

Resolution on FY 2013 Operating Budget Priorities
Adopted October 25, 2011

Whereas, MCCPTA's mission is to speak for children and, without question, our highest priority is education;

Whereas, the Montgomery County Board of Education will hear testimony on, and consider the Superintendent's Recommended FY2013 Operating Budget in January 2012;

Whereas funding for the MCPS Operating Budget is derived predominantly from county revenues, in addition to state funds and limited federal funds, and the Montgomery County Council will hear testimony on, and consider the MCPS FY2013 Operating Budget Request in Spring 2012;

THEREFORE, MCCPTA resolves as follows:

MCCPTA supports the principle of the Maintenance of Effort law;

MCCPTA considers the following items to be of the highest priority, each item to be given due consideration in relation to the others:

Protecting the "classroom" and direct support for students to ensure the success of every student, with no further increase in class size and no further reduction in teachers or staff who provide direct instruction or support to students;

Retaining and recruiting highly qualified and effective school leadership, teachers and staff;

Full implementation of hours-based staffing for special education students;

Maintaining safe, secure and healthy school environments, with no further reductions in maintenance, building service, MCPS security staff or School Resource Officers (SRO);

Comprehensive and effective rollout of all new curriculum, including the integrated curriculum in elementary schools, with consistent and comprehensive staff development and training across all schools, parent access to the online curriculum; and

Continued support for after school activities.

Background on Operating Budget Priorities:

These priorities reflect the input provided by PTA leadership from each area of the county to MCCPTA officers in June 2011, as well as the collective input provided by the MCCPTA Board of Directors and MCCPTA Delegates.

MCCPTA supports the principle of the Maintenance of Effort law.

State increases in education funding should translate into increases for schools, not a reduction of local funding. The penalty for a county's failure to comply with the law should be borne by the county and not the schools, which have been underfunded.

Protecting the "classroom" and direct support for students to ensure the success of every student.

Until FY 2011, MCPS had made progress toward reducing class sizes. It is critical to learning to protect that progress against further budget cuts, and to reduce class sizes as soon as fiscally feasible. Given cuts already made, it is important to protect against any further cuts to teachers or staff who provide direct instruction or support to students.

Retaining and recruiting highly qualified and effective school leadership, teachers and staff.

Strong school leadership is essential at every school to achieve the goals of continuous improvement for all students in the face of continued budget cuts. Qualified and effective teachers and staff are essential to ensure success for every student.

Full implementation of hours-based staffing for special education students.

As budget pressures force class sizes up, hours-based staffing for special education students is especially important to minimize adverse impacts on both these students and general education students.

Maintaining safe, secure and healthy school environments, with no further reductions in maintenance, building service, MCPS security staff or SROs.

Devoting resources to the classroom includes devoting resources to ensuring a classroom environment that facilitates learning. Components of a good learning environment include:

- Well-maintained classrooms free of mold, vectors, and other contaminants
- Freedom from bullying and gang activities, including the maintenance and restoration of MCPS security staff and SROs
- Safe and secured access to school facilities

Comprehensive and effective rollout of all new curriculum.

Parents are concerned about the way major curriculum reforms are implemented, including the integrated elementary school curriculum, middle school advance courses leading to high school credit, and the accelerated math curriculum. Appropriate support would include:

- Increased assistance to students who lack mastery of building blocks for new curriculum
- Completion of teacher training BEFORE introducing curriculum changes
- Consistent and comprehensive instructional materials in all schools
- Technology to enhance training and reduce use of substitute teachers, with tools to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of training

Continued support for after school activities.

After school programs are important both to provide additional learning and enrichment opportunities, and to extend the protections of the school community environment to students beyond the school day. The latter is an important component of gang prevention.