

**Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (MCGPTA)  
Minutes of the Delegate Assembly on February 26, 2008  
in the Auditorium of the Carver Educational Services Center**

**PROGRAM**

Kent Weaver, Supervisor of School Counseling Services Unit, Nancy Carlson, High School Counselor Specialist, Sherry King, Middle School Counselor Specialist, and Linda Bart, Elementary Counselor Specialist provided an overview of the MCPS school counseling program.

**OPENING BUSINESS**

**Call to Order:** MCCPTA President Jane de Winter called the meeting to order at 8:10

**Mission:** Vice President for Administration Liz Wheeler read the mission of the PTA.

**Agenda:** The topic of School Climate Surveys was added under New Business.

**Minutes:** The minutes from the January Delegates Assembly were distributed and reviewed. Spelling and typographical errors were corrected. Kay Romero made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dale Ryan has hurt her knee and is unable to attend this evening so Jane de Winter reviewed the Treasurer's Report. We have received some donations for the Presidents and Principals Dinner. Uncategorized Income was from cash donations for MANNA food bank at last month's Delegates Assembly that we deposited so that we could send them a check. We have fewer members than last year and than we anticipated having this year, which has budget implications.

**MCCPTA EPI UPDATES**

**FLES**

MCCPTA Educations Programs, Inc. (EPI) is a separate organization from MCCPTA that runs education programs. Kirsten Rhodes gave a brief update on the status of the Foreign Language in Elementary Schools (FLES) program. FLES offers French, Chinese, and Spanish. She noted that they are looking for teachers, coordinators at local schools and advice on what classrooms to use at local schools.

**Hands on Science**

Barbara Griner gave a brief update on Hands on Science. The program originated in Montgomery County. It used to be a separate entity from EPI, but shut down recently. MCCPTA-EPI is working on reinitiating the program. Classes were offered at eleven schools this spring as part of a pilot project. Every school will have the option of running programs next year. They are looking for teachers to hire for next year as well. Classrooms are arranged through ICB, but we often need guidance from people at the school on which classrooms would be good for the program. In response to a question from the floor about an alternative program called Mad Science, Jane de Winter

explained that it is up to local PTAs to decide what programs (if any) they want to run. Another question was whether Hands on Science will continue to offer eight-week sessions. The response was that that is their current plan, but they will consider alternative configurations and welcome feedback on what works and what doesn't. Contact information is on the MCCPTA website. Currently, costs are \$65 for each 8-week session. There are three different levels: K-1, 2-3, and 4-5.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **High School PSAT Resolution**

Sharon St.Pierre offered the following resolution about PSATs on behalf of the High School Committee, which had been distributed at last month's delegate assembly.

Whereas, students who take the 11th grade PSAT are eligible for a variety of scholarships and a lot of information from colleges as a result for taking the PSATs, and

Whereas, it is difficult for high schools to get all 11th graders registered, and

Whereas, MCPS pays for 9th and 10th graders to take the PSAT to identify students who could be accelerated, and

Whereas, the PSAT results are of limited value in identifying 9th graders who could be accelerated, and

Whereas, MCPS has stated that they could use an old PSAT exams or practice exams for 9<sup>th</sup> grade, which would provide the same benefit at no cost, therefore be it

Resolved that MCCPTA supports MCPS paying for 10th and 11th graders to take the PSAT and MCCPTA supports MCPS's efforts to utilize other available resources to identify 9th graders for placement.

Sharon went on to announce that this month, Carol Blum, Director of High School Instruction, saying that MCPS was planning to start paying for 11th graders to take the PSAT and that old versions of the PSAT would be used with 9th graders. There were questions as to whether ninth graders could pay to take the official PSAT under this new system. It was believed that they could do so. Rich Edelman made a motion to table the motion. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

### **Presidents and Principals Dinner**

The Presidents and Principals Dinner is on Wednesday, May 21 at the Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center. Traditionally, it is held on the fourth Wednesday of May, but we had to move it one week earlier this year because of a conflict at the conference center. April Keyes put out a request to the Delegates for volunteers for the Presidents and Principals Dinner. She needs assistance identifying musicians from local schools to provide entertainment, getting someone to donate gift certificates for the performers,

checking people in the night of the program, as well as preparing programs, invitations and awards. Leon Harris from WJLA has agreed to emcee the event.

### **Nominating Committee**

Andrea Bernardo, chair of the nominating committee put out a call for people interested serving as officers next year. Nominees for Cluster Coordinators and Area Vice Presidents are due to the Nominating Committee by March 15th. Nominations received after that date can still be voted on at the April Delegates Assembly, but they will have to be nominated from the floor. Local PTAs are reminded that they should be forming their own nominating committees.

### **Training Committee**

Liz Wheeler noted that several mini-trainings have had to be canceled and rescheduled because of inclement weather. There is a President's Training at 7:30 this Thursday, at Quince Orchard High School. There will be another Presidents Training at 7:30 on March 12 at Wheaton High School and a Treasurer's Training at 7:30 on March 5th at Rocky Hill Middle School. There will be a Board of Directors Training this Saturday, March 1, from 9:30 am till 2 pm. Community Superintendents will be in attendance. People who are planning to be Cluster Coordinators are welcome to attend as well. Wednesday, June 4th, has been tentatively set aside for Spring Training.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### **Maryland PTA**

Jane de Winter noted that she would attend the Maryland PTA Board meeting next week.

### **Month of the Young Child**

The MCCPTA Board of Directors voted to co-sponsor the Month of the Young Child. There are events at Lakeforest Mall and Wheaton mall this month. Elisia George and Susan Young are spearheading this effort and are looking for additional assistance.

### **MCCPTA Bylaws**

The Bylaws Committee is working on revisions to the bylaws to address issues with the quorum of the Board of Directors. The revisions will most likely be presented to the Board of Directors in March, presented at the March Delegates Assembly and voted on at the April Delegates Assembly.

### **Kindergarten MCPSAP-PR Options for Administration**

Jane de Winter shared with the delegates a proposal being considered by the school system. Currently, kindergarten students are assessed three times a year. One of these takes place at the beginning of the year, which can be very disruptive to instruction. An MCPS workgroup of teachers, principals, and central office staff considered three options:

1. Summer Administration: Students have appointment to be assessed in the summer. Schools allocated funds based on a formula TBD.

2. Pre-service Administration: Students have appointments to be assessed during two days of pre-service. The start day for kindergarten students is delayed until the third day of school.
3. Rolling Entry Administration: One-third of each kindergarten class attends school on each of the first three days of school and is assessed. All Kindergarten students attend school on the fourth day of class.

The work group recommended the Option 3, but MCPS is interested now in hearing parents input on this proposal. It should be noted that Options 1 and 2 have costs associated with them, so the school system may be less interested in them. MCPS hopes to make a decision by April 1st. Jane suggested that the Delegates spend some time at their local PTAs explaining this situation so parents can provide feedback. Parents can send their feedback to Ebony Langford, Director of Elementary School Instruction.

### **School Climate Surveys**

MCPS conducts surveys of students, parents, and staff. The staff surveys are now administered totally online. Schools can have their students complete the survey either online or on a scantron. Elementary schools tended to use online form; Middle Schools and High Schools tend to use scantron. For parents, MCPS used to try to survey every parent in certain grades, but for the last two years, they have only tried to survey 30% of parents. The surveys are mailed out in March using bulk mail with prepaid postage. Doing fewer surveys has freed up money to send out a reminder letter. The total cost of conducting the survey is over \$100,000. Earlier this year, a request was made for an additional \$23,000 to cover increased costs of conducting the survey this year. Because of the current budget freeze, that request needed approval from a committee at MCPS. That began a conversation of whether the survey should be done every year, or every other year. Apparently, there are other school systems that do it every other year. A decision was made to not do the surveys this year. Costs include an outside firm to handle the printing and mailing of the surveys and additional temporary help.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **School Climate Surveys**

Janette Gilman made a motion:

Whereas the annual MCPS surveys of school environment-parent, staff, and student-are unique, valuable mechanisms for stakeholder feedback; and

Whereas those surveys provide time series data that are critical to gauging the climate at MCPS schools, identifying improvement, and flagging potential areas of weakness; and

Whereas MCPS announced in a January 2008 email memo to principals that the survey would be "postponed," i.e., cancelled, this school year to cut expenditures; and

Whereas MCPS has emphasized its commitment to Baldrige principles through systemic, systematic training and implementation of methodologies and techniques to

improve school system performance, and the annual surveys function as the lone systemic, systematic tool for stakeholder feedback; and

Whereas MCCPTA holds that stakeholder input is critical to maintain and build upon the excellence of Montgomery County Public Schools;

Now therefore be it resolved that MCCPTA will advocate for the immediate reinstatement in the FYOB budget of the 2007-08 surveys of school environment, to include the parent, staff, and student surveys, at all MCPS schools.

Rich Edelman made a motion for immediate consideration tonight. A two-thirds majority is required for such an action. The motion for immediate action was seconded and passed by a voice vote of more than two-thirds. Sara Morris made a motion to change the resolved to say:

"Now therefore be it resolved that MCCPTA urges that all funds be immediately reinstated in the..."

The amendment was passed by voice vote. The overall motion was then passed by voice vote. In its final version, it read:

Whereas the annual MCPS surveys of school environment-parent, staff, and student-are unique, valuable mechanisms for stakeholder feedback; and

Whereas those surveys provide time series data that are critical to gauging the climate at MCPS schools, identifying improvement, and flagging potential areas of weakness; and

Whereas MCPS announced in a January 2008 email memo to principals that the survey would be "postponed," i.e., cancelled, this school year to cut expenditures; and

Whereas MCPS has emphasized its commitment to Baldrige principles through systemic, systematic training and implementation of methodologies and techniques to improve school system performance, and the annual surveys function as the lone systemic, systematic tool for stakeholder feedback; and

Whereas MCCPTA holds that stakeholder input is critical to maintain and build upon the excellence of Montgomery County Public Schools;

Now therefore be it resolved that MCCPTA urges that all funds be immediately reinstated in the FY08 budget of the 2007-08 surveys of school environment, to include the parent, staff, and student surveys, at all MCPS schools.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 pm.