



2015-2016 Advocacy Priorities

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

Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) is an association of 192 local PT(S)As in Montgomery County, chartered by Maryland PTA, representing almost 50,000 members. MCCPTA advocates for the students, parents, and teachers of Montgomery County Public Schools on educational priorities, determined by the membership.

As an organization, MCCPTA holds the following as our Advocacy Priorities for 2015-16.

Ensure that MCPS and related County agencies take Concrete Steps to Mitigate the Effects of Enrollment Growth

Issue: MCPS continues to experience tremendous annual enrollment growth due to the county's ongoing development, neighborhood turnover, and household/population increase.

MCCPTA will:

- encourage MCPS and other county agencies to openly communicate and coordinate planning and policy for necessary school capacity in concert with residential development.
- emphasize that school staffing levels (administrators, teachers, counselors, and support professionals) must keep pace with projected student enrollment and essential smaller class sizes should be restored.
- encourage MCPS to support school staffing (teachers, para-educators, support professionals (counselors, nurses, etc.), personnel, and administrators) in proportion to school size and need, not only by grade level, so that larger schools or those with diverse needs have adequate professional resources.

Support County and State Funded School Operating and Capital Budgets

Issue: Quality and equitable education must be a priority for our community and public officials. MCCPTA will continue to advocate at the County and State levels for adequate funding for public education.

MCCPTA will:

- work with our General Assembly Delegation to advocate at the State level for Montgomery County to receive operating (GCEI) and construction funds from the State in proportion to MCPS' need, growth, and size.
- urge the County Council to fund the operating budget at a level that restores per pupil spending to 2009 levels.
- urge the County Council to recognize that our aging and overcrowded buildings have reached a point of crisis, including an unacceptable number of relocatable classrooms, and there is no choice but to increase funds for school construction.

Support School Construction & Capital Improvements

Issue: Schools should be safe, modern, comfortable, and welcoming environments for students and staff to facilitate learning.

MCCPTA will:

- encourage MCPS to consider projected student enrollment and the school's physical condition, as well as the impact of overcrowding on building systems (such as HVAC), lifecycle costs of relocatable classrooms, student and staff safety, quality of the education experience, suitability of

the educational environment, and student achievement when scheduling school capacity and revitalization/expansion (rev/ex) projects.

- encourage MCPS to systematically re-evaluate the conditions of all schools in an unbiased, objective manner to determine an appropriate revitalization/expansion schedule.

Take Action to Close the Achievement Gap

Issue: All students should have the opportunity to be successful in school, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, native language, and ability, and deserve highly skilled teachers who have high expectations for every student. MCCPTA continues to support targeted efforts by MCPS to close the opportunity and achievement gaps experienced by students of color.

MCCPTA will:

- encourage teacher diversity, implicit bias training, and cultural sensitivity training.
- advocate for additional, relevant instructional resources and appropriate training for students.
- advocate for necessary academic interventions.
- encourage increased parent outreach through appropriate MCPS staff.
- encourage timely data driven monitoring and analytics in order to measure progress toward closing the achievement gap.
- advocate for methods to increase the number of students of color adequately prepared to succeed in accelerated and advanced classes.

Encourage Resource Allocations for Specific Learning Groups

Issue: Children have different levels of ability and educational needs. Each one deserves and is entitled to an education in our public schools that meets his or her needs.

MCCPTA will:

- advocate for the appropriate resources, accommodations, and technology for students receiving special education services, whether mainstreamed or in special programs.
- call for appropriate resources and curriculum for all English language learners.
- support appropriate resources and curriculum for advanced level learners.

Improve accountability for effective communications between MCPS and parents

Issue: Parent engagement, which relies on access to information from the schools, enhances student academic performance and social competence.

MCCPTA will:

- encourage uniform, consistent, easily accessible, and timely communication between MCPS and parents regarding anything that affects the academics, safety, or health of our students; and,
- strongly support the offering of information to parents in their native languages, given the diversity of the county.

Support Successful Technology Integration in Classrooms

Issue: Students are growing up in a world that is increasingly technology dependent, and computer competency is essential.

MCCPTA will:

- advocate for a fully functional system-wide technology plan that helps teachers use 21st-century knowledge, strategies, and skills to create an effective and motivating environment, supports curricular and educational standards, provides flexible technology to meet the needs of diverse learners, and meets the requirements for statewide PARCC assessments .