

MCCPTA Committee Report for September 2008

Safety Committee Report

Chair: Laurie Halverson (Lauriehalverson@verizon.net)

We will hold our Safety Committee meetings on these dates/times at Carver at 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville:

- September 22 at 7:00 pm (room 127)
- October 20 at 7:00 pm (room 223)
- November 17 at 7:00 pm (room 223)
- December 18 at 12:30 pm (room 127)
- January 7 at 7:00 pm (room 127)
- February 9 at 7:00 pm (room 223)
- March 23 at 7:00 pm (room 127)
- April 20 at 7:00 pm (room 223)
- May 11 at 7:00 pm (room 127)

Here is a summary of activity during the past month:

Laurie Halverson attended a meeting with the non-profit group “**Drawing the Line**” (DTL) to discuss the year’s strategies. MCCPTA partners with DTL to help promote alcohol awareness and work to prevent underage drinking. The winners of commercials from the middle and high school contest were shown and were very impressive! The video contest will be underway in the fall and there will be a dinner in March to honor them. For more information, see www.drawingtheline.org.

Laurie also met with the “**Coalition for the Prevention of Bullying**” to learn about their goals. Since the bill, HB 199 passed which requires schools to have a prevention program in place, they are working with stakeholders to make sure MCPS implements the new law in a proactive way. They want to promote a research-based whole school program on bullying. They want a program that works on prevention and intervention. Currently, while MCPS has bullying programs, they are not implemented the same way across all schools and some counselors do not even know what curriculum information is available to them. The role of the MCCPTA would be to promote awareness of their campaign. At our next committee meeting, we will discuss our role in this process.

MCPS hopes to add **visitor management systems** to 39 schools during this school year beginning sometime in the fall. This is not a system to track parents who are in our country illegally, but it is a system that will now be able to know immediately if a sex offender tries to enter the building (a note will appear to the office staff member to get an administrator.) It is also a system that will have immediate accountability-if there is an emergency, MCPS (the local school and the Central Office) will know right away who is in and out of the building. And, of course, no one can pick up a student who has not been authorized by the parent to do so. This is a new online screening system to keep track of everyone in the building and prevent sexual predators and criminals from entering our schools.

An email went out to PTA Presidents on August 28 to give guidance on recess volunteers and playground equipment purchases.

Any PTA member is welcome to attend our Safety Committee meetings. Committee Chairs are encouraged to participate. In these budget-crunch times, it is very important that we continue to advocate for the safety of our children. Our committee will discuss priorities for advocacy, work on ways to make parents aware of safety needs, and work to accomplish goals for the year. Pressures will be there this year to sacrifice our children’s safety, so PLEASE HELP IF YOU CAN! If you can’t come to meetings but would like to participate in another way, please contact me.