20-21 MCCPTA Special Education Priorities

Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) is comprised of 195 local PT(S)A’s advocating for more than 200,000 students, parents, family members, teachers, staff and administrators of Montgomery County Public Schools. MCCPTA’s priority is to ensure that every student feels safe, welcome, and valued for being exactly who they are.

MCPS should:

1) Review the courses, programs, facilities, placement of highly qualified teachers, and individual school instructional budgets to identify and reduce disparities between all students receiving special education students, specifically for those that are in discrete programs.

2) Create clear and transparent processes to identify students that need special education services. This will be completed by meeting with the MCCPTA Committee Chair, or Co-Chairs once a quarter to address stakeholders questions, comments, concerns and provide updates.

4) Partnerships should be created with outside organizations that parents can utilize when participating in the Child Find, Infant and Toddlers, Judy Hoyer, IEP process. These resources should be easily accessible, offered in multiple languages, and shown to parents when going through the screening process of all students.

5) Provide additional resources in underperforming cohorts that have been identified in each school’s Equity Accountability Model specifically for those in discrete programs.

6) Share best practices, classes, trainings, and professional development to all stakeholders that participate in restraints and seclusions specifically to help address disparities between race and gender gaps that are seen. Additionally, significantly reduce the number of restraint and seclusion incidents in favor of staff and teacher trainings of de-escalation strategies, Dr. Ross Greene’s Collaborative and Proactive Solutions, more Restorative Justice programs in partnership with the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County, and trauma-informed practices.

7) Provide more consistent, appropriate, support for students with special needs (and their families), in order to promote and enhance participation in general education academic, (too general – make booklet to help parents understand the IEP process)

8) Partner with MCCPTA to faithfully implement and fund Local Special Education Committee Councils to participate with MCPS providing parents and students with the resources they need in order to be as academically, physically, emotionally and socially successful as possible.

9) Form official MCCPTA Special Education Awards Committee including no less than four members that will actively participate in the awards process throughout the spring of 2021.

10) Provide 4 trainings for parents, once per a quarter, and attend MCPS Special Education Summit to provide resources to parents.

11) Increase oversight of individual schools for compliance issues with IEPs. Hold open town hall meetings to elicit feedback from parents related to special education compliance.

12) Increase support for parents going through the special education identification and IEP process to help them know what to expect from MCPS. Develop a parent informational IEP handbook with timelines, procedures, and information about the overall IEP process.

13) Distance Learning: Ensure that special education students receive the vast majority of their IEP services, accommodations, and goals including social, emotional and behavioral goals. Advocate increased programming for building peer to peer and peer to teacher/counselor connections during Distance Learning.

15) Ensure that 504 plans are being implemented.

16) Increased services for students with Dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities that require specialize multisensory instruction. Increase identification of students with these disabilities and provide increased teacher training in peer-reviewed remedial and instructional programs.

17) Develop a partnership with the Gifted Child Committee to look deeply at the current GTLD programming and access to appropriate programming for twice exceptional students. Help 2e students gain access to gifted programming including housing their program in an appropriate location to access peer groups and education received in accelerated Magnet programs. Advocate for different testing criteria for gifted student with learning differences to gain admittance to Magnets. Ensure that Magnets are able to support twice exceptional learners with training and increased special education staffing. Look at the profiles of students who attend Magnet program and determine whether they are gifted and in need of a gifted program or if they are high achievers who can be accommodated in their home schools. Encourage development of true gifted programs in MCPS that can adequately serve twice exceptional students. Ensure that staffing in the GTLD program are highly qualified to teach/work with the unique group of 2e students; train staff in the whole school of the GTLD programs to understand and support their unique learning profiles. The principal and other school administration team should be selected as highly qualified to meet these needs. Ensure that there is equal access to the GTLD program and develop transparency about the program. Ensure that the GTLD programs are current with best practices for 2e students both educationally, socially, and emotionally.

18) Educate parents about the types of alternative schools that are available within the county including the Magruder ED program, GTLD program, etc. and train staff to know about these program so they can offer a continuum of placements to parents.

19) Advocate for alternative school models for all special education students.