**Families helping families campaign (From December**)

Information from Gillian Huebner

The Families Helping Families campaign is a partnership between MCCPTA, MCPS, and the MCPS Education Foundation. It was set up in an effort to build on the very successful efforts of a number of individual schools to raise funds for grocery gift cards to support families facing food insecurity. Over the spring and summer, a number of our schools -- mostly in heavily impacted communities -- mobilized more than $65,000 in short order. Our goal was to scale up this model and take it county-wide.

Since launching in September, the Families Helping Families campaign has received 355 donations totaling $34,410. To date, $1,000 in grocery cards have been distributed through the MCPS Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement (OSFSE). Distribution has been slow as accountability systems have had to be established. We have received assurances that the majority of funds will be disbursed prior to winter break.

A main takeaway is that individual school efforts appear to have been more successful at raising funds and more efficient in terms of distribution. Of course, PTAs have had to grapple with restrictions on various funding campaigns and gift cards. The Families Helping Families campaign was meant to offer an alternative.

We may want to take a closer look at schools that have mobilized ongoing support for their communities, including Ridgeview MS and Einstein HS, to name a few. It's worth documenting some of these best practices.