



August 15, 2007

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Greetings,

Welcome to 2007-08! I hope that you have all had the chance to enjoy time with your families this summer and that you have also spent some time working with your fellow Board members to plan for the upcoming PTA year. You should have reserved space for your fall PTA functions by now—if not, please fill out the use of schools paperwork immediately.

Welcome back picnics, open houses, and back to school nights are great opportunities to recruit PTA members. Make sure you have a table staffed by friendly, outgoing people at all of these events! Our membership chair has compiled a number of membership tips which are available on our website with more to come.

Each PTA should have received the National PTA welcome kit; these were sent to schools in July and August. These kits contain handbooks and useful information. The handbooks are also available to download on the National PTA website, pta.org. The MCCPTA guidebooks were distributed at our spring training and ponied to schools in June. Each PTA received guidebooks for president, treasurer, secretary, delegates, bylaws, newsletter, human relations, and others. If you hold any of these positions and you have not received your guidebook, ask the local president to distribute them. The books are also available on our web site. I recommend that officers read each others' handbooks so you all have a general idea of the duties of each officer.

MCCPTA has been busy this summer; the officers visited all six areas of the county and met with about 200 PTA leaders. Thanks to all of you who came out to meet with us on many a steamy summer night. Look for a synopsis of these meetings in the September Presidents Letter.

Our fall training will take place on September 29th, from 9am to 2pm. Each PTA will receive a packet of information on this training by the first week of September. We will offer the same sessions which were included in the spring training plus additional topics. There will be three sessions and lunch. All PTA leaders—gray haired or freshly minted—will benefit from attending this training. If you think you don't have anything else to learn about PTA, then come to share your wisdom! Please ask your fellow Board members to mark the date and to plan on attending that day.

Our first delegate assembly will be held on Tuesday, September 25, at 7:30pm in the Carver auditorium (BOE Building). We have some business to conduct and then we will have a committee fair so that you can meet the MCCPTA committee chairs and talk with them about the work of their committees. Starting in October, we have programs planned from 7:00-7:55pm immediately before the Delegate Assembly which will start at 8:00pm. These programs are designed to give you information to take back to your local PTAs. Topics for this year (suggested by locals at the area meetings) are: gangs, transportation,

inclusion, school lunches, counseling, and School Improvement Plans. Over the course of the year, our committees host presentations on additional topics. These will be announced over our bulletin list serve, on our web site, and in the delegates' packets. Every PTA has three voting members of our delegate assembly—their two delegates and their president. All MCCPTA Board of Directors members also have a vote at the DA. Please sign in every time you attend the assemblies and make sure that one of you picks up your PTA's packet and then distributes the materials in the packet to the appropriate persons. If no one is able to attend the delegate assembly, your packet will be ponied to your school. The programs before the DA are taped by ITV and are usually aired 4-6 times after each DA. We will send out the program air dates/times so that you can provide that information to your local PTA members.

MCCPTA maintains several list serves. Local PTA presidents are automatically added to the presidents list. You must sign up for Bulletin and Delegates. Bulletin is an announcement only list which will distribute information regarding MCCPTA, MCPS, and Community events. All MCCPTA meetings will be announced on Bulletin. Membership on Bulletin is open to all PTA members. Delegates is a discussion list and all voting members of the DA can sign up to be on this list. See the Communications Committee report or our web site for information on how to sign up for these lists. Several MCCPTA committees also maintain list serves for their members.

If you have not provided your Blue Book information to our office, please do so right away. The Blue Book is the MCCPTA directory. It contains names and contact info for all our Board members and for all local Schools, presidents, treasurers, and delegates. Each PTA will receive 6 copies of this directory in October. MCCPTA strongly urges local PTAs to include a directory disclaimer in their own PTA directories which

clearly states that the information contained in the directory is not to be used for solicitations, advertising or mass mailings. Suggested wording is available on our website. Some PTAs also choose to copyright their directory each year. This can be done online for a nominal fee.

Cluster coordinators should be setting up their meeting schedule for the 07-08 school year. Presidents or their representatives should attend the cluster meetings to make contacts with other PTAs in your cluster and to have the opportunity to trade notes and discuss issues of concern. We strongly urge cluster coordinators to hold monthly meetings with their local PTAs and to ask their Community Superintendents to attend. These cluster meetings are a great way to get to know the Community Superintendents and a way to bring issues to their attention before they become big problems. Area vice presidents and cluster coordinators should be meeting with their Community Superintendents and Directors to discuss the upcoming year and to give them the schedule of cluster meetings.

Walk your children to school day will be held on October 2, 2007. The focus of this event is pedestrian safety but you could also tie it to healthy habits. We urge you to publicize this day and to plan an activity at your school. One of the purposes of this event is to highlight any impediments to pedestrian safety either on your school grounds or along the route to school and to compile a list of impediments to guide your advocacy efforts.

See you in September!

Jane

SAVE THE DATE:
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2007
9AM – 2PM
MCCPTA FALL TRAINING

MCCPTA Committee Updates – August 2007

(Please note: Additional Committee updates are shared electronically on the MCCPTA Bulletin)

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Communications Committee Report

Patti Twigg, Committee Chair and Listservs Moderator, LPTwigg@erols.com

This committee is newly formed in order to consolidate related committees. It consists of the following subcommittees:

- Listservs
- Website
- Spotlight
- Cable TV
- Public Relations

1) Website:

Website Coordinators: Sharon Goodall, sharon.goodall@gmail.com Lin-Lin Mao, linlinmao@earthlink.net

We would like to encourage all of you to please visit the MCCPTA website at either of these URLs:

www.mccpta.net or www.mccpta.com

All the latest information is posted there. In addition, there is an archive of past minutes, resolutions and MCCPTA Presidents letters. Check out the calendar, the committee pages, and the numerous resources for PTAs, including essential information for your treasurers!

Before the new school year begins the Website Coordinators have been working on updating the MCCPTA website with new information such as the schedule of 2007-2008 MCCPTA events and meetings, updating the committee pages, and adding names of new officers, cluster coordinators, and committee and workgroup chairs.

If you have additional information for the MCCPTA website or suggestions for how to better organize or improve the website, please send an email to webmaster@mccpta.com If you or someone you know has graphic design skills and would like to volunteer to work on the website subcommittee, please contact us.

2) Listservs:

Listservs Moderator: Patti Twigg LPTwigg@erols.com

While you are visiting the MCCPTA website, linger a moment on the Listservs Subcommittee page, and read about the different listservs provided by MCCPTA to help you stay informed. Information on subscribing and using the lists is included on the page.

As of August 6, 2007 membership on the various lists is as follows:

Listserv	# subscribed
MCCPTA Board	92
MCCPTA Bulletin	512
MCCPTA Delegates	409
MCCPTA Presidents	285

During the summer, the documents contained on the Listservs website page were updated to reflect changes in moderators for the various groups due to changes in MCCPTA leadership, and other small housekeeping items. Also reflected were changes in the structural organization of this committee.

3) Spotlight:

“Spotlight” Reminder: If you have news and/or achievements from your school or PTA that should be highlighted in the “Spotlight” corner of the MCCPTA homepage, please notify MCCPTA (via email to office@mccpta.com and/or webmaster@mccpta.com).

Gifted Child Committee

Holly Gaut, Committee Chair, hollygaut@hotmail.com

Our committee has planned four meetings with the assistance of the Office of Accelerated and Enriched Instruction. All meetings are geared toward GT Liaisons, however all interested persons are invited to attend:

- **October 24th - GT Liaison Fall Training Session** - General GT information regarding acceleration/enrichment opportunities within MCPS. Question and Answer period regarding Gifted Education. Information packets will be provided to all GT Liaisons to take back to their schools.
- **November 29th - Exploring the Writing Curriculum: How MCPS Prepares Students to be Exceptional Writers** – Come and learn the components of the writing curriculum. Are there extensions for advanced writers? What are the expectations regarding writing instruction for students in ES, MS and HS? Does the MCPS curriculum specify expectations regarding length of compositions at different grade levels? Are BCR’s part of the writing curriculum?
- **January 24th - Beyond the GT Label: How Teachers Identify Students Who Need Above Grade Level Instruction** - How do teachers determine a students' need for above grade level programming? What assessments are used in reading? In Math? In other subjects? What is MAP-R? What do the assessment scores mean? When is it appropriate to skip grades in order to meet a student’s academic needs? Is there ever a point at which acceleration is a bad thing for students?
- **April 24th - Differentiating Instruction: Best Practices in Grouping Strategies & Teacher Preparation** - What does differentiated instruction look like in Reading, Science and Social Studies at each school level? What are grouping strategies MCPS uses in ES and MS? What are the pros and cons of each? Does research support a particular strategy for gifted students? What are some practical strategies teachers can use for students who learn at different rates or bring prior knowledge to the classroom? How are teachers prepared/trained by MCPS to address the needs of gifted students and advanced learners? Is any training required? Does MCPS maintain information on what training each teacher has received?

The Gifted Child Committee has developed a MCCPTA listserv for use by GT Liaisons to inform them of upcoming events or meetings, resources available and other items of interest. To join, PTA GT Liaisons, (PTA GT Contacts) can go directly to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MCCPTAGiftedChildCommittee/> or they may send an email to hollygaut@hotmail.com with a request to join.

This year MCPS is working to revise policy IOA Gifted and Talented Education. Members of the Gifted Child Committee are serving as members of the Accelerated and Enriched Instruction (AEI) Advisory Committee to provide feedback regarding changes to the policy. We will be working to provide periodic updates and information as well as gathering feedback from our local PTAs before any changes are recommended.

Safety Committee Update

Pam Moomau, Committee Chair, Pammoomau@comcast.net

Support a safe and secure environment for your kids - form a safety committee and/or appoint an MCCPTA Safety Committee liaison for your local PT(S)A!

Do you have concerns about traffic, pedestrian, or bus safety around your school? Are you worried about your school building security? Are there problems with bullying, student discipline, gangs or other student violence - in the school or on the playground? Have you noticed mold and other hazards to indoor air quality around your school? Are you up to date on issues affecting teen driving safety, and drug and alcohol abuse prevention? The MCCPTA safety committee works to gather and disseminate information about these issues to all MCPS parents. We need the help of each local PTA to keep us informed about the issues that your schools are facing, and to help us provide information about parent resources, MCPS policies, and advocacy steps at the local level. Please designate at least one person in your PTA to keep track of these issues - if you have a lot of them, a committee would be better. Watch for notices of MCCPTA Safety Committee meetings - we will try to schedule one each quarter- and check out the MCCPTA website under Committees/Safety for information.

Watch for support for building security in the MCPS Capital Improvement Program.

Last year, the Delegates' Assembly approved a Safety Committee resolution calling for more careful assessment of school building security by MCPS, and for resources to be allocated toward security where the assessments warrant. The new MCPS Master Plan for the FY 2008-13 Capital Improvement Program includes funds to install or upgrade security cameras in middle and high schools, and to improve the ability of elementary schools to monitor their main entrances. Remember to mention support for these initiatives in your capital budget advocacy.

A new School Safety Report is under development by MCPS.

Responding to a requirement by the County Council Office of Legislative Oversight, MCPS has been developing a template to provide information about school security for each school community. The current plan is to develop a one-page summary of statistics about suspensions, serious incident reports, safety-related climate survey responses, and available programs and resources for each school in MCPS. The format is modeled after *Schools at a Glance*, and it looks like a promising leap forward in providing parents with information about safety in their schools. MCPS plans to begin gathering input from "stakeholder groups," including parents. We will keep you informed as the process continues. They are targeting summer of 2008 for the publication of the first report.

Please email me at Pammoomau@comcast.net or call me at 301-530-9691 with any questions, suggestions, or other commentary on school safety.

Fall Training—All PTA members welcome

*Saturday, September 29, 2007
9:00am-2:00pm*

The following sessions will be offered along—look for more info at the beginning of September

Presidents, Treasurers, Secretaries, Delegates, Middle School President/MS Issues, High School Presidents/HS Issues, Advocacy, Newsletter Editors, Membership recruitment, Membership OMDR (online membership dues reporting), Cluster Coordinator/AVP, Emerging leaders, How to run and Effective Meeting, Painless Fundraising, School Improvement Plans (SIPs), Reflections, Facilities/CIP, Cultural Arts, Outreach, Bylaws, and Volunteer Programs.

MCCPTA Best Practices and Membership Recruitment Ideas

Ideas from Middle School PTSA President:

- Include a membership form in the August mailer
- Translate form into Spanish on the reverse side
- Free school directory included with Membership (Fee charged would include dues and printing costs. Student and staff fee \$5.00, parent fee \$9.00)
- Membership includes free admission to the fall dance (therefore it pays for itself and they have their own Directory!)
- Staff Membership forms in staff mailboxes on their first day back.
- Manned Membership Table at Back to School Night (BTSN) to join and p/o directories
- Forms in school office
- President encourages membership when addressing staff at August breakfast
- President encourages membership at BTSN
- Two seasoned Membership Co-Chairs

Delegate from an ES and MS:

- Use good PR skills. Individually talk to parents and ask them to join. Parents will join when directly suggested or if there's a cause they see it will directly impact.
- Having forms available at every turn is also important – sent in backpacks, summer mailings, at back to school night, summer parent meetings.

MS Membership co-chair:

- At one time or another we have given incentives to classes with the most sign ups.

Cluster Coordinator ideas:

- Keep a table with the president and other key members at the front door as people walk into Back to School Night.
- It seems flyers don't always reach everyone – so much comes into the backpacks the first couple of weeks and it's overwhelming. So, talking to parents at pick up and drop off or other ways that are more personal will probably help even more.
- At kindergarten orientation in the spring, have PTA reps available to talk to new families and have them complete a form to consent to share phone and address information. The information can be shared with kindergarten parents before the directory comes out – great for early birthday parties and play dates. This is a great way to reach out to new families – they immediately appreciate and can see the benefits of the PTA.

M.S.P.T.S.A. President:

- We have given student directory to anyone who pays their membership dues. This has been especially helpful in recruiting student members of the PTSA.
- We actively recruit the parents at Back To School Open Houses and BTSN as well as in our summer packet.

- We also raffle off small prizes for the teachers, each one that joins the PTSA has a chance at a small gift.

Elementary School ideas:

- On back to school night we have a checklist of things to do before leaving for the night. On the list is sign up for the PTA! It has added a few people to membership but mainly it gets people to sign up on one night with less begging.

Cluster Coordinator ideas:

- One successful membership suggestion I have is to offer teachers/staff a discounted price the first 2 weeks of the school year. This REALLY helps light the fire under the teachers and gets them to sign up early in the school year.

From Other Local Sources:

- Hang a poster in staff lounge with name and/or picture of each staff member who joined thanking them.
- Place treats in mailboxes for staff that joined (beginning of year and/or holiday time.)
- Print names in newsletter for all who joined.
- Send membership forms home to parents who have not joined with their name on the form.
- Have parents stand at BTSN if they have:
 1. donated time to the school
 2. helped with a school function
 3. volunteered in the classroom, etc.
 4. and then finally, if they have joined the PTA.
- Request that the principal ask parents to join the PTA at BTSN.
- Request that the principal ask staff to join the PTA at staff meeting.
- Give a Nano to the 500th person who joins PTA.
- Offer a giveaway such as a balloon, sticker or bookmark at open house for PTA members. Those with children asking if they can get one can sign up for membership right then and there.

If you have other ideas, or questions, please contact:

Susan Stavenhagen
MCCPTA Membership Chair
s.stavenbury@comcast.net

PRESIDENT'S LETTER
MCCPTA
2096 Gaither Road
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Pony Mailing

AUGUST 2007

MCCPTA Calendar 2007-2008

**Unless otherwise specified all meetings take place at the
Carver Educational Services Center (850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850).**

August	2	7:30	BOD's Meeting
September	6	7:30	BOD's Meeting
	25	7:30	Delegate Assembly
	27		Cultural Arts Showcase
	29	9am – 2:00pm	MCCPTA Fall Training
October	4	7:30	BOD's Meeting
	1, 4, 11		Cultural Arts Showcase
	23	7:00 8:00	Program: Gangs Delegate Assembly