

# MCCPTA

## June, 2011 Committee Reports

### Cultural Arts Committee

Priscilla Peterson: [PrisFP@verizon.net](mailto:PrisFP@verizon.net)

The Cultural Arts Committee began the 2010-11 school year by holding a workshop at Blake High School on Sept. 25th, as part of the annual MCCPTA Fall Training event. Materials were provided for the participants about the upcoming MCPS Cultural Arts Showcases, procedures for hiring performers for their schools, advocating for bigger budgets for Cultural Arts, etc. We also had a "Q & A" session for Cultural Arts reps from county schools, some of them new to this job.

On October 4th, 5th, 11th and 15th the annual Cultural Arts Showcases were held at the Carver Educational Center. Performers who had auditioned and been approved by the Superintendent's Committee for Performances in MCPS were presented at the Showcases; each gave a 15 minute version of their longer performance for reps from the schools to observe and choose from in hiring for their schools. Priscilla Peterson (MCCPTA Chair of Cultural Arts), Randy Chin (former Chair), and another volunteer 'manned' the tables at the Showcases – distributing the daily schedules of performers, giving out the MCPS Performing Arts Catalogue, collecting information about each school's budget for Cultural Arts, taking sign-ups for the PTArts e-list, organizing and providing brochures from the performers, etc.

The MCPS Performing Arts Catalogue was provided online for anyone who did not attend the Showcases and receive a hard copy. On December 8, 2010, I also provided online the annual Cultural Arts Budget Survey, which is a way for Cultural Arts reps to see how much other schools are spending and perhaps help them advocate for more money for their own school's programming.

In addition, this year the MCCPTA-EPI Board arranged to have the Showcases videotaped so that they could be seen online as well. Because it was the first time this had ever been done, there were some glitches involved in the taping and editing, so the videos did not become available until February 2011. However, these videos will remain online for three years, and will be added to in future years. Information on how to access both the catalogue and the videos has been put on the PTArts e-list several times.

The PTArts e-list continues to be actively used and is a good way for the schools' Cultural Arts reps to communicate with each other about what performances they have particularly enjoyed; many participants use it to pose questions about performances they are considering hiring for their schools. I maintain and oversee the e-list and post notices of importance to all Cultural Arts reps. If anyone is interested in joining, all they have to do is send their Name, School, Position (Cultural Arts Chair, Teacher, etc.) and Email Address to: [PTArts-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:PTArts-subscribe@yahoo.com)

Recently I have shared online information about the dates for the upcoming performer auditions (to be held September 8th & 12th), and the **2012 Cultural Arts Showcases**, to be held **OCTOBER 3rd, 4th, 11th & 12th**. It has been heartening to see that as the current school year is coming to a close, many schools are already planning ahead for their Cultural Arts programming for next year and I have been answering numerous requests for information to help them prepare.

### Gifted and Talented Committee

Michelle Gluck: [gluck.michelle@yahoo.com](mailto:gluck.michelle@yahoo.com)

I would like to extend my thanks to the hundreds of MCPS parents who made their voices heard in support of appropriate curriculum options for gifted students during the 2010-11 school year. Due to both budget and political pressures, these are difficult times for gifted education advocates and I appreciate the passion and dedication of each and every parent who took the time to write, come to meetings, and offer their views. As we head into the coming school year with a new superintendent and more budget woes, your voices will continue to be of utmost importance.

Highlights of the Gifted Child Committee for 2010-11:

- **Revitalization and Expansion of the GCC Elists:** After a dormant year without a chair, we worked to publicize the committee and its mission and to increase the number of schools with GT Liaisons.
- **Fall GT Liaison Training:** We revived the fall training session for GT Liaisons, which had not been held for a few years. We hope to expand to multiple sessions addressing a greater breadth of topics next year.
- **Challenge Every Child campaign:** With the full and able support of Kristin Tribble and Laurie Halverson, we led a pushback against the MCEA/MCEF “No Labels No Limits” campaign, which we believe is a misguided effort to address the imperfections in the delivery of gifted education services by eliminating gifted education altogether in favor of one size fits all expectations for all students. We joined with the Gifted and Talented Association of Montgomery County to urge the BOE to Challenge Every Child by offering a continuum of curriculum options and services that recognizes and addresses the unique needs of every student..
- **Advocacy Before AEI:** We successfully pushed for resumption of the meetings of the AEI (MCPS Division of Accelerated and Enriched Instruction) Advisory Committee, which began in March. Nevertheless, the committee was reconstituted as a “Feedback Council” and its continuing purpose is unclear. Thus far, the meetings have reflected what appears to be AEI’s decreasing emphasis on serving gifted students in favor of deploying its limited resources for the benefit of all MCPS students. We will continue to urge AEI to recognize its unique role as the only MCPS division focused on the needs of students who need accelerated and/or advanced curriculum options.
- **Sponsorship of College Admissions Seminar:** We cosponsored, with GTA, a successful College Admissions Seminar that provided free advice on academic preparation, application tips, and financial aid options for college-bound MCPS students.

## Health/ Safety Committee

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Susan Burkinshaw: [susan.burkinshaw@verizon.net](mailto:susan.burkinshaw@verizon.net)

We have made progress on a number of issues. Some of the accomplishments of last year included:

- Creating a **new Safety & Health Committee e-list** with 100+ members. ANYONE is welcome to join, just email [DonnaPfeiffer@gmail.com](mailto:DonnaPfeiffer@gmail.com) and we'll get you registered. We share info, concerns and timely developments that affects the safety and security of our students & staff.

We encourage at least one person per school to sign up on this e-list so they can keep their school community in the loop.

- We stayed focused throughout the school year to save **the School Resource Officers (SROs)** program. Unfortunately, this program was back on the chopping block. The Safety & Health committee passed an emergency resolution with MCCPTA Delegates, showing unanimous support to save and restore this program to one officer for every high school with support in middle schools as needed. Safety & Health committee chairs; Donna Pfeiffer & Susan Burkinshaw advocacy efforts included; meeting individually with County leaders and various organizations to raise awareness about this valued community policing program. Thankfully, with Council leadership from Craig Rice and Board of Ed leadership from Mike Durso, the SRO program was not eliminated- but it is cut back to bare bone having just 6 SROs assigned to support 25 high schools. While the additional SRO program cuts are certainly a setback, at least the county has this program in place, with our hope and expectation that the County Executive, Chief of Police, Council members, Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education truly collaborate together to evaluate and developed a stronger SRO program next school year.
- Our Council was privileged to have been personally invited by National PTA to participate in **President Obama's Bullying Prevention Conference**. Laurie Halverson (VP Ed Issues) and Susan Burkinshaw participated in the conference. With their leadership, they will continue to share information on the topic of bullying as it becomes available. The consistent theme through all of this information about bullying is that everyone needs to be aware of bullying and its effects to prevent it, and we all need to be a part of the solution--parents, students, teachers, counselors, administrators, even our President!

- MCCPTA Safety & Health committee partnered with MCCPTA CIP committee by sponsoring two **athletic turf forums** to look at natural versus artificial turf. These forums were presented to show the pros and cons of both turfs while encouraging those interested to present their opinion to County Council during public comment period ending May 13, 2011.
- Additional speakers we hosted this year included:
  - Marla Caplon, **Director of Division of Food and Nutrition Service** for MCPS. She shared with us that MCPS school lunch menus exceed the USDA dietary requirements, how the menus are planned and tested.
  - Nadji Kirby- coordinator for **Safe Routes to School Program** (with Montgomery County's Department of Transportation). This program is an effort to use a variety of education, engineering, and enforcement strategies that help make routes safer for children to walk and bicycle to school.

We look forward to another productive school year!

## High School Committee

Dave Lechner: [dave@lechnersonline.com](mailto:dave@lechnersonline.com)

In order of items in 2010/2011 Work Plan -

1. Recognizing Issues: no new progress this month.
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 Completed. 3 HS participated, 2 won prizes.
2. HS Model United Nations event....Started planning for an MCCPTA ran event in Fall of 2012..
3. Parking Lot Safety - Draft report out for comments. Discussed with MCPS (Bruce Crispel)
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...No new actions.
6. Special Programs idea sharing - no action this month..
7. Shakespeare Video Contest or Festival Event - Planning or events in 2012.
8. MCPS Policy IED (H.Schools). - Discussed MCCPTA comments with Carol Blum, MCPS. She has matrix of responses that is being sent to me.
9. Relationship to the Booster club and After-Prom Committees - Started Email discussion - only 3 of 24 HS PTSA Presidents responded. Will restart this discussion in the Fall.
10. SAT/PSAT Test preparations - Compiling survey results. .
11. Share topics and speakers - Started EMail discussion - only a few respondents.
12. PTSAs involvement in SIP - no actions to date.

## Legislative Committee

Patrick Dunn: [patrickdunn65@yahoo.com](mailto:patrickdunn65@yahoo.com)

Rebecca Smondrowski co-organized the annual Annapolis Education Advocacy trip with MCEA to enable PTA members to speak with General Assembly representatives.

- Participated in MDPTA Legislative Committee teleconferences to follow status of bills before the General Assembly, provided input on legislative goals, and reported to MCCPTA on General Assembly activity. MDPTA encourages MCCPTA members to participate in PTA Action Network, an advocacy organizational tool that tracks participation to provide feedback to MDPTA and NPTA on organizing efforts.
- Forwarded information to MCCPTA BoD and Delegates from MDPTA VP for Legislation on MDPTA and NPTA projects and advocacy efforts including the advocacy.

- Added BoE, County Council, General Assembly, and Governor contact information and budget time lines (from MCCPTA Operating Budget Committee) to MCCPTA Legislative Committee web page.
- Explored limits of upgrading MCCPTA web site to accommodate site wide changes.

## Membership Committee

Janette Gilman: [janettegilman@verizon.net](mailto:janettegilman@verizon.net)

The MCCPTA Membership Committee was pleased to have the MCCPTA membership awards announced at the Presidents-Principals Dinner on May 18, 2011. Dozens of PTA/PTSAs were recognized for their success in growing or sustaining membership. MCCPTA membership awards were given for a) percentage growth in local PTAs b) absolute numbers—the top three largest—PTA/PTSA by category of school (elementary, middle, high, or special school); and c) greatest parent involvement calculated by the ratio of the total number of members to students. Certificates acknowledging these successes will be prepared and ponied to winning units over the next weeks.

Membership numbers on record at Maryland PTA and MCCPTA as of March 31, 2011 were used to calculate the awards; discrepancies were found between the two sets of numbers and an effort was made (via email) to reconcile the data. Assuming MCCPTA determines that these awards should be continued next year, the committee would suggest working to clarify language so that local units will be motivated to ensure that they remit dues to both state and MCCPTA for the same number of members by the March 31 date. The committee was disappointed that MD PTA was unable to provide statewide membership data prior to our awards ceremony; we had hoped to be able to use that data to let our locals know how they compared to other PTA/PTSAs throughout the state.

The Membership Committee greatly appreciated the efforts of our locals that led to a total of 47,010 members, per current MD PTA records. Unfortunately, that number represents a loss of almost 8 percent of total members from the previous year. The committee would make three recommendations moving forward:

- 1) AVPs and Cluster Coordinators immediately be tasked with working with PTA/PTSAs that had significant declines in membership this year to reverse the trend and help grow these local units;
- 2) PTA/PTSAs with strong membership growth be encouraged to share the techniques and practices they used—both within their clusters and with the broader MCCPTA community—so that best practices can be discerned and copied by other locals; and
- 3) Membership training and workshops continue to be conducted at Spring and Fall MCCPTA training and at various locations throughout the county over the summer months with a continued emphasis on addressing the needs and values of each local school community vis-a-vis PTA/PTSA membership. While membership growth happens all year, the summer and early Fall remain the primary “season” for recruiting PTA/PTSA members and our local leaders need to be ready to grow membership when parents, staff, students, and communities are in the “Back-to-School” spirit!

The Membership Committee wishes to acknowledge the support of the MCCPTA Executive Committee, particularly MCCPTA President Kristin Tribble and MCCPTA Vice President for Programs DeBora King, as well as Pam Loebach, for their advice and assistance with the committee’s work this year.

## Operating Budget Committee

Pam Moomau: [pammoomau@gmail.com](mailto:pammoomau@gmail.com)

The 2010-2011 school year was particularly challenging for the operating budget advocacy. Growth in Montgomery County tax receipts continues to fall short of growth in MCPS enrollment, creating an ongoing squeeze on County funding. Federal aid that helped the County bridge that gap for the fiscal year 2010 and 2011 budget was reduced considerably for fiscal year 2012. The amount of aid from the State of Maryland was uncertain until the end of the legislative session. The Montgomery County Council took an aggressive stance toward funding MCPS, announcing at the beginning of the school year that it would not be able to fund a Maintenance of Effort budget, and adopting spending affordability guidelines that were more than \$200 million below an MOE budget.

The task of the Operating Budget Committee is to help PTA members understand the MCPS budget and the prospects for school funding, to help communicate the MCCPTA position on the budget to decision makers, and to help PTAs organize budget advocacy.

Specific tasks completed this year:

\*adoption of an MCCPTA Operating Budget Priorities Resolution and Operating Budget Compact

- \*numerous budget committee meetings with MCPS officials and employee unions
- \*numerous budget updates at DA meetings, BOD meetings, and postings to the Elists
- \* Operating Budget Forum with Board of Education and County Council members on January 3, 2010
- \*Operating Budget workshop for cluster coordinators and area vice presidents
- \*MCCPTA Operating Budget Testimony before the Board of Education
- \*MCCPTA Operating Budget Testimony before the County Council

### **Budget results:**

The County Council adopted a budget that was \$125 million below the maintenance of effort level of funding requested by the Board of Education. This shortfall is tentatively scheduled to be accomplished by

- \*second year of foregone step increases for school employees
- \*additional \$21 million reduction in employee benefits
- \* reduction in contributions to OPEB (retiree health benefit fund)
- \*approximately \$25 million in program cuts (listed below as in the BOE agenda, beginning with MCCPTA priorities; some changes were made on May 23 for which I don't have specifics)

- \*no cuts to general education classroom teacher size guidelines or building services; [May 23 reduction of 20 reserve teachers, which could have a small impact on class size]
- \*\$0.495 million reduction in the Division of Maintenance ( -4 positions eliminating a Maintenance Apprenticeship program, and reduced supplies)
- \*\$1 million in cuts for ES paraeducators (eliminate hours for a university partnership), lunch hour aids (- 6 positions), and parent community coordinators (-2.2 positions)
- \*\$1.9 million cut in academic intervention teachers (-14.0 positions) [partially restored May 23]
- \*\$1 million cut for special ed teachers in high school learning centers, (-6.6 positions related to phaseout of the secondary learning centers; -11.25 positions resulting in increased class sizes in learning centers at Kennedy, Walter Johnson, and Watkins Mill HS)
- \*\$1 million cuts in other special ed programs (-5.9 positions in preschool paraeducators; -10 positions in various other special ed programs) [partially restored May 23]
- \*\$0.6 million reduction of 9.1 ESOL teachers, increasing ESOL student/teacher levels by one student at MS and HS levels
- \*\$0.5 million in reading recovery programs (-8.0 positions)
- \*[FULLY RESTORED MAY 23] \$0.2 million reduction in security assistants (-2.0 positions in MS, and -2.0 positions in HS)

Other items of interest:

- \*\$3.7 million cut in staff development teachers (-51.2 positions; ES may substitute reduction in other non-classroom positions)
- \*\$4.9 million cut in central offices (-34.1 positions spread across the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, Office of Special Ed and Student Services, Office of Chief Operating Officer [which includes maintenance positions listed above], Office of Chief Technology Officer, Office of Shared Accountability, Office of Deputy Supt of Schools and Communications, and Office of Human Resources and Development)
- \*\$1.4 million cut in media assistants (-34.375 positions, mostly in the form of reducing hours)
- \*\$0.8 million reduction in Counselors (-5.0 positions in ES, and -4.0 positions in MS/HS)
- \*\$0.3 million reduction in instrumental music (-4.0 positions in ES) [2 positions restored May 23]
- \*\$0.7 million reduction in athletics, mostly junior varsity

## **Parent Involvement Committee**

Elisia George: [ekigsha@gmail.com](mailto:ekigsha@gmail.com)

MCCPTA Parent Involvement Committee ended the year with the presentation of their first workshop, "Rolling Out the Red Carpet for Multicultural Families. " This was held on May 12th 2011, in the Carver Auditorium. Approximately 65 parents and Community members attended the event.

Our committee consisted of 8 parents (6 committed parents) collaborated with Division of Family and Community Partnerships to make this happen. This workshop was presented in Panel format, consisting of 3 Principals and 6 parents. Feedback received from participants, was very encouraging and insightful. Overall it was very successful. Our desire is to make this an annual event for this committee, per request from many participants.

## **Special Education Committee**

Jeanne Taylor: [frtjmt@aol.com](mailto:frtjmt@aol.com)

Our twenty-third annual recognition ceremony was a great success.

On Monday, May 9, 2011 we honored 47 individuals and groups that have had a positive impact on students who receive special education services in MCPS. Students, Parents, Programs and Educators were honored. Phil Andrews, Education Committee Member, MC Council and Chris Barclay, President, MC Board of Education, are some of the people who provided opening remarks. "Crash", a band made up of high school and middle school students played for us and the Rock Terrace Bistro provide delicious light refreshments. We received many compliments, including some from the press, the audience, the participants, and BOE members. All of the Board members were in attendance as well as MCPS and MCCPTA VIPs.

- \*We held two meetings during the school year (one was canceled due to illness)
- \*We shared information and strategies with new members
- \*We made updates to our listserv and contact spreadsheet
- \*We sat in on MCPS personnel interviews
- \*We advocated on behalf of specific families who were having issues with MCPS
- \*We advocated in general by sharing information on various lists
- \*We held our twenty-third recognition ceremony with few glitches

We will be represented at the MCPS Special Education Staffing Plan meeting scheduled for this Thursday, June 2.

## **Student Learning Services (SSL) Committee**

Deb Lang: [debolang@yahoo.com](mailto:debolang@yahoo.com)

SSL Liaisons have been busy making sure that their students all know about the huge number of wonderful opportunities to volunteer within their communities, and are now busy making sure that there are no students who haven't met their 75 hours graduation requirement.

Two months ago, the SSL committee met with representatives of MCPS and the Montgomery County Volunteer Office to confirm our mutual participation in promoting Community Service Week next year being held in honor of Montgomery County's 25th Anniversary of Community Service Day. The goal of Community Service Day is to engage new people in service and recognize those who are already serving as well as meet needs in our community. Our goal next year is to engage 25,000 volunteers throughout the week! The week will kick off at the World of Montgomery Festival in Wheaton and conclude with a large celebration of service in Downtown Silver Spring. Throughout the week there will be service projects and volunteer fairs to engage volunteers. our committee will endeavor to have each local PTA ask its members to make the 25 hour Pledge that will be a part of this huge celebration of service to our community. Watch for further details!