

# ***The Important Role of MCCPTA Cluster Coordinators and Area Vice Presidents***

## **Cluster Coordinators**

### Expectations and duties:

- Core duty: Monitor and coordinate the interests, concerns and actions of the PTAs of a high school and its feeder schools, and serve as a liaison to MCCPTA and MCPS. Cluster Coordinators are expected to work as problem solvers, addressing problems and concerns of local PTAs to minimize the chance that they reach crisis proportions and do damage to the unit.
- Pay attention for problematic issues within local PT(S)As and make sure the board and general membership know that you are a resource. Intervene when needed. Consult AVP, MCCPTA President, and MCCPTA VP-Administration for advice and to keep them informed.
- After election in the spring- Make sure local PTA leaders and school principals in the cluster know who you are and your role. Collect names of PTA presidents, MCCPTA delegates, school cluster reps, treasurers. *Suggestion- create cluster distribution lists.*
- Organize periodic meetings with the representatives of cluster PTAs; as a guideline, two annual meetings with cluster principals and PTA leaders should be a minimum goal. Many clusters have up to five meetings. Meetings may have a specific goal or may allow idea exchange.
- Determine what form and frequency of communication works for your cluster. Encourage PTAs to share county PTA information with members. Communication must be timely. Establish a process with a back-up plan.
- Optional, but may be important for some schools or clusters-
  - Attend PT(S)A executive board and general membership meetings within the cluster with local PT(S)A leadership, meet with principals in the cluster
  - Engage with the MCPS Director of Learning, Achievement, and Administration for your schools
  - Attend cluster principals meetings, when allowed
  - Engage directly with the Board of Education on cluster-specific topics (school sites, school boundaries, school names, additions, facility modernization, educational programming, school leadership, etc.) Community members (involved or not in the PTAs) may go to the Board outside of the PTA structure, so its important to have dialog with elected and other decisionmakers
- Work with PTA presidents to make sure they are in good standing with MD PTA requirements (fulfill all Standards of Continuing Affiliation; SoCA). When needed, help to establish PTA of newly opened schools in collaboration with MD PTA and MCCPTA.
- Testify at Board of Education and County Council budget hearings (Operating and CIP)
  - November Capital Improvement Program (Facilities and Boundaries) testimony to Board of Education
  - January- Operating Budget testimony to Board of education
  - Approx mid Feb- County Council Capital Budget Hearing
  - Approx mid April- County Council Operating Budget Hearing
- Attend and represent your cluster at MCCPTA meetings. Cluster Coordinators are members of the MCCPTA Board of Directors (one vote per cluster) and are part of the Delegates Assembly (general membership; voting body) of MCCPTA.
  - BOD meeting- Generally first Thursday of the month
  - DA meeting- Generally fourth Tuesday of the month
  - Be familiar with information shared prior to the meeting
  - Submit monthly cluster reports to Board of Directors
- Send each PTA their relevant SoCA compliance information. Assist noncompliant PTAs

- Encourage PT(S)A leaders to take advantage of training opportunities and MCCPTA programs and workshops throughout the year
- Organize Cluster-Board of Education meetings, if your cluster is scheduled for the meeting during the school year (every four years). MCCPTA will provide guidance.
  - Work with BOE staff on agenda,
  - Organize with local PTAs on format, questions, and logistics
  - Follow-up with BOE on remaining questions from community
- Organize and encourage cluster interactions with elected officials
- Attend legislative events, including MCCPTA-sponsored events and the annual MD PTA Night in Annapolis
- Make sure PT(S)As are aware of and follow the appropriate nominating committee and election process
- Annually, by March 15, submit to the MCCPTA Nominating Committee the names of any persons approved by the cluster for the position of Cluster Coordinator for the next school year
- Be familiar with PTA policies and procedures
- Be familiar with MCPS policies and procedures, which are available in each school and usually on the MCPS web site. Become familiar with the organization and functions of MCPS.

**Sample list of Cluster Meeting Topics (Adapted from Walter Johnson CC Handbook)**

The topics may change, based on priorities in the cluster, MCCPTA, and MCPS

MEETING NO.	MONTH	PURPOSE
1	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Set cluster CIP priorities</li> <li>• Review MCCPTA CIP position paper</li> <li>• Gather information for CIP testimony for BoE</li> <li>• Representatives report issues and activities of interest to the cluster</li> </ul>
2	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set cluster Operating Budget priorities</li> <li>• Review MCCPTA Operating Budget position paper</li> <li>• Gather information for Operating Budget testimony for BoE</li> <li>• Representatives report issues and activities of interest to the cluster</li> </ul>
3	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review cluster CIP priorities</li> <li>• Gather information for CIP testimony to County Council (CC)</li> <li>• Elect Cluster Coordinators for next school year</li> <li>• Representatives report issues and activities of interest to the cluster</li> </ul>
4	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review cluster Operating Budget priorities</li> <li>• Gather information for Operating Budget testimony to CC</li> <li>• Representatives report issues and activities of interest to the cluster</li> </ul>
5	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather inputs from each school in CIP needs (MCPS provides templates in April)</li> <li>• Representatives report issues and activities of interest to the cluster</li> <li>• Introduce newly elected Cluster Coordinators to the members</li> </ul>

### **MCCPTA Area Vice Presidents (AVPs)**

- The Area Vice Presidents work with MCCPTA Cluster Coordinators to support local PTAs, to keep MCCPTA informed of local activities and issues, and to seek active involvement from local PTAs in the Montgomery County Council of PTAs.
- **Essential: Schedule summer meetings for clusters in their area (MCCPTA mtg and MCPS mtg)**
- **Essential: Provide the VP of Admin the name of the area rep on the Nominating Committee (September or October)**
- Actively monitor the Standards of Continuing Affiliation (SoCA) chart monthly and communicate with your cluster coordinators to ensure they are working with your schools to get these requirements met
- Ensure that clusters distribute the information they receive on MCCPTA and countywide issues and events, including hearings, area meetings, and informational programs
- Be the arbiter for issues in your locals that neither the local PT(S)A or the cluster coordinator(s) can resolve
- Advocate for attendance and participation at MCCPTA-sponsored and Maryland PTA-sponsored events and programs, from advocacy opportunities, to training, to informational programming

### **Cluster Representatives**

- Some local PTAs have a position for a Cluster Representative and include this position as part of their PTA board to enable this person to stay well informed on important PTA and school matters and be a part of the decision making process.
- In some PTAs, the MCCPTA Delegate fills this role. The rationale for having both roles is to reduce meeting and responsibility burden.
- As the liaisons for local PTAs, cluster reps communicate the needs of their school and issues or concerns of their school community to their Cluster Coordinator.
- The cluster rep works with the principal and PTA President of the school to collect information on Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Operating Budget Issues. It is the role of the cluster rep to share this information with the Cluster Coordinator.
- It is also the role of the cluster rep to write letters of testimony on behalf of their school and submit to the Cluster Coordinator.
- Cluster reps participate in cluster meetings, to share and discuss concerns that affect schools within the cluster. To prepare for the cluster meetings, the cluster reps may lead discussions at their local PTA meetings. Following the cluster meetings, the cluster rep reports back to the local PTA.