

## **MCCPTA Resolution in Support of Amending Montgomery County Public Schools' Absence Policy to Provide MCPS Students Up to Three Excused Absences per Year to Participate in Civic Action**

The students of Montgomery County have a history of advocating for changes and improvements to their schools and our school system.

Over the past 18 months, Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) students have elevated their advocacy, demonstrating an impressive and inspiring capacity to thoughtfully speak to the issues they care about. Their civic engagement has included thoroughly researching issues, public speaking, writing clear and persuasive opinion papers and issue summaries, contributing to the crafting of legislation at the County and State level, writing and delivering testimony before the Board of Education, County Council, and General Assembly, hosting and participating in workshops and Town Hall meetings, lobbying Congress, collaborating with fellow students both locally and nationally on topical issues and prominent events, and comprehensive project management of large-scale activities including partnering with State and Local agencies, organizations and law enforcement.

Part of the work of our school system is to teach core subject matter content. Part of the work of our school system is to teach students essential social-emotional, interpersonal and organizational skills. Part of the work of our school system is to teach critical thinking and the importance of citizenship, thereby equipping our students to participate in the life of their communities and understand the importance of civic engagement.

The work of our student advocates uniquely encapsulates an enormous range of the knowledge, skills and citizenship concepts taught in our schools. Students are taking what they are learning in our schools and in their lives, and applying it to real world problems in a highly organized way. That is the essence of critical thinking, and the many forms of civic action in which our students are engaging is direct evidence of learning.

MCCPTA as an organization prioritizes partnering with our students, advocating with and for them to ensure that the education they receive in our school system empowers them to achieve their full potential. One way that MCCPTA can support students in their advocacy is to encourage MCPS policies that don't penalize them for their civic engagement and civic action.

Therefore, the Montgomery County Council of PTAs urges the Board of Education to amend Montgomery County Public School absence policy to allow students up to three excused absences per year to participate in civic action.