

November 15, 2007

President

Jane de Winter
301-949-5368
president@mccpta.net

VP for Educational Issues

Kay Romero
301-946-2190
vpeducation@mccpta.com

VP for Administration

Liz Wheeler
301-424-8457
vpadmin@mccpta.com

VP for Programs

April Keyes
301-515-8249
vpprograms@mccpta.net

VP for Legislation

Victor Salazar
301-563-6780
vbsjpf@verizon.net

Treasurer

Dale Ryan
301-253-1780
treasurer@mccpta.net

Recording Secretary-DA

Ted Willard
301-212-9355
secda@mccpta.com

Recording Secretary-BOD

Stacy Menendez
301-602-6228
secbod@mccpta.com

MCCPTA Office

2096 Gaither Road
Suite 204
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone 301-208-0111
Fax 301-208-2003

Visit our web site

www.mccpta.com

Greetings,

We had a good workout at the October delegate assembly with several counted votes and approved a list of eight operating budget priorities for this year. There were three items of business for delegates to take back to their locals: the Operating Budget Compact; a resolution supporting more funding for Crossing Guards and Educational Facilities Officers (EFOs); and a resolution on back ground checks. These will be discussed and voted on at the November DA. Copies of all three are attached after the committee reports.

Our Health and Safety Committee chairs have collaborated to amend the program for the November DA. The program will begin one half hour earlier than usual at 6:30pm. Judy Covich from the MC Health Department and Pam Montgomery, MCPS Safety Officer, will give brief reports and take questions on MRSA (staph infections). Our program on transportation will begin at 7:15pm. We know it is hard for everyone to get to the meeting that early but, as always, the program will air on ITV several times. The air times will be posted on our bulletin list serve after the DA; we recommend you forward this information to your school community so they can view the program too.

The MCCPTA membership and training committees want to strengthen your local PTAs but first they need your help to build their own membership. The membership committee would like to build a team that could go out to locals and help with membership drives as well as

work on a countywide membership marketing campaign. The training committee is trying to build a group of members that will be able to go out to locals to help train their officers and board members and to attend local PTA meetings if needed. If you are interested in either of these committees, or any other committee, please get in touch with the chairman. Contact information for some follows in the committee reports and is also available on our web site, www.mccpta.com.

We also need people who are interested in helping on the Special Events Committee. The primary (but not the only) responsibility is to plan the Presidents/Principals dinner in May. We also need sponsors for the dinner. If you know any businesses or organizations that might be interested in supporting the dinner, please pass that information along to April Keyes who chairs this committee. Last year tickets were priced at \$60 each. We would like to be able to lower the price this year—costs are up so to lower the price we will have to raise more than \$15,000.

Our Blue Book directory has arrived. Each PTA will receive 6 copies of the Blue Book, one for the school and the rest to be distributed to officers/board members. The books will arrive by pony mail at the school addressed to the PTA president around Thanksgiving. MCCPTA Board members who did not pick up a book at the CIP testimony can pick up their book at the December BOD meeting.

Local PTAs should have paid their first dues installment by now. PTAs receive

an invoice from Maryland PTA, which covers the state and national portion of your dues (\$3.25 per member). In addition, each PTA received a dues report sheet for its MCCPTA dues (\$1.00 per member). Next month, Maryland PTA will begin to send us monthly membership reports, which we will pass along to the cluster coordinators so they can remind locals to pay their dues. A PTA must enroll 25 members each year to remain in good standing. If your PTA is having difficulty getting 25 members, please contact our membership chair and your cluster coordinator for ideas and assistance.

It is unclear whether Montgomery County will host a Maryland State PTA regional training. We had expressed an interest in hosting one in late January/early February but I recently learned the state has decided not to schedule an event in Montgomery County. Consequently, we will be trying to schedule a series of mini-trainings— evenings, which will focus on one position or topic only. While there were more than 130 people at our September training, with 190 PTAs there are still many people who could benefit from more information. We will also be scheduling an additional training for the MCCPTA Board of Directors.

The Board of Education has changed their meeting for CIP final action from November 19 to the 27th so it coincides with our DA. Many of you have heard that the Board has asked that the collocation of Stephen Knolls and the Sandburg center be referred to a multi-stake holder committee. We

applaud this decision and thank the BOE for their leadership on this issue. Throughout its involvement in the budget development process this fall, MCCPTA has consistently urged MCPS to more fully involve stakeholders and recommended that the community not learn of significant programmatic and policy changes by reading them in a budget book.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. I recently came across the minutes of a BOE meeting from March 1986. This was an annual meeting with MCCPTA. County Council President Marilyn Praisner was on the Board of Education at that time, and the minutes show that she expressed a discomfort with the budget process noting that things come to the BOE during the budget process that should be discussed at other times and in a broader context. Normally I would follow this comment with an Amen or similar endorsement, but in the spirit of Janis Joplin who is my background music as I write this, I say Hell Yes!

Hope you all have time this month to reflect on the good things in your lives and give thanks for friends and family. Happy Thanksgiving!

Jane

Communications Committee

Patti Twigg, Committee Chair and Listeservs Moderator

1) Website:

Website Coordinators:

Sharon Goodall sharon.goodall@gmail.com

Lin-Lin Mao linlinmao@earthlink.net

We have been very busy keeping the calendar and information current. Please continue to send us updates.

2) Listservs:

Listservs Moderator:

Patti Twigg LPTwigg@erols.com

As of October 29, 2007 membership on the various lists is as follows:

Listserv	# subscribed	Increase/decrease from last month
MCCPTA_ Board	94	+ 2
MCCPTA_ Bulletin	548	+ 9
MCCPTA_ Delegates	432	+ 8
MCCPTA_ Presidents	287	+ 1

3) Spotlight:

“Spotlight” Reminder: If you have news and/or achievements from your school or PTA that should be highlighted in the “Spotlight” corner of the MCCPTA homepage, please notify MCCPTA (via email to office@mccpta.com and/or webmaster@mccpta.com)

Patti Twigg, Committee Chair and Listservs Moderator LPTwigg@erols.com

Cultural Arts Committee

The last of four days of Cultural Arts Showcases took place on Thursday, 10/11. This day was for artists new to Montgomery County Schools and it attracted the largest audience of the four days.

I received suggestions about Showcase scheduling for next year, which were forwarded to Seda Gelenian for review by her committee. Approximately 40 new people have joined the Cultural Arts listserv (PTArts) this year, bringing the total to over 180 members. If your Cultural Arts Chair/Committee would like to join, please have them email me with their name, school, and committee position.

I met with Joan Burns of Class Acts who held this position for a number of years.

A list of school Cultural Arts Budgets will be posted on PTArts by the end of the month.

Randy Chin, Chair, Chinhaven@aol.com

Curriculum Committee

MCCPTA Curriculum Committee Meeting-December 10, 2007, Carver Center Auditorium, Rockville, 7:30-9PM Erick Lang, MCPS Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Programs, will speak on how curriculum is developed in MCPS. Everyone is welcome to attend. Advance questions for Mr. Lang are encouraged and can be sent to committee chairs.

A more detailed report was provided at the November MCCPTA Board of Directors Meeting and posted to the MCCPTA Bulletin Listserv. Please post that report on individual school listservs.

MCCPTA Curriculum Committee co-chairs,

Ted Willard, twillard@aaas.org

Sharon Schulman, sharon29@comcast.net

Gifted Child Committee

The next Gifted Child Committee Meeting will be on November 29th from 7:30 – 9:00pm at Walter Johnson High School, 6400 Rock Spring Drive, Bethesda, MD.

The topic to be covered is “Exploring the Writing Curriculum: How MCPS prepares students to be exceptional writers”. Come and learn what MCPS expects regarding writing instruction in elementary, middle and high school Find out how BCRs (Brief constructed responses) fit into the writing curriculum. See actual examples of what is expected of our students. Presenters will be Sophie Kowzun, Supervisor, Elementary Reading Language Arts and Jim Flaikas, Supervisor Secondary English Language Arts of MCPS. There will be time for questions and answers at the end of the presentation. Everyone is welcome to attend. If you have any questions, please contact Holly Gaut at hollygaut@hotmail.com

On the MCCPTA Gifted Child’s Webpage at http://www.mccpta.com/GT_committee/MCCPTA_FAQ_10_16_07.pdf we now have available MCPS’ draft response to our 10 Most Frequently Asked Questions about Gifted and Talented Programming. Please take the time to check it out.

Holly Gaut, Chair HollyGaut@hotmail.com

Guidance and Counseling Committee

The MCCPTA Guidance and Counseling Committee met on October 16, 2007 from 7 until 8 pm in the Carver Building Room #120 Rockville, Maryland.

In attendance were Ann Gallagher and Risa Sandler.

- Topics from previous meetings were reviewed. Members felt at a loss to make progress in the absence of the other committee members.
- It was reported that Kay Romero, MCCPTA VP for Education, and Jane Winter, MCCPTA President were aware that committee members were interested in pursuing increased counselor allocation at the elementary school level.
- Members were reminded that the MCCPTA is interested in support and funding for counselors in MCPS. For example Summer Area Meetings emphasized more staffing at largest Elementary Schools, reduction in student / counselor ratios at MS and HS, and more PPWs and psychologists. More information can be found on the MCCPTA website:
http://www.mccpta.com/resolutions/Resolution_on_FY2009_Operating_Budget_Priorities.pdf
- Methods to change the dynamic between parents and counselors was considered but not resolved. This seems to be the area of most need this year. The committee would like to improve (or codify) how parents, counselors, and administrators cooperate to identify and solve issues under the purview of counselors.
- Location for future meetings was reconsidered. It was suggested that RSVPs be requested. Perhaps meetings could be held in Bethesda if no up-county members were going to be able to attend.

The next meeting is planned for November 27, 2007 from 10 – 11 am.

Ann Gallagher, Chair agm@saltywaters.org

High School Committee

The High School Committee had our Fall Interactive Forum for High School PTSA Presidents on October 27th. Our guest speaker was Marcia Vogel from the MCPS Division of Family and Community Partnership who spoke about the Parent Academy. Ideas and suggestions were brought up to Ms. Vogel regarding future topics to be included in the Parent Academy. Other issues that were discussed included online membership, increasing membership in all categories, newsletter distribution and graduation venue. It was decided that a spring forum would be planned to discuss other topics of interest. During the year, PTSA presidents will use the High School President's yahoo group to continue discussion and share best practices.

Sharon St.Pierre, Chair Stpierre619@comcast.net

Middle School Committee

The Middle School Committee is meeting Monday, December 3 from 7:30- 9:30 p.m. at Carver Auditorium. We will hear an update from MCPS (speaker TBA) with a brief Q and A for the first hour, followed by some discussion of middle school issues of most concern to parents. All are welcome. Please forward any topics/questions that we might discuss to

Ellen Paul, Chair epaul@foxhall.com.

Operating Budget Committee

At the October 23, 2007, MCCPTA Delegates Assembly, the Operating Budget Committee presented a draft resolution regarding crossing guards and Educational Facilities Officers (EFOs) for consideration by the delegates, to be discussed and voted upon at the November Delegates Assembly. The draft Operating Budget Compact was also presented to the assembly. Additionally, the Operating Budget Committee provided a brief report and assessment of the forthcoming budget environment, including projections by MCPS and potential outcomes from the current Special Session of the Maryland General Assembly. Prior to the Operating Budget Committee report, President de Winter reported on the draft Resolution on FY2009 Operating Budget Priorities, and entertained discussions and motions to revise the resolution prior to its formal adoption, as amended, by the assembly. Amendments regarding implementation of middle school reforms and providing safe, secure, clean, and healthy school facilities were adopted by the assembly.

John Hall, Chair john.f.hall@nasa.gov

Parent Involvement Committee

The Parent Involvement Committee is in the process of reserving a speaker for our January meeting. As soon as our speaker confirms, we will send an announcement out. Our next meeting is scheduled for January 10th 2008, 7 pm in Room 120 at Carver.

Elisia George, Chair dalisha3313@hotmail.com

Reflections Committee (Timeline)

- September-determine date for awards ceremony-Melissa/Chuck
 - Completed
- October-determine site for awards ceremony-Melissa/Chuck
 - Completed
- October-request volunteers to take on the duties below:
 - In progress
- November-schedule entertainment (HS jazz band/chorus?)
- January 2 – submissions due to county -Melissa/Chuck
- January - Images sorted and delivered to judges-Melissa/Chuck
 - Winning images photographed prior to taking to state --Melissa
- February 2- Submissions due to state
- February- Start preparing slide show with winning images (perhaps with winning musical composition as accompanying it)
- March -- Order awards (medals/trophies)
- March-print invitations & Maps
- March -- Mail invitations & include note to all county award winners to do a brief presentation of their work (what inspired them; mediums used, etc –they could read their artist’s statement)
- March – RSVP deadline

- March-Print certificates
 - For Students
 - For Chairpersons
- March- Prepare program
 - Proofread for typos
- April-confirm entertainment
 - Proofread again/corrections as needed
- April - Print programs
- April- Print identification cards for the artwork
- April – purchase refreshments-
- April – Set up gallery (usually day of event)
- April 23 - Reflections Awards Ceremony @ BlackRock Center for the Arts

We participated in a successful MCCPTA training workshop on September 29, 2007, and are providing information and support to the local chairpersons as they contact us. Helpful information is sent via e-mail through our distribution list. In addition, we submitted a press release to the Gazette for a call of entries through the students' local PTAs, with our contact information.

Lastly, we are in the process of getting all old pieces of art (dating back to 2002) back to their owners.

Melissa McDonald & Chuck Benjamin, co-chairs

Melissa.mcdonald@verizon.net chuck@blackrockcenter.org

Technology Committee

The Technology Committee continues to advocate with the local PTA's regarding concerns about Schools Websites and to raise administrator awareness of the importance of school web sites to parents.

The primary focus is to get the Schools and administration to understand the importance of instituting standards across all school web sites. The committee is also working with MCPS Web Services to implement the web publishing system for as many schools as possible in 2007/2008.

Linda B. White, Chair lindabwhite1@aol.com

Training Committee

MCCPTA has a goal of doing regional trainings and would like to establish positions to focus on and dates for those trainings. They could be in the evening and will be much smaller in scale than the fall training. In order to do that, a date needs to set for a brief meeting of potential trainers. We have a base of people on our training staff to call on with expertise in one or more areas. We need to convene a meeting and have the training dates and locations already established, so we will know who is available.

How regional trainings will work:

- Assignments are given to trainers for sections of the training.
- We always have food on our agenda. Nothing elaborate.
- Agendas and handouts are always distributed at the training meeting. We know who's providing what materials because we have a separate agenda for the trainers.

We need experienced volunteers to help with local trainings. We are planning a date to get together with potential trainers and a date for the 1st regional training session focusing on the area with the most need for locals.

Effective 10/29, we have a new training committee member. Fred Fleming is a skilled organizer and parent advocate in Montgomery County public schools. He is interested in being a trainer and helping to organize

Resolution on Crossing Guards & Educational Facilities Officers

Submitted by: MCCPTA Operating Budget Committee (Pam Moomau, Lilo Mitz, and John Hall)

Resolution:

Whereas crossing guards and Educational Facilities Officers (EFOs) provide vital safety and security functions at MCPS schools; and

Whereas crossing guards are provided only for most elementary schools and some middle schools, but not for high schools; and

Whereas there is a need for additional crossing guards or extended crossing guard services at MCPS schools, including high schools, as well as enhanced security and EFO services; and

Whereas MCPS schools lack adequate pedestrian protection and crossing guard staffing and services for special events at MCPS schools; and

Whereas EFOs currently are assigned to multiple schools, and some schools require enhanced EFO support;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that MCCPTA supports and will advocate for increased crossing guard support in order to provide safe access to schools; and

Be it further resolved that MCCPTA supports and will advocate for increased EFO support and coordination across MCPS schools, in order to provide the safe, secure learning environment to which Montgomery County schoolchildren and staff are entitled.

RESOLUTION ON MCPS EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECKS

Submitted by Rich Edelman, delegate Frost MS

During the last school year there were instances where certain MCPS employees engaged in conduct that resulted in criminal charges against them.

In connection with those incidents it became apparent that while MCPS may require some criminal background checks when hiring employees, there is no periodic follow-up for persons who are already employed by MCPS; and there is no procedure for notifying school principals regarding employee convictions.

It is therefore resolved that:

1. MCPS should report to MCCPTA within one month of the date of this resolution regarding its current practices concerning criminal background checks for new hires and current employees.
2. MCPS should develop a system for criminal background checks (such as the National Crime Information Center background check) for all employees. Such a system should, at a minimum: a. provide for criminal record background checks for all new hires; b. provide for criminal record background checks for employees every three years; c. provide that a principal will be notified of any criminal conviction of any person employed at the principal's school.
3. MCPS should report to MCCPTA by the end of March of 2008 with MCPS' recommendations for an employee criminal background check system for new applicants and employees.

MCCPTA FY2009 DRAFT OPERATING BUDGET COMPACT

The Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations (MCCPTA) believes that an Operating Budget for the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) must provide funding to make progress towards the fundamental requirements described in this budget compact. This compact will provide the basis for testimony before the Board of Education and the County Council and in other forums concerning the MCPS Operating Budget for FY 2009. MCCPTA will not support any budget, MCPS Strategic Plan, or other planning or policy document, that does not make progress towards the requirements of this compact.

Goal 1 of the MCPS Strategic Plan: Ensure Success for Every Student.

MCPS must focus on addressing academic performance of all students so that all may reach their full potential, no matter where they reside in the county. There is a need for uniformly high expectations that all students, including Special Education, ESOL, and Gifted/Talented students, will succeed and will have their needs met. There must be sufficient funding for programs to raise the performance of under-performing students. There must also be adequate funding to enhance the performance of students who have attained satisfactory levels of performance but who can do better, and to challenge students who exceed satisfactory levels of performance but are able to perform at even higher levels. In order to further these goals, MCCPTA supports the following staff initiatives from the past several years and encourages continued support for these initiatives:

- Reduced class sizes throughout the County
- Reduced class sizes for art, music, and physical education
- Improved staffing ratios for LAD
- Move toward hours based staffing for special education students in order to ensure the success of a move toward promoting education in the least restrictive environment
- Phase-in of additional assistant principals

In addition, the budget should provide for the following:

- Math specialists to provide early intervention for students
- Certification in the appropriate content areas for middle school teachers teaching high school courses and specialty courses offered in signature programs
- Additional reduction in student/teacher staffing ratios for art, music, and physical education
- Reduction in the use of substitute teachers in the classroom during academic year for teacher training
- Academic intervention/support such as summer learning opportunities for all students based on needs of the students throughout the County, not limited to Title I schools.

Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan: Provide an Adequate Instructional Program

As adequate educational staffing is achieved, it will become even more important to provide staff with the tools necessary to assure success. In order to further this goal, MCCPTA supports the following staff initiatives from the past several years and encourages continued support for these initiatives:

- Reform of the middle school curriculum to increase rigor and ensure instruction appropriate for each student.
- Increased support for high school literacy
- Expansion of accelerated and enriched programs into more secondary schools.
- Improvements to technology and support for improved technology use

In addition, priority should be given to providing for the following academic and developmental supports for students

- More emphasis on providing a well-rounded curriculum including a rich science, social studies, and arts curriculum
- Increased academic intervention/support resources, including:
 - Specific action/intervention plans for students not meeting standards under the grading and reporting policy
 - Specific action/intervention plans for students not meeting extracurricular activity eligibility requirements.
 - Consistent funding and implementation of special programs across the county
- Timely provision of new materials and textbooks when new curricula are introduced
- Improved vertical articulation to ensure students receive the foundation for future curriculum options.

Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan: Strengthen productive partnerships for education.

In a system with sufficient teaching resources in adequate buildings, other supports will still be needed to ensure a quality education for all children. We support continuation of the following former initiatives:

- Enhanced translation services
- Expanded study circles
- Implementation of Ed Line in all secondary schools

However, there is a desperate need for enhanced communication and outreach at the local school level, especially in light of the growing number of families with limited knowledge of English. There is also a need for more general support for students and families. Therefore, we request more support for the following:

- Local school based resources for communications, especially with non-English speaking parents and increase translation services
- Additional guidance counselors, pupil personnel workers, and other staff to address social/emotional/developmental needs at all levels
- More attention to addressing discipline problems, including gang recruitment and bullying, especially at the middle school level.

Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan: Create a Positive Work Environment in a Self-Renewing Organization.

Development, retention, and recruitment of talented educational, administrative, and support staff are fundamental to maintaining a high quality of education in Montgomery County. The following initiatives are needed:

- Reduction in high turnover rate for staff from Principals to building services staff
- Increased diversity in hiring
- Focus on providing timely teacher training BEFORE the roll-out of new curricula
- Adequate training for all staff, including supporting services.

Goal 5 of the Strategic Plan: Provide high quality business services that are essential to the educational success of students.

Consistent with the goal of promoting maximum performance by all students, there must be greater accountability by MCPS for improved academic performance of students. MCPS accountability for effective use of resources should be increased by using the inventory of all MCPS programs to reduce duplications and overlaps, and through outcome measurement rigorously evaluate programs for effectiveness and efficiency. We support the following initiatives in prior and current plans:

- Overhaul of the financial and budgeting information systems.
- Adequate staffing for the Ride by the Rules program, to improve communication between bus drivers and principals

We urge attention to the following:

- Assessment of new programs and curricula before and after implementation, to ensure that sufficient course materials, guidebooks, and implementation documents are available
- Evaluation of the use of new technology to ensure that it is the most cost-effective way to increase student performance
- More oversight of local schools by the Community Superintendents.
- Budget document that is more clearly accessible to the public, including clear demarcation of new initiatives and increases or decreases in funding levels for existing services
- Improved nutritional value for school lunch and a la carte menu selections

Finally, the setting in which education takes place should not be neglected. For optimal learning our schools, including portable classrooms, must provide an environment where the children feel safe and their health is protected. The following issues need to be addressed:

- Increased recess supervision
- More attention to addressing discipline problems, especially at the middle school level, including the problem of gangs, bullying and risk to student safety
- Adoption by MCPS of objective standards for portable conditions and installation, routine building systems maintenance, and prompt response to unanticipated repair and maintenance needs
- Revision of salary structures or increased outside contracting for positions that are persistently vacant, such as HVAC mechanics and speech and language therapists.
- More maintenance and repair personnel, particularly HVAC mechanics
- Expanded indoor air quality staff, with training in building envelope issues
- Increased staffing of building services
- Adequate security personnel and other resources necessary for securing school buildings and portables
- Reassessment and adjustment of traffic patterns around schools to promote pedestrian safety
- Reassessment of bus stop placement to promote safety
- More activity buses to promote participation in after school programming as well as a safe return home from after-school programs
- More rigorous and frequent background checks for employees of MCPS and its contractors.

The MCCPTA recognizes that an Operating Budget that satisfies all of these requirements will necessitate a continued strong commitment to education by Montgomery County. Such a commitment and investment, however, is more than justified by the benefits a well-resourced educational system provides to the community.

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

Pony Mailing

NOVEMBER 2007

MCCPTA Calendar 2007-2008

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

November		
15	7:00 pm	BOE CIP Hearing
27	10:00 am	Guidance and Counseling Committee, Carver Rm 120
	6:30-7:15 P.M.	Program MRSA (Staph Infections)
	7:15-8:00pm	Program: Transportation
	8:00pm	Delegate Assembly
29	7:30pm	MCCPTA Gifted Child Com. Mtg. Walter Johnson HS Caf�
December		
3 – 7		Inclusive School Week
3	7:30pm	MCCPTA Middle School Committee
6	7:30pm	MCCPTA Board of Directors Meeting
10	7:30pm	MCCPTA Curriculum Committee Meeting
13	7:30pm	MCPS Operating Budget Presentation, Rockville HS
January		
3	7:30pm	MCCPTA Board of Directors Meeting
5	TBA	Operating Budget Testimony writing workshop
7	7:30pm	Operating Budget Forum