

Minutes MCCPTA Delegates Assembly
November 25, 2008
Carver Educational Service Center

6:30 -7:30 PM Program: Presentation on Internet Safety and Cyberbullying

*Special guests: Dr. Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools
Chief J. Thomas Manger, Montgomery County Police Department
Mr. John J. McCarthy, Montgomery County State's Attorney*

Call to Order:

Kay Romero, President, brought the meeting to order at 7:38 PM

Liz Wheeler, VP for Administration, read the PTA mission.

Approval of Agenda and Oct. 28, 2008 Minutes:

The agenda was amended to move: New Business: Election for VP for Educational Issues, Election for VP for Legislation; Motion: Proposed by Juan Johnson, AVP for Northwest, Poolesville, Quince Orchard, & Seneca Valley; and Discussion: School system closing (or not) for Inauguration Day (January 20, 2009) to before Reports, and was approved as amended.

The minutes from the Oct. 28, 2008 DA were amended to correct Delegates names and were approved as amended.

Treasurer's Report:

Dale Ryan, Treasurer, reviewed Expenditures for November. Our total YTD income was \$30,592. She then reviewed the Budget, and reminded Delegates that MCCPTA is now asking that local PTAs pay their MCCPTA dues monthly, to coincide with their payments to MD PTA. The first installment was due November 1, 2008. Our total YTD expenses of \$21,826 leave us with \$8,765 net operating income. She then reviewed the Balance Sheet. She stated that we have money to cover our expenses, but reiterated that it is important for locals to get their dues into us.

Kay Romero stated that the Treasurer's Report will be filed, and added a brief list of our operating expenses; office manager, Blue Book, copying, materials, etc., and noted that when the Blue Books return from the printer in about 2 weeks, they will only be sent via pony mail to schools that have paid MCCPTA dues. Blue Books are pre paid out of the PTA dues collected. The printer is paid upfront before printing and that is a large expense for MCCPTA.

New Business:

Elections:

Liz Wheeler read the section of the bylaws pertaining to the election of officers to fill vacancies. She noted that the Nominating Committee, which was voted in at the DA in October, went straight to work and has been working hard to fill vacancies that arose. They were required to have nominees sent out in under two weeks per our bylaws, but accomplished the task in under two weeks. She offered kudos to them for their diligence. She then provided an overhead that contained the duties of officers.

Carol Salisbury, Nominating Committee Chair then presented the nominees:

Merry Eisner, VP for Educational Issues
Rebecca Smondrowski, VP for Legislation

Kay Romero called for nominees from the floor for each office, but there were none. Since there were none, the Body agreed to vote for them as a slate by voice vote. The vote carried.

Motion:

Juan Johnson, AVP for Northwest, Poolesville, Quince Orchard, & Seneca Valley brought forth the following motion:

Move that the MCCPTA Delegates Assembly set a 10 minute time limit on original motions, and that this limit be in effect beginning with the November 25, 2008 Delegates Assembly.

The motion was seconded, and Juan spoke to the motion by saying that this was a way for the chair to set a limit, and that the time could always be extended if the Body felt it was necessary. With no further discussion, the motion passed on voice vote.

Discussion:

School system closing (or not) for Inauguration Day (January 20, 2009).

Kay reviewed Dr. Weast's recommendation regarding Inauguration Day 2009. She reminded the Body that the BOE has the final say. She also noted that Christopher Barclay, member of the BOE, has put forward a proposed resolution to the BOE that the schools be closed that day and in the future for Inauguration Day.

Rebecca Smondrowski, Roberto Clemente MS Delegate, brought forward the following motion:

Move that the schools be closed on Inauguration Day, January 20, 2009.

The motion was seconded. It was noted in response to a question that this motion was only for Inauguration Day, 2009, not for future Inauguration Days.

Rich Edelman, Wootton Cluster coordinator, spoke in opposition to the motion.

Lori Wilen, Magruder HS Delegate, offered an amendment to the motion in support of Chris Barclay's resolution:

Amend to close every four years on Inauguration Day.

Her amendment was seconded.

Tony Zagami, Sherwood ES President, asked if the BOE could tie the hands of future BOEs by forcing the schools to be closed every Inauguration Day in the future.

Kay pointed out that we have past resolutions and motions that remain organization positions. She then re-read parts of Chris Barclay's resolution for clarification.

Bill Jacobs, Olney ES Delegate, stated that he felt it could be viewed as partisan if we only supported the 2009 Inauguration Day as a holiday and not future Inaugurations.

Helene Bernstein, Little Bennett ES Delegate, was in opposition to the amendment and the motion, questioning if parents would really take their kids to the Inauguration, and if this could possibly result in schools being open later into the summer.

Frances Frost, Bel Pre/Strathmore ES President, added that while closing the schools was probably not a partisan move, the teachers had requested the day off, and she was concerned about there being adequate coverage that day. She moved:

That the two parts of the motion be split so that the amendment was separate from the original motion.

The motion was seconded.

Linda Bozzonetti, Julius West MS Delegate, suggested the word "Presidential" be added to the original motion, so that we were clear which Inauguration we were speaking about.

Monique Riddick, Brooke Grove ES Delegate, stated that their PTA wanted school open, but if it is closed, that it should be for all future Inaugurations also, not just this one.

Kay reminded the Body that currently we had the motion to separate the two parts on the floor for discussion.

Laurie Halverson, Safety Committee Chair, moved:

That we extend the time for discussion by 10 minutes.

The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote.

Lori Wilen, Magruder HS Delegate, stated that the reason she would like to see the resolution and amendment to stay as one was because it then mirrors what Chris Barclay had presented in his resolution to the BOE.

Since there was no further discussion on this point, a vote was taken, and the motion to separate the parts failed on a voice vote.

Laurie Halverson, Churchill Cluster Coordinator, felt that PTAs should not feel pressured to vote, and that they should abstain if they felt pressured.

Linda Bozzonetti, Julius West MS Delegate, stated that she felt the schools should be open because of childcare issues for parents that must work that day and children on free and reduced meals would be coming off an already three day weekend and thus miss 4 consecutive days of meals. She offered an amendment that the day be considered an excused absence but that the students would need to turn in a meaningful activity like a BCR or the equivalent on the day. It was pointed out that Dr. Weast had already suggested that it be an excused day off.

Sharon Bland, Seven Locks ES Delegate, felt that the schools should be open because kids will likely not pay attention to the Inauguration and just be out playing and that they would be better off in school with guided discussions.

Sally Taber, DCC Coordinator, said that high school exams (and some middle school students take them too) were that week, and closing schools that day would mean there are no make up days for exams. She also elaborated for parents of younger children that the exams need to be finished that week, because the next week the high school students start a new semester, frequently with new teachers.

Andrea Bernardo, AVP for the Churchill, Richard Montgomery, Rockville, Wootton clusters, said that she is perturbed that the teacher union insists on a day off for the State Teacher Convention that most teachers do not attend, and so she is not sympathetic to the teachers in this request.

Suzanne Babich, Rockville HS Delegate, continued the expression of concern regarding high school exam week, and included the fact that some students take classes at Montgomery College, and the buses for transporting the students from the middle schools to the high schools were already arranged. Also, if school was closed it might mean three exams a day for some students, and that would add a lot of stress to the students.

Anita Balaehandra, Bradley Hills ES Delegate, (but speaking for herself) felt it was too late to be changing the calendar now. This should have been thought of earlier.

Tony Zagami, Sherwood ES President, but speaking only for himself, agreed that the disruption would be too much and that the kids were better off in school that day.

Sharon Bland, Seven Locks ES Delegate, called the question.

Susan Thomas, Gifted Child Committee Chair asked for clarification on two points: 1) Are people able to vote if their PTA had not met to discuss this matter? and 2) If the PTA had not paid its dues, can those schools vote?

Kay clarified that sometimes delegates are asked to vote without bringing the issue back to their community if it is time sensitive. This issue has been out on the MCCPTA listservs and community/PTA listservs for a while now, as well as having been discussed at some PTA meetings.

Since the question had been called, the Body voted to end debate.

Kay then read the list of schools that had paid their dues that night (11/25/2008). Then she read the list of schools that had not paid. We now voted on the complete motion, with amendments.

Move that the schools be closed on Inauguration Day, January 20, 2009 and to close every four years on the Presidential Inauguration Day.

By voice vote, the motion failed. A standing vote was done with a check of what school the Delegates were from, using the list of who had paid their dues. The count was 53 against the motion, 19 in favor.

Anne Witkowsky, Bethesda ES Delegate, asked if we could bring this up for future years. Kay clarified that every year there is a calendar workgroup that MCCPTA has representation on, along with MCPS staff and unions. Anyone can bring it up when MCCPTA seeks feedback on the upcoming calendars or can send recommendations to the BOE. In any year, a Delegate can bring a motion before the body.

Dale Ryan reminded the Delegates that it was important to bring their voting cards to the Delegates Assemblies. She encouraged the Delegates to ask their PTA Presidents for them. If a PTA does not have them, and has paid their dues, they can call the MCCPTA office for assistance. PTAs that paid that night would get cards ponied to schools the next day by the MCCPTA office manager.

A point of clarification was requested as to what we had just voted on and what it meant. The clarification was that there was no vote to support either Dr. Weast's recommendation or Chris Barclay's proposed resolution, but a vote on a specific motion approved by this body.

Chris Biamonte, Cannon Road ES President, moved:

That if schools are open on Inauguration Day 2009, to allow students an excused absence.

Monique Riddick, Broke Grove ES Delegate, added that she would like to see excused absences not just for students that are being taken to the Inauguration, but for any students to stay home and watch on TV with their parents too. A friendly amendment was offered to add:

To celebrate this historic event.

The motion, with the friendly amendment, was seconded.

Beth Kennington, Grading and Reporting Committee Chair and Northwest HS Delegate, said that it is important for students taking exams to have an excused absence so that they can make up the exams.

Cherly Peirce, Twinbrook ES President, because parents might want to keep their children home from school that day for other reasons than to celebrate the Inauguration, such as concerns about adequate coverage, offered an amendment to remove:

To celebrate this historic event.

It was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

A vote was then taken on the motion:

That if schools are open on Inauguration Day 2009, to allow students an excused absence.

It passed on voice vote.

Kay stated that she would write a letter stating our position to Dr. Weast and the BOE and include the motions the Delegates approved.

Kelly Rogers, Darnestown ES President, felt that staff deserves some opportunities to take time off that day, and thus moved:

To recommend to Dr. Weast that staff who request leave on Inauguration Day, January 20, 2009, be allowed to take leave.

The motion was seconded.

Lora Johnson, Thurgood Marshall ES Delegate, thought that teachers should use a personal day if they want the day off.

Bob Quackenbush, Frost MS President, was opposed to this motion, being concerned that there would not be enough coverage if the teachers were allowed to take the day off.

Clarification requested – could principals deny leave on that day if a teacher requests it? A Delegate who is also an MCPS employee responded that yes, a principal can deny leave if they think that coverage for that day is low. If they take sick leave, a principal can require that the staff member bring a sick note when they return to work.

Laurie Halverson, Churchill Cluster Coordinator, felt this was a personnel issue and that we should not get involved in it.

On a voice vote, the motion was defeated.

Rebecca Smondrowski, Roberto Clemente MS Delegate and MCCPTA Curriculum Chair, felt as Curriculum Chair, that it would be good for the students to benefit from the events on Inauguration Day. Thus she offered the following motion:

That if schools are open January 20, 2009, that we support a change in curriculum, when/where able, to include discussion and viewing of the day's events.

It was seconded.

The question was called, and the vote for calling the question passed on voice vote.

It passed on a voice vote.

Reports:

President's Report:

Kay offered a brief summary of the MD PTA Convention, and read the bylaws change adopted that would impact the locals: within 2 weeks of their election, local PTA must send to Maryland PTA the contact information of their officers. She also noted there were 10 bylaws changes, some related to Council Bylaws and MDPTA Bylaws. MCCPTA was currently in the process of updating its bylaws.

On the recent parent surveys, she was looking for feedback as to when the cards with info arrived. They were supposed to have arrived before parents went to schools for parent conferences, so that the parents could use the computers in the schools, but apparently some cards arrived after conferences. The cards were mailed and sent home in backpacks.

Kay Romero informed the Body that the Office of Shared Accountability would be bringing a survey on health and nutrition related to Policy JPG (Wellness: Physical and Nutritional Health) implementation in schools to either the January or February DA to be filled out by Delegates.

She reminded everyone that Policy AEB was currently up for public comment, until Jan. 23, 2009.

She noted that Dr. Weast had canceled his Operating Budget Presentation that was originally scheduled for Dec. 11. This was possibly due to the current economic climate.

Kay pointed out that the MCPS was scheduled to discuss curricular fees at a meeting tomorrow (Nov. 26, 2008) and that she had been invited. She would attend but had no further information as to where MCPS was in this process since MCCPTA had not been a part of the workgroup related to curricular fees.

CIP Committee:

Steve Augustino, CIP Committee Chair presented a summary. He stated that every day we seem to be getting more bad news about the budget. On Nov. 20, the BOE approved the Superintendent's recommendation, which included \$200 million for construction. But, he cautioned that we need to make it all the way to May with that amount intact, and we may be short \$10 million from the State. Other sources of fund may also fall short, including the recordation tax. His committee will watch the process as it goes forward. Every dollar will count. They are also working with the Annapolis Delegation, and may call on the local PTAs to support us by lobbying on behalf of MCCPTA with the Delegation.

A Delegate asked for clarification on what happens if the County Council votes the BOE approved budget down?

In late May, there is a reconciliation meeting. Last year the budget was cut \$75 million.

Further clarification was asked on if we are able to advocate during this time or if we need to wait for testimony time?

We definitely can advocate at any time. There will be testimony before the County Council, probably in February, and of course there is PTA night in Annapolis in January. So there will be opportunities to advocate.

Legislative Update:

Rebecca Smondrowski, VP for Legislation, gave the Legislative Update. She stated that the Legislative Committee will be working hard to advocate for our schools and will certainly let PTAs know about opportunities to advocate. Kay Romero and Cluster Coordinators recently attended the BOE Legislative dinner, which had 16 MCCPTA Cluster coordinators representing 14 clusters. She also noted that she would be putting something out on the listserv as to when the Legislative committee would be meeting and where.

Operating Budget:

Liz Wheeler, VP for Administration asked Delegates to make note of the following dates:

Operating Budget Workshop, January 10, 2009, 9-11 am, location yet TBD

Operating Budget forum, Jan. 5, 2008, 7 pm, CESC

Operating Budget testimony before the BOE, Jan. 14 and 21 at 7 pm. She arranges testimony times for cluster coordinators, but individuals can testify to if they call the BOE office to sign up. Dec. 18 is the date for individuals to sign up.

The workshop is open to all interested people, and focuses on testimony writing tips. The forum is important to attend. We will formulate some question in advance, but it is really important for people to attend, since we have elected officials from County council, County executive's office, MCPS, BOE, Annapolis, all in the room at the same time. If we don't have sufficient numbers of people they will think we don't care. This forum is separate from the January DA later that month.

The awards to the local PTAs that won Maryland PTA awards at the MDPTA State Convention will be personally delivered to schools by Kay Romero next week.

AWARD WINNERS

Montgomery County Award Winners-Maryland PTA State Convention President's Dinner and Award Celebration-November 14, 2008.

MEMBERSHIP

This was calculated based on the information that was submitted by the local units to Maryland PTA on March 31, 2008

Membership, 5 percent growth

Burning Tree Elementary

Laytonsville Elementary

Sherwood Elementary

Spark Matsunaga Elementary

Membership, 15 percent growth

Westover Elementary

Whetstone Elementary

Robert Frost Middle School

Membership, 25 percent growth

Damascus Elementary

Fairland Elementary

John T Baker Middle School

James Hubert Blake High School

Northwood High School

PTSA Student Membership

Ridgeview Middle School

Outstanding County/City Award

Given to one local in each county/city for the largest percentage of membership based on school population. This was calculated based on the information that was submitted by the local units to Maryland PTA

Winston Churchill HS

DAD4PTA Award

A male PTA member who has made contributions, which are outstanding and exemplary and reflect the Purposes of the PTA

Mr. Melvin Moore, Briggs Chaney Middle School PTSA- Mr. Moore attended the awards dinner and we congratulate him on his award and his commitment to PTA.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Patti Twigg, Secretary for Delegates Assembly