

The logo for MCCPTA is displayed in white, bold, italicized capital letters on a dark blue rectangular background. The letters 'M', 'C', 'C', 'P', 'T', and 'A' are all in the same font style, with a registered trademark symbol (®) at the end of the 'A'.

MCCPTA

everychild.onevoice.

**Montgomery County Council of
Parent Teacher Associations**

**Local PTA
PRESIDENT'S
GUIDEBOOK**

Revised: June 2015

12900 Middlebrook Road, 3rd Floor
Germantown, MD 20874

Telephone: 301-208-0111 Fax: 301-208-2003

Email: office@mccpta.com

Website: www.mccpta.org

MCCPTA Office Hours

9:00 am - 2:00 p.m. Monday – Thursday (School Year)

10 am - 12 pm Tuesday and Thursday (Summer)

THE PURPOSES OF PTA

The Purposes of MCCPTA, and those of the National PTA, Maryland PTA, and local PTAs are:

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship.
- To raise the standards of home life.
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.
- To develop between educators and the general public such united effort as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

THE MISSION OF PTA

To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Useful Contacts

MCCPTA	www.mccpta.org
MCCPTA Office	301-208-0111
MCCPTA Office (FAX)	301-208-2003
Maryland PTA	www.mdpta.org
Maryland PTA (Glen Burnie)	1-800-707-7972 410-760-6221
Maryland PTA (Glen Burnie) (FAX)	410-760-6344
National PTA	www.pta.org

MCCPTA President's Guidebook
Table of Contents

MCCPTA: PTA in Montgomery County 2

Expectations and Responsibilities of Local PTA Presidents 3

MCCPTA and Your PTA..... 3

MCCPTA Procedures for Resolutions before the Delegates Assembly 4

Presidential Pointers..... 5

PT(S)A Executive Committee 6

The PTA Board of Directors 6

PTA Calendar and PTA Meetings 7

PTA Operations..... 9

Develop a Good Working Relationship with the Principal..... 9

PTA Record Keeping: Sustaining a Well-Run Organization..... 11

SoCA Requirements..... 13

Nonpartisan Policy and Legislative Activity 15

The PTA and Local and National Elections..... 16

The Role of PTAs in MCPS Employee Contract Issues 16

EVERY CHILD. ONE VOICE..... 17

MCCPTA: PTA in Montgomery County

Founded in 1944, MCCPTA has grown from 15 PTAs to 192 local PTAs and PTSAs. This growth reflects the vital role PTAs have had - individually and in council – in meeting the needs of our children and families.

Local PTA Presidents and their MCCPTA Delegates serve as a link between the Montgomery County Council of PTAs and the local PTA by participating in MCCPTA Delegates Assemblies, working with their Cluster Coordinators and Area Vice Presidents, and sharing information between the two organizations. Delegates will have information about what is happening across the school system to share with the members of their local PTA and will bring the perspective of their local PTA to the discussions at the county level.

General MCCPTA meetings, Delegates Assemblies, normally are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month during the school year at 7:30 pm at Carver Educational Services Center in Rockville and are open to all PTA members. The privileges of introducing motions, debating, and voting are limited to the voting body, which consists of the delegates from local PTAs (the president, or alternate, and two accredited delegates) and the members of the MCCPTA Board of Directors (the officers, area vice presidents, cluster coordinators, and committee chairs). The monthly meetings provide an opportunity for delegates to present ideas, debate issues, become better informed, make personal contacts with other PTA leaders, and vote on MCCPTA business.

Area Vice Presidents and Cluster Coordinators will also coordinate meetings with their local respective PTAs to develop the relationship between the PTAs and discuss issues of concern across PTAs.

MCCPTA Presents!, special informational programs, usually are held from 6:30-7:30 pm on the fourth Tuesday of the month prior to the Delegates Assembly. This program is open to the public and is later broadcast on MCPS-TV.

Expectations and Responsibilities of Local PTA Presidents

The PTA President provides leadership to the organization and is the official representative of the local PTA in the community, in MCCPTA, Maryland PTA, and National PTA. The PTA President serves as the liaison between the parents and the school administration, in the school building and in MCPS Central Office. To be an effective leader, the PTA President must be knowledgeable about the mission of PTA, the structure of the organization, and its role in advocacy for student education.

MCCPTA and Your PTA

The local PTAs of Montgomery County are banded together in a Council for a three-fold purpose:

- ✓ "To unify and strengthen local PTAs in the Council"
- ✓ "To provide for the conference and cooperation of the local PTAs in the council so as to create a public opinion favorable to the interest of child welfare; to encourage child welfare projects in the local PTAs; and to assist in the formation new PTAs according to the plan of the Maryland PTA."
- ✓ "To promote the interest of the National PTA and of the Maryland PTA within its territory."

MCCPTA adheres to the Objects and Mission of the National PTA and to its Basic Policies.

MCCPTA provides a link between locals, Maryland PTA, and National PTA. The president of MCCPTA or a designee serves on the Board of Directors of the Maryland PTA, representing the views and positions of the local PTAs.

Administratively, MCCPTA reminds PTAs of dues payments and bylaws reviews, and supports local PTA work and efforts, including meeting Standards of Continuing Affiliation (SoCA) requirements.

MCCPTA organizes various workshops—including annual Fall and Spring leadership training—to provide training and information for incoming, present, and future leadership.

The monthly MCCPTA Delegates Assembly provides an opportunity for PTA delegates to present ideas, debate issues, to vote upon positions, to become better informed through the programs, and to make contact with other PTA leaders to share ideas. The PTA president and up to two additional delegates may represent each PTA at these meetings; only PTAs who have paid MCCPTA dues may cast a vote. MCCPTA delegates are members of their local PTAs' board of directors and should be on meeting agendas so that they can report regularly on their activities to the leadership and general membership.

MCCPTA officers are elected to handle the work of the organization. MCCPTA area vice presidents are elected to serve PTAs in specific cluster groupings. Cluster coordinators are local PTAs' primary link to MCCPTA and are elected to support specific clusters, including organizing meetings of PTA representatives from each school in their high school cluster, to serve as resources for their local PTAs, and to provide budget testimony on behalf of their cluster's schools in concert with MCCPTA and countywide priorities.

The appointed MCCPTA committee chairmen work on substantive issues and support services for the council and the local PTAs.

MCCPTA cooperates with other organizations in the county that have interests in subjects of concern to PTAs.

MCCPTA works closely with MCPS to provide interested and qualified representatives for task forces, study groups, and panels, and to help disseminate information about the school system and about School Board policy.

Additional Resources - Guidebooks are available for local PTAs from the MCCPTA office and are posted on the MCCPTA website; these include:

- Delegate's Guidebook
- Treasurer's Guidebook
- Secretary's Guidebook
- Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Guidebook
- MCCPTA Board of Directors Guidebook

MCCPTA Procedures for Resolutions before the Delegates Assembly

In order to ensure a consistent and effective process for conducting meetings and bringing resolutions to the MCCPTA delegates, MCCPTA approves standing rules each Fall. The standing rules in force may be found on the MCCPTA website. Additional information may be found in the MCCPTA Delegate's Guidebook.

Presidential Pointers

Be enthusiastic, welcoming, and open-minded. The PTA will, in great measure, reflect the attitudes of a strong president.

Know the bylaws and parliamentary procedure. PTA meetings should not be too stiff; however, parliamentary procedure allows the work of the organization to proceed in an orderly fashion and gives everyone an opportunity to participate in discussions. A working knowledge of the bylaws and Robert's Rules will help a President, and other leaders, to move the meetings along effectively.

See that the PTA is represented at PTA events, hearings, meetings, and workshops at the county and state levels. PTA is an advocacy organization and the voice of the school communities makes a difference.

Delegate responsibilities to other Officers, Board members, and Committee Chairs. For instance, the vice president(s) may manage program planning, membership, or committee oversight. Responsibilities are listed in the bylaws; additional tasks may be designated, as needed.

Be certain that committee chairs are aware of and use all material relevant to the work of their committee.

Share MCCPTA and other Maryland and National PTA resources and materials with the members of the executive board.

Give the MCCPTA delegates and/or cluster representatives the opportunity to keep the membership informed and up-to-date on county, state, and cluster matters at each meeting and in communications.

Keep the MCCPTA Cluster Coordinator and Area Vice Presidents informed about your PTA's successes, concerns, and operations. Ask for their help in answering questions or solving problems. Invite them to meetings occasionally.

Keep business meetings interesting, orderly and brief, but allow time for discussion.

Refrain from expressing personal bias or opinions when presiding.

Encourage the principal and staff to involve parents in decision-making at the school. The procedures for the School Improvement Plan call for parent/community involvement in the development and review of the plan, as does the Board of Education's Parent Involvement Policy.

Promote good relations with all school staff. Always consult the principal on any project concerning the school. Try to solve problems cooperatively.

Use the materials such as National PTA's Annual Resources for PTAs or website. Do not "reinvent the wheel" when proven materials and techniques are available.

Be generous with praise and recognition of service of all members.

Establish one or two objectives during the year and accomplish them.

Expect committee chairs to keep adequate records of committee work. Encourage them to have these ready in the spring to turn over to new chairperson.

Become familiar with Montgomery County Board of Education policies.

PT(S)A Executive Committee

The PT(S)A Executive Committee generally includes the Officers of the local PT(S)A, per the local bylaws.

Every member of a PT(S)A Executive Committee should have:

- Local PTA Bylaws
- Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised
- MCCPTA Suggested Timeline for PTA Leaders
- MCCPTA Guidebook(s) appropriate to position
- A procedure book including the PTA's goals, plan of work, and reports from predecessor

Every member of a PT(S)A Executive Committee should also have access to:

- National PTA Annual Resources for PTAs
- National PTA Standards for Parent / Family Involvement
- MCCPTA Blue Book
- MCCPTA Guidebooks (also available online at www.mccpta.org)

Comprehensive information for PTA leaders is provided by National PTA each summer. To receive a kit, PTA Presidents must register for an Official PTA Kit through the National PTA website. Kits are available for all PTAs in good standing.

The PTA Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is defined by each PTA's bylaws. Usually the Board of Directors includes the elected officers, MCCPTA delegates, committee chairpersons, the principal, and, if the unit is a PTSA,

student representatives. Some PTAs will include the immediate past president, a historian, a parliamentarian, and liaisons to other parent groups active in the school.

Each person on the Board of Directors has a unique job to do and has a responsibility to the entire PTA organization. The Board of Directors:

- Provides leadership to the organization.
- Sets goals, plans the PTA calendar, and approves committee work plans
- Reviews and approves the PTA budget and bylaws amendments to be sent to the membership for adoption.
- Develops recommendations to take to the membership on all matters of policy, but makes it abundantly clear that these are merely recommendations. The membership establishes policy.
- Shares information relevant to the school, community, PTA, and MCPS with the general membership and school community.
- Schedules general membership meetings to facilitate the attendance of as many people as possible; the schedules of parents who work should be respected.
- Involves the general membership in decision making.
- Supports decisions made by the Board and/or General membership.

Review the positions in your PTA periodically to see if some should be re-defined, new ones added, or some eliminated. Consult the MCCPTA Blue Book and Maryland PTA for names of committees currently working on the county and state levels that can provide information and assistance to your Board members.

Use board of director positions to encourage more parents to be involved. Bring in new people, and make an effort to have the PTA fully represent the demographics of the school community.

PTA Calendar and PTA Meetings

Tuesday is traditionally PTA night in Montgomery County. Local PTAs should schedule their monthly general membership meetings as follows to coordinate with other local PTA and MCCPTA activities.

- Elementary - 1st Tuesday
- Middle School - 2nd Tuesday
- High School - 3rd Tuesday
- MCCPTA Delegates Assembly - 4th Tuesday.

Keep these dates in mind when setting PTA activities for the calendar year. Avoid scheduling any PTA activities other than monthly meetings on Tuesdays and encourage the school not to schedule major events on Tuesdays, as many families have children in more than one school.

Check local bylaws to determine how many general membership meetings your PTA is required to hold and when; a meeting every month may not be necessary.

Dates and times of membership meetings and Board of Directors meetings should be published in your newsletter and/or on your eLists. All parents, staff, and, for PTSAs, students, should be invited to attend general membership meetings.

MCCPTA Dates: Dates of MCCPTA meetings and events, BOE hearings, and Maryland PTA events will be published on the MCCPTA website, in the Blue Book, and on the various eLists and social media.

MCPS Dates: For MCPS holidays and other events download the MCPS school calendar from the MCPS website and check the website for periodic updates.

Effective Meetings

Members are more likely to attend meetings that are respectful of their time, effective in getting business completed, and pleasant. Keep these things in mind when planning and running your general membership and Board meetings.

- Develop an agenda and plan, with specific beginning and ending times, for each meeting.
- Encourage all members to speak at meetings and voice their opinion, whether in favor or against a proposal.
- Limit the time that a member speaks so that he/she does not monopolize the discussion or insist on their own way.
- Keep discussion focused on the specific motion or proposal on the floor.
- Schedule meeting times that are convenient to members, as much as possible.
- Provide members with needed information prior to the meeting, when possible, so that they have time to review.
- Be prepared to discuss issues that may be controversial. Remind members that debate should be on the issues and ideas, not on the person(s) making comments.

PTA Operations

Use the PONY. Each PTA has MCPS "pony" privileges. The PONY is the MCPS interdepartmental mail system to all schools, Central Offices and County Government. A pony mailbag is available in each school office. Bulky items and materials without time priority can be sent at no cost and often as quickly as regular mail.

Check the PTA mailbox. Designate the PTA secretary or someone else to check the PTA mailbox in the school office on a regular basis and distribute mail to other officers and chairmen. In the fall, the mail should be checked more frequently for membership dues, and these should be distributed to the Treasurer in a timely manner.

Communicate and promote PTA involvement in your school. Good publicity for all PTA programs and activities is as important as good event planning. Use PTA newsletters, e-lists, bulletin boards, posters, local newspapers, flyers, principal's newsletter, websites, Facebook, Twitter—different media reach different people.

Operate the PTA within its established budget, and follows required processes—including getting general membership votes as necessary—when and if changes become desired or necessary.

Plan three PTA events or activities for each fundraising event. Fundraising is not the primary purpose of PTA. (This three-for-one rule is a requirement of the IRS for non-profits, of which your PTA is one.)

Pick an issue affecting children and education. Develop and carry out an advocacy campaign at the county, state, or national level.

Develop a Good Working Relationship with the Principal

Through the years, PTAs have played an important role in improving schools by fostering broad understanding of school programs; encouraging and supporting the establishment of new services; encouraging public support for program improvements; building positive relationships among school staffs, students, and parents; and keeping the school informed about community needs, desires, and concerns.

PTAs have accomplished these results most effectively when the organization has strong leadership and maintained its identity as an independent group, while creating working relationships with principals and staff. Both the school and its PTA exist to promote the welfare of each student. Recognizing and

acknowledging roles and encouraging communication are critical to the success of PTA-school partnerships.

The principal is legally responsible for the school's program and, in this capacity, serves as the education leader and final decision maker at each school.

In providing leadership and making decisions, however, principals recognize that PTAs are an integral part of their communities. Therefore, principals normally establish processes for informing and soliciting the views of PTA leaders and parents to aid in their leadership and decision making roles.

The principal is usually a member of the PTA board of directors (check local bylaws) and like all Board of Directors members, the principal must be a member of the PTA to claim his/her seat on the Board. The principal also is just one voice on the Board.

To establish and maintain a positive working relationship, the principal and PTA must cooperate. The principal can be expected to provide the PTA and its members current information about county and local school policies and procedures; to offer advice and information to parents and PTA leaders; to support PTA programs and efforts as much as possible; and to encourage community support for the PT(S)A.

It is essential for the principal to be open to and kept informed on PTA and community viewpoints.

The principal may:

- Seek advice of parents of particular groups of students or grade levels on issues that have implications for them in particular;
- Engage in full and frank discussions with the PTA, or affected parents and students, concerning the background of issues; and
- Involve the PTA board of directors and membership as participants in the study and discussion of issues and consideration of alternatives, prior to final decision-making on issues that have implications for students and their families.

The principal should seek ways to keep the PTA and community members informed about issues and decisions affecting the school or segments of the school community, including:

- Recognizing the importance of involving parents in their children's education.

- Sharing updates on curriculum, instructional methods, and organizational patterns in the school, and showing how these meet student needs and demonstrating their relationship to the county program of studies;
- Informing the PTA and other parents about the school's progress toward its goals by encouraging discussion of the school's SIP goals with the school community;
- Keeping the PTA and others informed about progress toward the resolution of educational concerns within the school community;

Familiarity with the following PTA basics and resources will help the principal develop a positive working relationship with the PTA:

- General knowledge of National PTA, Maryland PTA and MCCPTA and the bylaws of the local PTA;
- MCCPTA, its publications, and workshop opportunities as well as the assistance available from cluster coordinators and others involved in MCCPTA; and
- The right of the PTA to use the "PONY" and a school mailbox.

The principal may help build and strengthen an effective PTA by encouraging the leaders to seek training, to participate in MCCPTA, to follow appropriate PTA procedures, and to reach out to those who have not been involved in the school and the PTA previously.

Principals are special guests of their PTAs at the MCCPTA Presidents and Principals Dinner in May. This event honors presidents for their efforts and principals for their support of the PTAs. All PTA leaders and members and school staff are welcome to attend. Each local PTA should budget for at least two tickets for this event for their PTA President and Principal.

PTA Record Keeping: Sustaining a Well-Run Organization

PTA records are the business of all the leaders. Maintaining the records in good order is the responsibility of the President, along with the Secretary, and if a PT(S)A as one, a historian.

The continuity of having previous records and reports available will help the organization to run efficiently and effectively so that each new class of leaders does not have to reinvent the wheel or repeat mistakes. Prior year records are useful for goal setting (for example, membership), budgeting, and event planning.

The Minutes and Official Documents

Minutes: The official records of any organization are the minutes of the meetings. See the MCCPTA Secretary's Guidebook and Robert's Rules of Order for information on keeping the PTA's minutes correctly.

Financial Records: The treasurer's books should be up-to-date. A monthly Treasurer's Report should be presented at each meeting and should always be included in the meeting minutes. The Treasurer's books must be reviewed annually. After the audit (or financial review) has been conducted, the audit or review report should be presented to the board or directors and the membership. Maryland PTA requires each local PTA to provide a copy of the annual report following the audit to Maryland PTA; this can be mailed in hardcopy to their office in Glen Burnie or scanned and emailed or faxed to Maryland PTA.

Bylaws: The PTA secretary should have a copy of the most recently approved bylaws at all times.

Local PTA References

The PTA should maintain a notebook or electronic files that include:

- Roster of current Officers, Board of Directors, other leaders and important contacts
- Roster of past executive committee members (with year), with addresses and phone numbers so that current members can contact them if the records don't contain needed information
- The current budget adopted by the membership -- plus notations of any additions and modifications made during the year as approved by the membership. Notations as to whether the money was actually spent according to proper PTA policy and procedures would be helpful in making the PTA more effective. The audit committee report and the annual treasurer's report should also be included.
- A listing of the programs for the meetings including the method of presentation (speaker, panel, small groups, film), the subject matter covered and audience reaction and response.
- An annual listing of the projects provided by committees and by the PTA as a whole, the outcome, and evaluation of the projects for future use.
- The Maryland PTA Achievement Award form so that materials can be compiled in order to apply for the award.

Procedure Books. Encourage officers and all members of the executive board to create and maintain a loose-leaf notebook in which they keep current material and which they take to executive board meetings. This could contain a copy of the annual report of the previous chairperson or officer, a complete

description of the job responsibilities, the approved work plan, the list of committee members, and reports on progress during the year. This material will then be given to the person's successor.

PTA Guidebooks and resources. Keep on hand materials from National PTA, Maryland PTA, and MCCPTA to be used by all leaders.

SoCA Requirements

All PTAs are required to meet the Standards of Continuing Affiliation, as established by National and Maryland PTA, and recorded by Maryland PTA. Many of these items are reports due to the State of Maryland and the IRS. PTAs should pay careful attention to these requirements in order to maintain their status as a PTA in good standing with Maryland PTA and a viable organization in the state of Maryland.

Maryland and National Dues

Each PTA should set local membership dues which will cover, at least, the MCCPTA, Maryland, and National Dues for each member. Maryland and National Dues are a SoCA requirement; MCCPTA dues are required for representation and participation in the Council.

MCCPTA dues: Helps provide local training workshops, communication resources, outreach efforts, advocacy materials, parent involvement initiatives, and office support.

Maryland PTA dues: Helps provide state-wide programs, services, materials, membership cards, and PTA leadership training. Maryland PTA charters local PTAs as well as councils.

National PTA dues: Local PTAs are provided with publications, guidance, training, programs, and services from National PTA. PTA has a voice on legislative issues and provides information on legislation and policy-making in Washington, D.C.

2015-16 Dues (per member)

- MCCPTA: \$1.00
- Maryland PTA: \$2.00
- National PTA: \$2.25

Insurance Coverage

All PTAs are required to have general liability, bonding, and directors and officers liability insurance as negotiated by MD PTA Maryland PTA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 7:

All local PTAs shall have, at a minimum, bonding, liability, and directors and officers insurance through the Maryland PTA negotiated policy, a due date no later than July as the date the state will cover existing local policies.

These provisions include the benefit of (1) consistency in that all PTAs are covered by the same policy with the same insurance company and (2) a group rate that reduces the cost to individual PTAs.

Note that Montgomery County Public Schools do not cover any PTA event. MCPS only assumes responsibility in two instances:

- In an instance where an employee of MCPS has been negligent and an accident occurs as a result.
- In an instance where there are structural deficiencies in the physical plant or a plant was not properly maintained and an accident occurs as a result.

If a child or adult suffers a loss -- physical, psychological or monetary - the person or persons who accepted responsibility for the circumstances wherein the loss was sustained may be charged with liability for the loss.

Knight Insurance Services, Inc. publishes an insurance summary and loss prevention guide. It refers to Red Light, Yellow Light and Green Light activities. Red Light activities are prohibited. Yellow Light refers to activities where certain conditions must be met and the local PTA must consult with the insurance broker in advance of engaging in any of those activities. Green Light activities are approved.

Each local PTA is responsible for paying to it's annual premium to Knight Insurance Services, Inc. which is due NO LATER THAN June 30, and will be billed in the spring. The 2015-2016 rate is \$201 for each local PTA. ** Note that the annual premium may change - check with maryland pta each year and be sure to read the invoice carefully*

More information and instructions to complete payment can be found on the MCCPTA website under SoCA/Insurance. Contact the Maryland PTA Office Administrator at officeadministrator@mdpta.org or 410-760-6221 with any questions regarding insurance premium payments.

Local Bylaws

Bylaws are the “playbook” that establishes important aspects about how an organization functions. Bylaws specify the number of general membership meetings that must be scheduled each year, how many members constitute a quorum, and the election process for the local PTA, and much more.

The President, Officers, and all Board members should have a copy of the local bylaws and read them cover-to-cover. If the PTA does not have a copy on file, contact the Maryland PTA office. Members should also have access to the bylaws.

It is required that PTAs update their bylaws every three years to remain a PTA in good standing.

Nonpartisan Policy and Legislative Activity

As 501(c)(3) tax exempt organizations, national, state, council and local PTAs must operate in a non-partisan manner. PTA bylaw provisions incorporate the prohibitions and limitations on political activity contained in Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)3. Failure to comply with these restrictions could result in a PTA losing its federal tax-exempt status.

The restrictions on partisan political activity by 501(c)(3) organizations primarily prohibit tax exempt organizations from actively participating in election politics. Tax exempt organizations have fairly wide latitude to participate in policy and issue advocacy.

One of the objectives of PTA, incorporated in our bylaws, is "to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth." Central to that mission is informing our membership--and through it, the general public--on important issues, policies, and legislative initiatives affecting children, families, schools and our communities. A corollary to informing our membership is ensuring our members have the tools and information they need to speak to issues important to them.

Further, National PTA and its constituent organizations (which includes MCCPTA) may propose, support or oppose legislation in keeping with the objective "to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth."

Neither the law nor National PTA Bylaws prohibit MCCPTA members, in their personal capacity, from participating in the political process in any way they see fit. Among other things, members may actively support candidates, and run for office. However, when participating in partisan political activities, MCCPTA members must be very clear that they are doing so in their PERSONAL capacity. It is crucial to ensure that no partisan political activities imply or represent endorsement by MCCPTA or any PTA organization.

Neither federal regulations nor National PTA policy prohibits state, council, or local PTA leaders from serving on commissions or other boards active in areas of concern to the PTA if such membership is not designed to support partisan interests.

State, council, and local PTAs can and should have legislative committees that share information on legislation with the membership. Every PTA should strive to be advocates on behalf of schools, children, and families.

The PTA and Local and National Elections

Pursuant to regulations governing 501(c)3 non-profit organizations, no PTA, no person speaking in the name of the PTA, and no PTA officer may use their PTA title or affiliation to support or endorse any candidate for office, whether partisan or non-partisan.

However, PTAs are encouraged to participate actively in activities to engage and educate voters, and encourage their members to meet and build relationships with their elected officials. Participating in, sponsoring and/or publicizing inclusive candidate forums, meet and greet events with elected officials, voter registration drives, Get Out the Vote activities, and distributing non-partisan candidate guides (such as those prepared by the League of Women Voters) are all acceptable and encouraged.

In keeping with its issue advocacy, council and local PTAs can take a position on an issue or ballot question when its membership votes to do so. Council and local PTAs, upon membership vote, may also join a short-term coalition formed to fight for or against a ballot question.

The PTA can form a political action committee, in accordance with state electoral law, to work to pass or defeat ballot questions.

In Montgomery County, when a PTA leader files to run for public office, whether partisan or nonpartisan, he/she often resigns from their PTA position in order to avoid any appearance of conflict. MCCPTA officers **must** resign their PTA positions if they become candidates for elected office.

Members who choose to seek public office may not request or receive PTA endorsement at any time, but may list their PTA service as part of their qualifications.

The Role of PTAs in MCPS Employee Contract Issues

Since the founding of the National PTA in 1897, the primary purpose has been to promote the welfare of children. No matter what the issue, PTAs must first ask whether any action or program is in the children's best interest. Adherence to that principle is especially important during employee contract negotiations.

MCCPTA and National PTA suggest that you consider the following guidelines.

- Historically, PTAs have opposed job actions because they disrupt the children's education.
- PTAs are not a party to the contract negotiations, and those negotiations are not open to the public. National PTA recommends that PTAs not take a position on any contractual matter during negotiations between a union and the board of education. PTAs should remain neutral observers, safeguarding the children's best interest.
- PTAs should closely follow the negotiation process, keep parents and the community informed, and continue to work for public support of education funding.
- Union representatives may ask to speak at a local PTA meeting. Under the terms of Maryland law and its contract with the union, the board is barred from discussing the negotiations. Keep in mind that PTA members will hear only one side of the issue.
- The Board of Education's fundraising policy prohibits PTAs from paying teachers for their participation in school and extracurricular activities.

EVERY CHILD. ONE VOICE

PTA is an organization devoted to the improvement of the welfare of children and youth. PTA is the oldest and largest child advocacy organization in the country. PTA is the foremost proponent of parent involvement, and fostering parent involvement is the priority of PTA at every level.

National PTA promotes a national agenda for all children and youth by:

- Focusing attention on achieving national education goals;
- Working to guarantee access to health information and care;
- Promoting safety in the home, school, and community, and
- Advancing parenting education and the well being of the family.

It is up to each local PTA to decide its own goals for the year. Each PTA is unique and is focused on its own community - but don't build a fence around your school community! Be aware of the strength the local PTA can have as a part of the largest volunteer organization in the United States and the largest membership organization in Montgomery County with approximately 50,000 members! Your voice united with other voices becomes a stronger, more influential voice -- speaking out in ONE VOICE for children and public education.