

MCCPTA

April, 2011 Committee Reports

eList Committee

Jodi Bierlair: j.bierlair@gmail.com

As of March 30, 2011, membership on the various lists is as follows:

Listserv	# subscribed	Net increase/decrease from last report
MCCPTA_Board	82	+2
MCCPTA_Bulletin	668	+3
MCCPTA_Delegates	511	+24
MCCPTA_HS_Presidents	35	+5
MCCPTA_Presidents	244	+1
MCCPTA_Presidents_Discussion	80	+4
MCCPTA_Treasurers	201	0
MCCPTA_Health and Safety	113	(new)

There has been an ongoing "purge" of non-functioning email addresses.

At the end of June (or otherwise if special circumstances exist), outgoing presidents and treasurers will be removed from their respective listservs, and posting permission for outgoing delegates will be removed for the MCCPTA_Delegates listserv.

Ongoing additions and modifications have been made for newly sworn in Cluster Coordinators and AVPs. Committee Chairs have been updated as necessary.

The auto-reminder calendars for the Bulletin and BOD listservs has been updated as meetings and events are scheduled or changed. Calendar updates have been forwarded to the Webmaster for the MCCPTA website calendar.

Subscription and moderation issues and assistance for the various listservs have been addressed. Assistance has been given to MCCPTA committee and locals listserv moderators as requested.

Gifted and Talented Committee

Michelle Gluck: gluck.michelle@yahoo.com

The GCC assisted Kristin Tribble with a March 21, 2011 letter to the Board of Education opposing the No Labels, No Limits campaign to end identification of students as gifted and talented and in favor of the continued identification of and provision of services to academically gifted students in local (non-magnet) schools who need curriculum and programs above their grade level. Along with Curriculum Chair Ted Willard, Michelle helped Laurie Halverson prepared testimony in support of the letter at the March 28, 2011 BOE meeting. Michelle also testified at the March 28 meeting urging MCPS to challenge children of all ability levels by providing an appropriate range of curriculum offerings at all schools. The testimonies will be uploaded to the MCCPTA website.

The GCC received a request from the Gifted and Talented Association of Montgomery County (GTA) to co-sponsor its annual college admissions seminar on May 26. This is free to the public and is not GT-specific but geared toward providing general advice on preparing to apply to college. Michelle will propose a co-sponsorship at the March 31 BOD meeting.

High School Committee

Dave Lechner: dave@lechneronline.com

In order of items in 2010/2011 Work Plan -

1. Recognizing Issues: Compiling report for HS Presidents based on survey results.
2. Communications: -no new actions this month.
3. Summarize Email Historic Content - no action this month.
4. Verify that all MCPS PTSA High School Presidents are aware of and "on" the Electronic Mail list - Completed.
5. County-wide projects and programs - See below.

Specific Actions / Projects:

1. Running a contest for Safe-Prom night Project launched - Ongoing.
3 RESPONSES received. Entries being judged by 3 judge pane, including Joanne Carl of Mont. College Video Dept, Sgt Suzanne HARrell (SRO Coordinator), and Gail Wolf (MCPS Family Programs Coord).
2. HS Model United Nations event....Received VERY positive responses from teachers in support of an MCCPTA event - they suggested fall is a preferred time to host it however. Probably too late to do a good job on this in this year.
3. Parking Lot Safety - Writing up report.
4. Test Day Survey - Compiling results from survey results. (HS Principals, English Dept, and Social Studies Dept. heads.)
5. Joint Curriculum discussion event with the Curric. Committee...Planned for later this year.
6. Special Programs idea sharing - no action this month.
7. Shakespeare Video Contest or Festival Event - Sent out questions and description to all HS English Dept. heads....received only modest response. May still be able to set up some sort of contest this year - also potential for next year.
8. MCPS Policy IED (H.Schools). - Since NONE of the MCCPTA comments or suggestion were incorporated into the approved policy, considering a draft based on our committee inputs.
9. Relationship to the Booster club and After-Prom Committees - No action to date.
10. SAT/PSAT Test preparations - Compiling survey results. .
11. Share topics and speakers - no action to date.
12. PTSAs involvement in SIP - no actions to date.

Operating Budget Committee

Pam Moomau: Pammoomau@gmail.com

The Operating Budget Committee posted the following two messages for assistance in budget advocacy; the first to the BOD elist, the second to the Delegates:

Talking Points for Operating Budget Testimony

- Appreciation for former support for the schools and the opportunity to comment on the budget
 - Recognition of the difficult financial situation facing the economy
 - Support for school funding at a level consistent with our operating budget priorities (in the interests of time, you probably won't be able to list them, but could attach them to your testimony)
 - Support for the schools is necessary to maintain the quality of the school system
 - Support for the schools is the best investment in the County's future
 - The County Executive's recommended budget for MCPS should be the absolute floor, and we urge the Council to do better. The cuts that would be necessitated for MCPS under the spending affordability guidelines would devastate our schools and the quality of education for all MCPS students for years to come. These are cuts we simply cannot afford.
 - An example or two about how proposed cuts to the budget would affect your school community; personal stories can be very effective
 - Mention School Resource Officers and health room aides, which aren't in the MCPS budget, but have received support through separate DA resolutions
 - General support for the principle of maintenance of effort, and concern about the possibility of lost state funding due to failure to meet MOE
- In the end, concern about the uncertainty of state and other funding sources, and willingness to work on maximizing school funding resources

Understanding the Budget #2

In the public discussion of the proposed MCPS operating budget, many different dollar amounts have been cited that appear to prove or disprove contentions about how proposed County funding of MCPS compares to funding from previous years. Below is an attempt to sort out a few of these discussions. Some of this will be repetitive of previous bulletins, but is there to provide context.

Apples to Apples: what percent of the Montgomery County operating budget IS the MCPS budget? Funding for both the County and for MCPS comes from several sources: the County's own tax revenues, state aid, federal aid, private sector grants, and "enterprise funds." When comparing school funding to the rest of the County budget, some people compare total school funding (from all sources) to total County funding, while others compare school funding just from local tax revenues to total local tax revenues excluding debt service. By the "whole budget -to -whole budget" standard, under the County Executive's budget, MCPS would be 48.8% of the total. By the "local revenues to local revenues" standard, MCPS would be 57.3% of the total under the County Executive's budget. (more details below)

Maintenance of Effort. Which comparison is correct? Reasonable people can disagree. But this is where the Maintenance of Effort ("MOE") concept comes into play. Generally, funding from County sources amounts to around 70 percent of the school's budget, and the state's contribution is around 20 percent. Like many states, when the State of MD instituted its program of providing aid to local school districts, it included a "maintenance of effort" requirement, to prevent local school districts from using state funds to reduce their own funding of schools. This requirement is simply that the County's contribution of its own funds for schools be the same dollar amount per student in the current year that it was in the previous year. Thus, an MOE level of funding adjusts for changes in enrollment, but does not provide for changes in other costs, like inflation.

If a school district fails to meet the MOE level in a given year, the required funding per student for the next year reverts to the funding level from the previous year - to reduce the probability of a permanent downward re-set. **Montgomery County has failed for the past two years to provide an MOE level of funding for MCPS, which means that the amount of its own revenues the County is spending per student this year (fiscal year 2011) is less than what it spent last year (fiscal year 2010) or the year before that.** Thus, the MOE level for next year (fy 2012) must revert to the per student spending level from fy 2010. MCPS has calculated that the MOE level of funding for the fy 2012 budget is \$10,664 per student. This represents just the local tax contribution to education; it does not include funding from other sources.

The MOE level of funding for fy 2012 requires that the County provide \$82.2 million more of its own funds for education in fy 2012 than it did in fy 2011. Of this, about 46 million is required to accommodate increases in enrollment (of about 4300) from fy 2010, and about 36 million is to "catch up" funding per existing student to fy 2010 levels (remembering that this year's fy 2011 level did not make the MOE requirement).

Consequences of failure to meet MOE funding level. The way the state enforces its MOE requirement on local governments is it reduces state aid to school districts that do not meet MOE. Specifically, it reduces state aid by the amount of increase in Thornton money over the previous year. Thus, for MCPS, if the County fails to fund the MCPS budget at the MOE level, the state could reduce state aid by about \$22 million. Cuts to the MCPS budget would thus be magnified. For the past two years, MCPS has been able to get a waiver of this penalty. It's not clear whether they would be able to go to that well again.

What do the different proposed funding levels mean in terms of possible MCPS program cuts? The MOE level of funding as proposed by the Board of Education would provide for generally the same level of services (e.g., same class size standards, academic support teachers, maintenance staff, and other MCCPTA budget priority items) as in this year's budget; no cost of living increases for staff, but step increases and longevity pay; some cuts in central office staff and miscellaneous other savings like delaying bus replacements; and a catch-up contribution of about \$48 million of the required \$55 million to staff retirement benefits fund ("OPEB"). The County Executive's proposed budget is \$82.2 million less than what was proposed by the BOE. The County Council's proposed budget as provided for in their Spending Affordability Guidelines is \$123.7 million less than the County Executive's or almost \$206 million less than the BOE request.

The difference between the MOE level of funding requested by the school board and funding recommended by the County Executive and the County Council could be made up in part by some or all of the \$47 million in possible cuts that MCPS has published, see "Possible Budget Reductions - Revised" at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/>) as well as adjustments to the OPEB contribution (up to \$48 million) , and changes to employee compensation (such as \$28 million in steps and longevity pay), which are still under negotiation. There are drawbacks to all of these adjustments. The program cuts speak for themselves. Failure to make progress on the OPEB catch-up could affect the County's bond rating. Asking staff to forego another year of step increases and longevity pay or other pay cuts on top of three years without cost of living adjustments could affect retention, recruiting, and the long-term quality of the workforce.

More detail on different measures of the budget.

Size of the MCPS budget: The Board of Education submitted a request to the County for a total level of spending for MCPS for FY2012 of \$2.2057 billion in total funds from all sources (including state, federal, and other grants and enterprise funds). Excluding private grants and enterprise funds, the "tax supported amount" from all sources is \$2.069 billion, and the amount requested from the County's own, locally-generated revenues is \$1.497 billion.

Recommended funding from the County Executive: The County Executive's budget recommended that MCPS total funding (that is, including revenues from local taxes and fees, as well as state and federal funding, and enterprise funds) should be \$2.123 billion; of which \$1.987 billion is "tax-supported" from all levels of government, and \$1.415 billion would come from the County's own, locally generated revenues. Thus, the County Executive's recommended funding level for MCPS is \$82.2 million less than what MCPS requested. Because MCPS's request was structured to a "maintenance of effort" level of funding, this is the same as saying the budget is \$82.2 million less than the "maintenance of effort" level.

Apples to Apples: what percent of the County Budget IS the MCPS budget? This is one of those statistics that can be manipulated, depending on how one wants to frame an argument. The County Executive's budget for the County as a whole (including MCPS) includes \$4.347 billion from all sources; \$3.768 billion from tax supported revenues from all levels of government, and \$2.469 billion (excluding debt service) from local funding. Thus, the County Executive's recommended total budget for MCPS is 48.8% of the total County budget, and 57.3% of local, tax-supported revenues excluding debt service.

Recommended funding from the County Council's Spending Affordability Guidelines: When the County Council adopted its "Spending Affordability Guidelines," ("SAG") which are the best indication of the Council's current budget policy, they included \$1.863 billion for all tax-supported funding, which is \$123.7 million less than what the County Executive recommends, and \$205.9 mil less than what MCPS requested.

Parent Involvement Committee

Elisia George: ekjgsha@gmail.com

The MCCPTA Parent Involvement Committee held a meeting on March 9th. At this meeting we organized our very first Parent Involvement Workshop: "Welcoming and Engaging Parents." This very exciting workshop is scheduled for May 12th, 2011 in the Carver Auditorium 7-9 pm. This workshop is geared towards giving PTA/PTSA's a view of the cultures and the various barriers that keep them out of our schools events, and activities.

Our hope is that every PTA/PTSA will be represented to receive this wealth of information that will be made available to them. We look forward to a very successful workshop. Our next meeting is April 14th in Rm 50 at Carver.

Presidents and Principals Dinner Committee

Dale Ryan: dalejryan@yahoo.com

1) Invitation and RSVP design complete – Invitations to go out Around April 1, RSVP by May 4.
We will not be using EVITE or PayPal as originally planned.

2) This year seating will be assigned on a first come basis. If PTA member want to sit together, they will need to indicate this on the RSVP/payment. (PTAs should have a line item in their budget for this event already.)

3) Need BOD approval on cost \$65 per ticket & # 8230; PTA members, \$75 per ticket Friend of PTA (Laurie to bring to BOD on Thurs.) Sponsorship below \$5K.

4) Program participants-

Master of Ceremonies – Leon Harris (ABC7/WJLA-TV)

Induction – Chuck Saylor (National PTA Pres.)

Waiting on final by 4/1 for Guest Speaker acceptance. If Guest speaker declines backup plan is in place.

Rebecca to follow-up with Guest speaker and Dr. Weast.

Entertainment – 3 bands auditioned, plus have 2 DVDs in review. To be finalized by next meeting

5) Program layout –

If the entire BOD picture is needed, suggest picture be taken after the elections. Nomination committee to forward names of cluster coordinators/area VP as soon as announced, so program page can be staged.

6) Nominations for National and Md. Life memberships need to be submitted to the office by April 3. P&P committee will review nominations at the next meeting.

7) Reception –

Looking for 15 responsible juniors to man the doors at the event. (SSL provided)

Name tags will be on table alphabetically (last name), with table numbers.

If a person hasn't paid, they will not have a name tag, or table assigned.

Limited number of pay at door will be available.

- 8) Sponsorship –
Still looking for sponsorships, through April 26.

Next committee meeting Monday 4/11 at 6PM.

Safety & Health Committee

Donna Pfeiffer: donnafeiffer@gmail.com 301-370-3200
Susan Burkinshaw: susan.burkinshaw@verizon.net 301-758-6995

We continue to advocate county-wide to save the SRO Program.

The H&S meeting Tuesday 3/29 was very well attended with guest speakers Nadji Kirby from MoCo DOT's Safe Routes to Schools Program and Kathy Michels who presented information on natural turf fields versus artificial turf fields.

Following the lively discussion about artificial turf fields, we plan to bring in additional speakers to address the artificial turf vs. natural turf fields more in depth. Susan Burkinshaw has also scheduled a meeting with a representative of the Germantown Soccerplex (at the suggestion of Duke Beattie, MCPS) to discuss their experience with both turf and natural fields--she will report back to the committee.

On April 14, Susan Burkinshaw and Laurie Halverson are honored to attend, at the invitation of National PTA, an event sponsored by the the White House Office of Public Engagement in honor of education month. The focus is to highlight PTA efforts to improve school climate and awareness of bullying.

Look for announcements of our next meeting in April. We are still working on setting the date and speakers.