Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) comprises 193 local PT(S)As advocating for students, parents, family members, teachers, staff and administrators of Montgomery County Public Schools. MCCPTA’s priority is to ensure a world-class education for every student, and ensure that all students feel safe, welcome, and valued for being exactly who they are.

**ACCESS TO EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

*MCPS should*:

1. Move quickly to explore in-person opportunities that can be offered safely using science-based standards, prioritizing populations with particular programmatic needs, such as special education and ESOL, and children who are experiencing barriers to effective online learning.
2. Audit every MCPS school and its individual budget in order to identify and reduce disparities in courses offered and access to academic resources. In order to address the opportunity gap, we especially seek processes to increase enrollment of students of color and in poverty in advanced courses. Counseling departments are integral to students’ course selections and therefore should include diverse staff who speak the native language of ESOL student cohorts that attend each school.
3. Implement a plan to address inequities, within and between schools, in access to academic and extracurricular opportunities, especially for historically disadvantaged groups. This plan should highlight partnerships with community-based organizations, increase transportation options for specific and targeted programs, and identify distance learning opportunities.
4. Provide additional resources in underperforming cohorts that have been identified in each school’s Equity Accountability Model. Provide consistent appropriate support for students with special needs and their families that would enhance their participation in academic, extracurricular, and social programs and activities. Provide training for teachers to understand their students’ disabilities and how to implement the required IEP/504 plan accommodations. Ensure that education plans are fully met during distance learning.

**CAPITAL FUNDS AND FACILITIES**

*Legislators should*:

1. Increase the State and County capital budgets to reduce overcrowding and maintain and improve existing infrastructure.
2. Update the Growth Policy to ensure school infrastructure matches ongoing development. The policy should ensure that the county and MCPS planning departments collaborate to develop a comprehensive strategy to serve both immediate and long-term MCPS needs.
3. Direct additional funds to schools to provide a healthy environment during the COVID-19 emergency.
4. Ensure that tech modernization budgets are increased so that teachers and students, especially special education students, have appropriate technology during the COVID-19 emergency.

*MCPS should*:

1. Engage students, staff, and school communities when gathering KFI (Key Facility Indicator) data so that it transparently reflects the school experience. Include MCCPTA in meetings with MCPS leadership while preparing the Superintendent’s proposed Capital Budget.
2. Explore alternative calculations of student generation to better project student enrollment.
3. Reduce disparities in the utilization of school facilities by engaging with MCCPTA and school communities to consider adjacent capacity.
4. Audit existing HVAC systems and update to increase ventilation and filtration in order to reduce exposure to Covid-19. Regularly test air quality to guide remediation.
5. Continue efforts to have no traceable lead in drinking water and encourage use of reusable water bottles by expanding access to filtered water filling stations with UV disinfectant enhancement.
6. Ensure safety of children during outdoor activities by providing school fields and play areas that are properly installed, maintained, and tested for hardness, abrasiveness, and certain known harmful substances such as lead.

**TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

*MCPS should*:

1. Install an Independent Ombudsman whose sole purpose is to serve as a family advocate in matters involving the school system.
2. Provide Open Data in a downloadable, searchable, sortable format (such as Excel), and share on all MCPS platforms to make data more accessible to school communities.
3. Collect, analyze, and publish data assessing effectiveness of pilot programs, including curriculum changes.

**COMMUNICATION**

*MCPS should*:

1. Partner with community organizations to prioritize interpersonal outreach, especially to diverse families in communities with limited internet access and where language, cultural differences, or work schedules could be barriers to participation in more traditional forms of outreach to families. Implement more in person and virtual outreach campaigns, parent and student focus groups, morning/weekend informational gatherings, targeted personal phone calls to families, and text alerts.
2. Encourage direct relationships between families and teachers/staff throughout the year.
3. Offer all print/online resources in multiple languages and in accessible formats.
4. Expand availability of interpreters for both in-person and video conference meetings, and work with schools with high language need populations to ensure they have equipment for in-person family engagement opportunities.
5. When implementing a major program, curriculum, or when considering district-wide changes, provide a minimum of 60 days’ notice to families.

**CURRICULUM**

*MCPS should*:

1. Implement a curriculum that meets the needs of our diverse student population by including enrichment and appropriate challenges for all children. The curriculum should include culturally-relevant materials and teaching strategies, approaches for different types of learners, and hands-on experiential learning. This should be consistently delivered during distance learning.
2. Provide robust staff training for virtual delivery of content that engages and promotes academic success for students.
3. Implement final exam policies that encourage college readiness. distance
4. Ensure students’ use of screens/digital media results in positive outcomes by examining the use of digital content in the classroom and through distance learning.
5. Include on-level courses in all middle schools and high schools in addition to Honors and AP Courses.

**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

*MCPS should*:

1. Identify goals beginning this school year, based on findings of the Anti-Racist System Audit report due in January and implement specific strategies to address each of the audit’s main focus areas: school culture, community relations and engagement, curriculum review, equity achievement framework, workforce diversity and workplace conditions. Provide staff with training and resources for their own development towards anti-bias behavior, recognizing their own prejudices and related behavior, and to help in curriculum planning in order to address the needs of students in a culturally-competent manner.
2. Ensure gender-neutral bathrooms are readily available to students in all newly-built and renovated schools.

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

*MCPS should:*

1. Expand available wellness resources, implement Local School Wellness Councils, and increase staff to ensure that all MCPS students have access to appropriate physical and mental health support. Students should have access to suicide prevention, addiction services, vaping education, and cessation programs in all secondary schools.
2. Expand the pilot program for extended recess in elementary schools when we return to school buildings. Explore outdoor education when possible, within CDC guidelines, even when distance learning is in effect.
3. Implement training for trauma-informed practices among school staff, including the Handle With Care program.
4. Improve nutrition, quality, and access to school-provided meals and snacks that support the health of our children. Expand access by delivering food closer to student’s homes during the Covid-19 Emergency.
5. Use science-based metrics when deciding to re-open schools, with the health of teachers, staff, students, administration, and the safety of the community, as well as the educational development and mental health of students, prioritized. In addition, in making the decision about reopening schools, the Board should take into consideration school closures’ exacerbation of existing inequalities as well as the pandemic’s unequal impact particularly on low-income families of color. When in-person school resumes, provide each school with adequate PPE, cleaning supplies, maintenance staff, Covid-19 tests, ventilation, and specific science-based protocols for when Covid-19 is detected.
6. Uphold compliance with MSDE’s Digital Best Practices in the Classroom so MCPS adheres to screen time guidelines.
7. Ensure that all in-class apps and extensions used by teachers are vetted/approved through MCPS’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer’s Online Digital Tools portal, in order to help avoid federal FERPA, COPPA, and CIPA violations.
8. With adequate safety measures, resume middle school and high school outdoor campus sports and offer elementary school outdoor physical education options.

**OPERATING FUNDS**

*Legislators should*:

1. Override the Governor's veto of the Kirwan Commission related bills and fund the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission (Maryland State Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education) in order to meet the needs of Montgomery County’s diverse population of learners.
2. Appropriately fund the MCPS budget in order to hire more teachers and staff to achieve class size reduction and to provide more resources to historically disadvantaged populations.

 *MCPS should*:

1. Use the Kirwan funds that were assigned to schools with high levels of poverty to fully implement the Commission’s recommended Community Schools model, which is intended to close persistent achievement and opportunity gaps by serving the whole child.
2. Assign more paraeducators, especially in elementary school, as a cost-effective means of providing students with greater individualized attention.

**SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SAFETY**

*MCPS should*:

1. Improve security in all school buildings by providing secure vestibules by the end of this fiscal year and ensuring adequate security staff at all schools.
2. Provide prompt and transparent reporting of incidents to appropriate authorities and the school community, including incidents within schools, on school buses, in virtual settings and criminal activity near schools.
3. Reduce disproportionality in discipline by implementing additional anti-bias and equity training, and implementing restorative practices in all schools.
4. Address, track and reduce incidences of bias, discrimination, bullying, hatred, and sexual harassment during and after school hours and on social media. Provide student and staff culturally-competent support and professional development to address the mental health outcomes due to incidents.
5. Review walking routes along major roads and bus stops to ensure safe routes to school and safe school zones, with the goal of moving bus stops away from high-speed traffic and eliminating overcrowded buses. Implement a safe routes plan when building or renovating schools, using MCPS school buses in coordination with the Kids Ride Free program.