

President's Corner...

Sandra Monaco-Burton, President, PTA Council of Harford County, Inc.



I hope everyone has been enjoying a happy and healthy holiday season. I thank all of you for the many hours you dedicate to advocating for the children and supporting our public schools.

The new year starts off with the HCPS budget hearings and the Board of Education will be seeking input from all of us. If you cannot attend the public hearings (January 9, 18, and 23), you are able to email your ideas/comments to: budget@hcps.org. In addition, you can watch the BOE meetings live via their website and the recordings are archived there as well.

Our [mid-year leadership training will be held on Thursday, January 19](#), since there are many tasks that PTA officers should be working on this time of year: recruiting candidates for the spring elections, putting together up-to-date procedure books, reviewing the budget to determine if any adjustments need to be made, etc. Of course, we always focus on enlarging our membership base and advocating for our schools. All these topics will be addressed at training; please see page 2 for additional information.

HCCPTA will celebrate 72 years of service to Harford County PTAs/PTSAs at our annual [Founder's Day Dinner on March 22](#) at Bel Air High School. Invitations will be mailed in a few weeks; please encourage your committee chairs and volunteers to join us, too. During the evening, we will celebrate the work you do and announce the membership and advocacy award winners. Many partners from the community will be in attendance to support your efforts so I hope every unit can send representatives. And children are welcome!

The county-wide [Reflections Awards Ceremony will be held on April 19](#) at Patterson Mill Middle/High School. Come celebrate the achievements of our budding artists.

(Please remember that your PTA/PTSA must be in full compliance with the Standards of Continuing Affiliation in order for your school's Reflections entries to be accepted for the state competition by Maryland PTA. That [deadline is February 1](#); if you are uncertain of your status or need help completing a task, please email me at: monaco_sandra@yahoo.com.)

Please don't forget that [HCCPTA awards \\$500 Scholarships each year](#) to graduating seniors. This year we are hoping to grant scholarships to up to four students. Applications and eligibility requirements/criteria will soon be available in the guidance counselors' offices and on our website: www.hccpta.org.

Stay tuned for correspondence from our Nominating Committee. All HCCPTA officer positions are up for election (scheduled for April 19); please consider serving at the county PTA level.

Thank you for all your hard work and please remember that we are here to assist you whenever you have a question or need help with any task. It is our privilege to work alongside you.

PTA Vision
*What the future will look like if PTA accomplishes its mission.
 Making every child's potential a reality.*

PTA Mission
*A powerful voice for all children,
 A relevant resource for families and communities, and
 A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.*

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Mark Your Calendars!

BOD Meetings

Patterson Mill Media Center
7:00 PM

2012

Jan 3	March 6
Feb 7	May 1

Council Meetings/Training

Thurs, Jan 19, 2012

Mid-Year Mini Training & Council Meeting
 Patterson Mill Media Center
 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Thurs, March 22, 2012

Founder's Day Dinner & Council Meeting
 Bel Air High School Cafeteria
 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Thurs, April 19, 2012

Reflection Ceremony & Council Meeting/Elections
 Patterson Mill Auditorium
 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Thurs, May 29, 2012

Leadership Training & Council Meeting
 Patterson Mill Media Center
 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Harford County Council PTA

Invites You
To Our Annual Mid-Year Training



Thursday, January 19, 2012, 6:00-9:00 pm
(Dinner included)
Patterson Mill MS/HS Media Center
Free for PTA members

Our topics will include:

The power of **Advocacy**

Membership: Recruiting and how to reach/support your members

Budget: Adjustments and forms (incl. Personal Property Form prep)

How **Nominations and Elections** should work

Registration form (Registration required)

January 19, 2012, Leadership Development Mid-Year Training
 Location: Patterson Mill MS/HS Media Center

PTA: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

E-mail: _____

For additional information, contact: Sandra Monaco-Burton at: monaco_sandra@yahoo.com

Send registration to: HCCPTA, PO Box 435, Bel Air, MD 21014

Membership Update

Submitted by Bruce Butz, HCCPTA Treasurer

Congratulations to the following Local PTAs & PTSAs who have already increased their membership by more than 5% over all of last year.



Aberdeen High PTSA
Abingdon Elementary PTA
Bakerfield Elementary PTA
Bel Air Elementary PTA
Church Creek Elementary PTA
Churchville Elementary PTA
Edgewood Middle PTSA
Harford Technical High PTSA
Joppatowne High PTSA
Magnolia Elementary PTA
Meadowvale Elementary PTA
North Harford Middle PTSA
Youth's Benefit Elementary PTA

The following schools have reported an ***increase in membership over last year*** and are on their way to reaching that 5% increase mark.

Deerfield Elementary PTA
Fallston Middle PTA
Fountain Green Elementary PTA
Hickory Elementary PTA
Homestead-Wakefield Elementary PTA
Jarrettsville Elementary PTA
Norrisville Elementary PTA



A reminder that payment for memberships sold should be made to Maryland PTA (\$3.75/member) and to HCCPTA (\$.50/member) ***by the end of each month***. We still have local units who have not submitted dues for membership to HCCPTA for the 2011/2012 school year. Don't get confused. Pay them at the same time. Please do not pay Maryland PTA for any membership that you do not sell as they do not issue refunds. You must remit your membership dues promptly. Not reporting to Maryland PTA or HCCPTA the portion of the dues you collected on their behalf is withholding money that rightfully belongs to them and is considered fraud by IRS.

Treasurer's Responsibilities

Submitted by Bruce Butz, HCCPTA Treasurer



All local PTA units were required to complete one of the 990 forms for the IRS. This should have been submitted to the IRS by, in most cases, November 15. Local PTAs are also required to register, or annually renew their registration, as a charitable organization with the Office of the Secretary of State and have submitted the fee, if appropriate, by the end of December. Those locals who filed the e-postcard for the 990N will not have to pay the fee, but Maryland PTA has determined that you must register with the Secretary of State.



According to Maryland PTA Bylaws, you are required to submit the treasurer's annual report reviewed by an auditor or an auditing/review committee to Maryland PTA annually. **The Standards of Affiliation report that HCCPTA receives from Maryland PTA shows very few reviews/audits have been received from Harford County locals. Please visit Maryland PTA's website Cash Encounters <http://www.mdpta.org/forms.html> or National PTA's website Money Matters http://www.pta.org/reference_guides.asp for additional information.**



Be watchful for the 2012 Personal Property Report forms which should be in your school's mailboxes in late January or early February. These are mailed to organizations that have not forfeited their incorporation in the state of Maryland and have a return due date of April 15. In order to maintain your good standing with Maryland PTA, you must submit a copy of that report to Maryland PTA. You can view your status by searching the website of the Department of Assessments and Taxation at www.dat.state.md.us. If you have forfeited your incorporation, contact Maryland PTA.



If you need to submit an IRS 1099 MISC for those individuals for whom you paid \$600 or more last calendar year, you should have ordered this form and the accompanying IRS form 1096 remittance form as the 1099 must go to the individual before the end of January. This form is not downloadable so order it immediately. Penalties for late reporting to individuals are quite stiff. Check MDPTA website Cash Encounters to determine who qualifies.

Now is an excellent time to review your budget to see if any amendments are necessary. Remember that IRS requires that you use a gross budget. This means that you cannot only report the profits from your fundraisers as income.



PTA REFLECTIONS
40 Years of Achievement in the Arts

Reflections deadline has past and we have received over 300 submissions from around the county. Look for results in our March/April Newsletter!

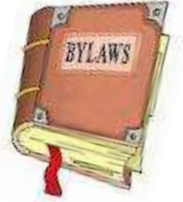
HCCPS Communications Office to participate in a focus group

You are invited to participate in a focus group session on **Thursday, January 12th, from 10:30 - 11:30 AM at the Center for Educational Opportunity in Aberdeen.** The HCCPS Communications Office, working in conjunction with A. Bright Idea communications firm in Bel Air, will conduct a focus group session to gather feedback and input regarding the development of the school system's brand identity which will include a redesign of the current school system logo as well as other marketing materials. The brand identity is defined as the overall perception and image of the organization. This session will take approximately 45 minutes. You are representing all HCCPS parents and your input is critical to this process.

Questions and RSVP by January 9th to Casey Payne, Casey.Payne@hcps.org or call 410-588-5203.

Avoid Common Bylaws Pitfalls

Submitted by Sue Parks, HCCPTA 1st Vice President



- When it is time to review your bylaws, most people get all worked up and their eyes glaze over. Bylaws are not that scary or daunting if you just take your time and avoid some common pitfalls.
- The most common mistake people make is by trying to change the standard form language. Bylaws are mostly boilerplate language that cannot be changed. Yet people still try to change it. This is when your bylaws will be rejected by the Maryland State PTA.
- Your duty when completing the bylaw review is to make sure all the blanks are filled in. Forgetting to do so is another common mistake. If you have left any of the blanks empty, your bylaws will be rejected.
- Make sure when you review your bylaws, you have a committee reviewing them. This helps to make sure everything is double and triple checked. That way, when you present the bylaws to your general membership, there should not be any mistakes.
- There are some common things to look for. If you have more than one vice president or secretary, you must make sure to add what each person's specific duties are as the template only includes duties for one vice president and one secretary. If your terms of office are two years, you need to add whether elections for the position are in odd or even years. If the positions are only one year, this is not necessary.
- When you complete the information on the back of the bylaws concerning who to contact in case there are any issues, make sure you think carefully who to use. If you are reviewing bylaws toward the end of the school year, you need to make sure you put an officer that will presumably be at the school the next year since it is likely the review may occur over the summer. If you put, for example, a President who is leaving the school because his or her children are moving on, that person may not be available to handle any questions the Maryland State PTA Bylaws Committee may have. Instead put another officer that you know will be returning.
- Maryland PTA changed the bylaw templates so make sure that you are using the most recent version. You will also need to include a copy of the minutes from the meeting in which your PTA adopted the bylaws, even if there were no changes.
- When it's time to review your bylaws, don't panic! They are not as bad as you think if you just take your time and "fill in the blanks".



HCCPTA Goes on the Road!

By Cindy Mumby, Local PTA Liaison



Your Harford County Council PTA understands that it is often difficult for local PTA leaders to come to our meetings, so we are making plans to visit all 48 of the PTAs in the county this year. Think of it as HCCPTA on wheels!

My name is Cindy Mumby and I have joined the HCCPTA board this year in a new position as the Local Liaison. My children have graduated from HCPS, but having been a local PTA officer for nearly 15 years, I hope to bring my experience and the resources of HCCPTA together to help you navigate the challenges and rewards of volunteering with PTA, the nation's largest child advocacy organization.

I am in the process of reaching out to local PTA presidents to see if there is a regularly scheduled board meeting that I might attend with a very brief presentation, but please don't hesitate to contact me first and let me know how we might be of service.

My email address is: liaison@hccpta.org.



HCCPTA Betty Bull Scholarship Award

Since 1988, the Harford County Council of PTAs has sponsored this award in honor of Mrs. Bull and her tireless and selfless efforts on behalf of children's welfare. She served during the 1950s as National PTA Legislative Chair, Maryland PTA President, Maryland State PTA Legislative Chair, President of HCCPTA, and President of the Jarrettsville Elementary PTA. She was also President of the Maryland Council on Education following World War II. She died on November 13, 1990, at the age of 86. The Harford County Council PTA continues this Award Program in her memory.

All Harford County High School Seniors with a GPA of at least 2.0 and a valid PTA/PTSA membership from any one of the 48 Harford County PTA Schools is eligible to apply for the Betty Bull Award.

Betty Bull Award application deadline is April 2, 2012

The Harford County Council of PTA, Inc. is planning to award up to four (4) \$500.00 scholarships for the 2011/2012 school year. (The number awarded is dependant on available funding from HCCPTA membership dues.)

The purpose of this award program is to provide financial assistance to students of the Parent Teacher Student Association who are pursuing their goal toward advanced education. All Harford County high school graduating seniors are eligible. There is a stipulation that the student or a parent or guardian is a member of a PTA or PTSA in Harford County.

Applications can be secured from the High School Counselor's office and are available on our website: www.hccpta.org.

Eligibility:

1. Must be a senior in a Harford County public high school.
2. Must have applied and been accepted at a post secondary institution, e.g. college technical school, etc.
3. Must have achieved a minimum GPA of 2.0.
4. A copy of the student's PTA/PTSA membership card, the parent's or legal guardian's PTA/PTSA membership card, or the signature of the President of a sponsoring PTA/PTSA only must be provided with this application.
5. Money awarded by the scholarship must be used for tuition, transportation, books and other associated materials, room and board to a college or technical school.

Selection Criteria: (Rating for Award applicants is based on a scale of 100%.)

1. Goals (40%)
2. Volunteer work/Extra curricular activities (30%)
3. Grades (GPA counts as 10% of the final process)
4. Written application (10%)
5. Letters of Reference (5%)
6. Financial need (5%)

Procedure: Complete the three-page application. Verify that all material is included or being submitted.

Mail to:

Betty Bull Award Selection Committee
Harford County Council of PTA, Inc.
P. O. Box 435
Bel Air, MD 21014

SUPPORTING MATERIAL REQUIRED:

1. Completed three-page application form by the deadline.
2. Transcript of high school credits earned, including current semester and GPA.
3. Two letters of recommendation from teachers, employers, sponsor, etc. (Family members may NOT be included as references.)
4. Copy of PTSA or PTA membership card or **signature of only a PTSA/PTA President.**

News from Our Local

HOMESTEAD-WAKEFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IS IN FULL SWING WITH THE 2011-12 YEAR

The Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School (HWES) PTA held its Wildcat Walk-A-Thon in October. This is our annual fundraising event. The weather was perfect, the children were loud and excited and the families were decked out in red and very spirited. This year, our Walk-A-Thon pulled in \$22,000...thanks to our awesome and involved families!



In November, HWES welcomed many grandparents, parents and other family members during American Education Week. Our Hospitality Committee set-up coffee and Dunkin' Donut munchkins each day to welcome our visitors.

Each month, the HWES PTA plans a Family Food Night. So far this year, we have been to Brooms Bloom, Box Hill Pizzeria, DuClaw and Chili's. These events promote our HWES community unity. At each of these four successful nights, our turnout has shown the overwhelming support of the HWES Wildcat families.

During December, we are continuing the fun times. Our Family Fun Committee planned a movie night and book exchange for the Wildcats.

"In Search of Santa Paws" was our feature presentation. The gymnasium, decorated like a star-filled night, was full of sleeping bags, blankets, beach chairs and Wildcats dressed in their cozy pajamas. Complimentary popcorn and lemonade was served. This was definitely a night for family and HWES friends to relax, enjoy and share the holiday spirit.

In closing, the HWES PTA would like to congratulate our very own Mrs. Dyann Mack, Assistant Principal of the Wakefield building. The Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals presented Mrs. Mack with the Maryland State Assistant Principal of the Year award. We are very proud of Mrs. Mack and we thank her for her commitment to our school and our children.

From the HWES PTA Executive Board, our many Committees and our school administration and staff, we wish all of our HCPS and HCCPTA friends a joyous, safe and healthy holiday season.



Prospect Mill ES PTA is off to a great start this year! Our membership drive exceeded expectations, despite the redistricting impact on our enrollment numbers. We have already held several events, greeted families during American Education Week, hosted several community nights, and held our big fall fundraiser: Laps for Learning. The students collected donations from family and friends and then walked and ran many laps outside at school, while many volunteers helped make sure the children were safe and that the event ran smoothly. As a result, we were able to raise over \$10,000. this year, which meant that our principal, Chris Cook, had to uphold his end of the bargain: he slept on the school roof for one (very cold!) night in November. The event received attention from local news stations, online blogs, and local radio shows. The following day, a pep rally was held to allow children who met certain fundraising goals to redeem their prize: a Pie in the Face of their favorite teacher. Over 30 students participated in this event, while being cheered on by their peers. This event was a huge success for our PTA and our school! Kudos to our many volunteers who are helping our PTA flourish.

- **Danielle Spigler, Prospect Mill ES PTA Secretary**

News from Youth's Benefit Elementary School

Submitted by Laura Runyeon, YBES PTA President



In an effort to provide additional resources to parents, the Youth's Benefit Elementary PTA sponsored a guest speaker during the first general PTA meeting on Monday, October 3, 2011. Dr. Shreya Hessler, a licensed psychologist, spoke about childhood anxiety and gave a presentation on "Parenting and Supporting the Anxious Child." Over 80 parents, staff and administration were in attendance. The PTA is thrilled to offer this opportunity to the families of YBES and we look forward to more guest speakers in the new year.

The newly established PTA Garden Club is excited to announce a partnership with the YBES Green School Re-Certification committee headed by 3rd Grade Teacher, Ms. Schultz. The dedicated moms and dads of the club will aid in the creation and maintenance of outdoor learning spaces for the students and celebrate the schools Maryland Green School Certification. Currently, the Garden Club has been busy this fall cleaning and weeding some of the many gardens around the school.



Revel with the Greater Excellence
in Education Foundation at the
Second Annual

Mardi Gras Bash

Sunday, February 12, 2012
5:00 – 8:00 PM

Clarence's Taste of New Orleans
2131 Old Edgewood Road
Edgewood, MD
Tickets \$50

For more information
Contact: www.geefinc.com

IMPORTANT SCHOOL CLOSURE INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED ON HCPS'S FACEBOOK PAGE!

HCPS will be posting school closures and delays on its
[Facebook](#) page, as well as the [Twitter](#) site.

Link to social media sites:

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Harford-County-Public-Schools/255350724505640>

Twitter: [@HCPSchools](#)

Visit HCPS Communication Resource Center at:
www.hcps.org

A new report titled **Analysis of State Bullying Laws and Policies** summarizes the anti-bullying efforts currently at work in the vast majority of states across the country. The full findings and narrative of this report can be found at this link:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oeped/ppss/reports.html#safe>

U.S. Department of Education. Office of Communications & Outreach, Press Office
400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202



Do you want to share your successes and solutions with us?

Send in a brief article to be printed in our next "eNewsletter". Tell us what works, what doesn't...Let's make it easier for the next PTA volunteers!

Email us your news to HCCPTA@hccpta.org Attention: Newsletter Chairman

Next deadline is February 15th

Education Advice
with Dr. Rick



Promoting Math for Kids of All Ages by Dr. Rick

Math is in the news again. The White House is promoting math education with superstars like Sesame Street's Elmo, and in Maryland, the state where I live, the University System is developing new math requirements for students headed to state colleges and universities. Those new requirements include four years of math studies in high school instead of the current three. Other states are no doubt doing the same.

Many students complete three years' math study by the end of their junior year and don't bother with math in their senior year. That's a one-year hiatus until college. You can forget a lot in one year. Four years of math study will better prepare students for university or work in our increasingly science-technology-engineering-math oriented economy.

Do we do enough to get kids interested in math at an early age? Probably not. Here are some thoughts and tips.

1. **Look for numbers all over.** For the youngest learners, look for numbers all around the house and the neighborhood. Just as we look for letters and words as our youngsters are learning to read, why not "explore" for numbers, too? There they are in magazines, on the addresses outside our homes, in road signs. Combine words and numbers in "searches," and see how fast children catch on.
2. **Use numbers.** Let your child punch in the numbers when you're making a phone call, read the quantities in a recipe, dial the oven to the necessary temperature (with your supervision, of course). Let her set the alarm clock, set all the clocks at spring-forward, fall-back time, and help you monitor number-exhibiting gauges like thermostats, speedometers, odometers, tire-pressure gauges, and the like.
3. **Count.** There are lots of things you can count with your youngsters. Stairs, birthdays, family members, cars in a small parking lot, toys on the floor, toys on the shelf, "sleeps" until a happy occasion, pets in the neighborhood. Sing counting songs. "Ninety-nine bottles of beer on the wall" can be changed to "Ninety-nine bottles of juice." It's a better message, but – fair warning – it'll drive you just as nuts in the car.
4. **Look for shapes and patterns.** Helping kids recognize and notice shapes and patterns gets them ready for the rudiments of geometry. Rectangles, squares, circles, ovals, triangles, and other shapes surround us in our homes and neighborhoods. Patterns are organized, repetitive, and predictable – and they're all around us. "Old MacDonald had a farm, E, I, E, I, O." Odd and even numbers. The seasons of the year. Rituals at church, temple, or mosque. Morning routines. Exercise routines. Recognizing simple patterns help children to predict what comes next.
5. **Know about STEM .** Science-Technology-Engineering-Math courses are more important than ever. For your middle- and high-school students, encourage them to explore these courses. Learn about them yourself so you can be a knowledgeable advocate at home.
6. **Be a role model .** Talk about the role of math in your life and job. Let the kids see you doing math. Point out your math when you're filling the car with gas, following a recipe, paying bills, examining sports statistics, figuring out the route for a vacation, building a tree house, figuring out a pool shot. If you "hated" math when you were in school, keep your mouth shut about it.
7. **Advocate for good math teachers.** Yes, all teachers are important, but math teachers are among the teachers hard to come by, more's the pity. So, let your principal know that you're interested in math education and you're willing to lend a hand when it comes to recruiting and retaining a new math teacher. If you have a college aged child who's good in math, encourage him or her to consider teaching .
8. **Bone up on the curriculum.** No, you don't have to master the higher math courses, but you should know about the math curriculum in your child's school. What are the requirements? What's the progression? Are the texts and materials up to date? Is special tutoring available? (The company I work for, Sylvan Learning, has an excellent math record for kids who want to catch up, keep up, or get ahead. Check us out at www.SylvanLearning.com. Sylvan Learning also offers SchoolMathPrep.com, a new, FREE, online math resource for grade 7-12 teachers and students to use at school – for remediation, enrichment or test prep. To learn how your family can use SchoolMathPrep.com's sister site, SylvanMathPrep.com, during your family's homework time, visit www.SylvanMathPrep.com.)
9. **Have fun.** Kids don't need to know they're learning math. There are many, many games that enhance math skills. Card games, Scrabble (good for math patterns and vocabulary), puzzles, Sudoku, brain teasers, fun workbooks, and Monopoly, to name a few.