The number of questions varies slightly from year to year and covers the following areas:

- Demographics, height and weight
- Safety behaviors (bike helmets, seat belts, weapon exposure, etc.)
- Depression, suicidal thoughts

Use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and other drugs  
Sexual behavior  
Weight, diet, and eating habits  
Physical activity  
AIDS education

Montgomery County Health Department supports the bill; MCPS originally supported the concept when discussions were underway months ago in anticipation of the bill being introduced but then seemed to change their mind – not sure if lack of communication was a factor. Negotiations are underway now to encourage MCPS to support it. The information collected is critical to help secure grant funding and to better target limited dollars to address real health concerns and issues. There has been one hearing on the bill in the Senate; the comparable House bill 536 will be heard on Tuesday, March 11.

**HB 503: Bryan Moore Student Health and Fitness Act:** MD Healthy Schools Coalition and a number of state legislators are working hard to pass a Physical Education Bill this session. Called the Bryan Moore Student Health and Fitness Act (HB 503) the goal of this legislation is to assure that all children in grades K- 5 participate in a daily program of physical activity totaling 150 minutes per week to include a minimum of 90 minutes of Physical Education with the balance to be made up of recess and other developmentally appropriate, moderate to vigorous physical activity.

At the BOE meeting on Monday evening, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, about a half dozen people testified in support of the bill. Representatives from the American Diabetes Assoc., American Cancer Society, MD Healthy Schools Coalition, Montgomery Health Care Action, and others, supported the need for more emphasis on physical education and activity in schools, but also recognized MCPS long-held opposition to this type of bill and others that impose more curriculum requirements on local school districts. The bill hearing on HB 503 will be in the House Ways & Means Committee on Tuesday March 11.

Note: the MCCPTA has 2 resolutions on the books (Passed in Spring 2005) supporting standards-based PE and urging BOE to look at ways to enhance PE opportunities in schools.

**SB 158: The Jane Lawton Farm to School Program:** this bill passed the State Senate on February 25, 2008 with farmer, State Dept of Agriculture, Maryland School Board and PTA support. Senator Raskin had 13 Senate sponsors on the bill when it was introduced. Delegate Sheila Hixson, Chairman of the State Ways and Means Committee, introduced and smoothed the way for the same bill on the House side. Her bill, HB 696 was heard in the Environmental Matters last week. Most Montgomery County legislators cosponsored the bill. Named after the late state delegate who was a champion for better school nutrition, the bill includes an educational component and also puts into place a communications line where the schools would communicate with the farm community what produce they need for their school lunch program and the farmers would communicate to the school lunch programs what they have available and when.

**Nutrition Talk to Stone Mill ES:** I will be talking about nutrition (general nutrition/hot topics in nutrition) to Stone Mill PTA representatives on Tuesday evening, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm.

**April Delegates' Assembly Program:** the April DA program will be devoted to Nutrition and Physical Activity/Education topics. I have met with several parents to discuss the format; Kathy Lazor, Food & Nutrition Division Director has agreed to participate, as has Susan Loftus, PE teacher from Burning Tree ES. I am waiting to hear from Terri McCauley, Health Coordinator for MCPS. Parents interested in helping plan this program are encouraged to contact Tracy Fox ([tracyfox@comcast.net](mailto:tracyfox@comcast.net)).

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## Reflections

Co Chairs, Melissa McDonald and Chuck Benjamin- [Melissa.mcdonald@verizon.net](mailto:Melissa.mcdonald@verizon.net), [chuckdebb@verizon.net](mailto:chuckdebb@verizon.net)

We have been busy planning the April 23<sup>rd</sup> MCCPTA awards ceremony along with our committee. The general schedule for the evening is this:

6:30 – 7:30pm Awards Ceremony (only Awards of Excellence recipients will be invited to ceremony)

7:30 - 8:30pm Exhibit and reception (all participants will be invited)

All artwork will be displayed at the exhibit, and will have Awards of Merit and participation medals with the artwork. The photography and visual arts submissions that moved up to state have been photographed and will be part of a slide show, and the music and films have been duplicated to play during the evening as well.

We should be hearing from MDPTA this week regarding any MoCo winners at the state level.

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## **Special Education**

Chair, Jennifer Zaranis, [jennifer.zaranis@verizon.net](mailto:jennifer.zaranis@verizon.net)

The Special Education Committee is still accepting nomination forms for the upcoming Recognition Ceremony that will be held on May 5, 2008 at Rockville High School. Nominations will be accepted till March 7. We will also be presenting on March 12, 2008 – Rick Lavoie Video Showing and Discussion, "It's So Much Work to be Your Friend: Helping the Learning Disabled Child Find Social Success".

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### **MCCPTA Webpage**

<http://www.mccpta.com/>

### **Committee workplans and committee reports**

<http://www.mccpta.com/committees.html>

### **Meeting dates and information about upcoming committee meetings**

<http://www.mccpta.com/cgi-bin/calendar.pl>

### **MCCPTA Upcoming Events (Right hand side of page)**

<http://www.mccpta.com/>

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## **HIGH SCHOOL PTSA President's Forum**

The High School Committee is having a PTSA President's Spring Forum on Saturday, April 12, 2008 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Walter Johnson High School in the Media Center. All High School PTSA Presidents are encouraged to come out and bring with them an officer or other PTSA representative if they wish. This forum provides presidents an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns and best practices on a variety of topics that affect our schools and PTSA's. A speaker for the Spring Forum is to be determined.

Please mark your calendars and contact Sharon St.Pierre at [stpierre619@verizon.net](mailto:stpierre619@verizon.net) to RSVP and let me know how many from your school will be attending.

## MCCPTA Grading & Reporting Committee

### Learn About New and Existing MCPS Grading Procedures at Every Meeting



Grade reporting has changed every year for the past 4 years.

Have grading procedures been put to you in terms that you and your child understand? Does earning a fair grade matter to your child? Is there an issue with the way that the grading procedures are implemented at your school or even throughout the county? Are you experiencing an unintended consequence of that procedure? Do you have difficulty understanding the grade reporting process?

If even one of these applies to you or your child, the Grading and Reporting Committee needs you!

### Current Focus of the Grading and Reporting Committee

The Committee is actively involved with AND needs your input on these current issues and many more:

- Exempting high school AP/IB/CIE students from taking the MCPS final exam

- Semester-end grade calculations in secondary schools - should letter grades or numerical grades be reported?

- Categorical grade calculation methods - which method should be used? Two are used by MCPS currently

- Whether grade trending should be discontinued when calculating a final grade in high school courses

- Pinnacle/Gradebook categories and their weights applicable toward the overall grade

- Development of the new standards-based first and second grade report cards

- Offering input as to which grade marks will be used on 3rd through 5th grade standards-based report cards

- Field testing of elementary school standards-based report cards (full implementation 2010-2011 for 1st/2nd grades)

- Homework completion and turn in



Beth Kennington, Chair  
[bkenn@starpower.net](mailto:bkenn@starpower.net)

To join the Committee listserv, send an e-mail to [MCCPTAGradingAndReporting-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:MCCPTAGradingAndReporting-subscribe@yahoo.com).

## *From Maryland PTA regarding new membership incentives:*

February 1, 2008

Dear Membership Chair:

We have some exciting news to share with your PTA/PTSA! MDPTA is holding a Membership Incentive Drive from now until the end of March. All PTA/PTSAs who turn in their membership invoices and unused PTA cards postmarked no later than March 31, 2008 are eligible for membership incentives. Your PTA/PTSA will receive recognition for the following accomplishments:

- All PTA and PTSA names will be placed in a drawing for a cultural arts program sponsored by MDPTA. (Gift certificate valued up to \$250)
- 5 percent growth over last year membership will be recognized with a certificate.
- 15 percent growth over last year would be recognized with a plaque.
- 25 percent growth over last year would be recognized with plaque and PTA/PTSA school banner.
- Units that distinguish themselves by maintaining 100 percent of classroom Teachers and 90 of parents and/or students over a two-year period would receive a certificate and be entered into a drawing for a free conference registration for a PTA and PTSA parent, teacher, and student member.

All awards will be presented at a MD PTA Membership Awards Reception that will be tentatively held in April during National Volunteer Appreciation Week. Please submit attached PTA/PTSA Membership Form with your PTA/PTSA invoice. We look forward to reviewing your PTA/PTSA accomplishments. Please contact the MDPTA office if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Debbie Ritchie  
Debbie Ritchie  
MDPTA President

Rhonda S. Ulmer  
Rhonda S. Ulmer  
MDPTA Membership Chair

**PRESIDENT'S LETTER**  
**MCCPTA**  
**2096 Gaither Road**  
**Suite 204**  
**Rockville, MD 20850**

**Pony Mailing**

**MARCH 2008**

**MCCPTA Calendar 2007-2008**

**Unless otherwise specified all meetings take place at the  
 Carver Educational Services Center (850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850).**

**March**

19		Delegate Assembly – Auditorium – <b>Wednesday Meeting</b>
	7:00pm	Program: School Improvement Plans
	8:00pm	Business Meeting

**April**

1	7:00pm	Guidance and Counseling Committee – Room 120
3	7:30pm	MCCPTA Board of Directors Meeting – Auditorium
7	7:00pm	Grading and Reporting Committee- Room 120
7&9	7:00pm	MCCPTA testimony to County Council on Operating Budget (Council Building, third floor hearing room)
10	7:00pm	Parent Involvement Committee – Room 127
10-12		State Conference on Early Childhood
12	9:30am	High School PTSA President’s Spring Forum – Walter Johnson HS
14	7:30pm	Curriculum Committee Meeting - Cafeteria
22		Delegate Assembly - Auditorium
	7:00pm	Program: Nutrition
	8:00pm	Business Meeting
23		MCCPTA Reflections Award Ceremony-Black Rock Center for Arts
24	7:30	Gifted Child Committee Meeting-Walter Johnson HS Cafeteria