

## PROPOSED 2017-18 ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) is comprised of 193 local PT(S)As in Montgomery County, MD, representing approximately 200,000 students, parents, family members, teachers, staff and administrators of Montgomery County Public Schools. To ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, native language, and ability, MCCPTA will advocate for MCPS to achieve the following:

- **KIRWAN COMMISSION.** MCCPTA supports state funding formulas that maximize direction of revenue to MCPS, in order to address our increasing operational needs, as Montgomery County's population and needs continue to grow. MCCPTA is committed to working with the Maryland State Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (the "Kirwan Commission") to make certain the State adheres to its Constitutional mandate to provide adequate resources for public education. The Kirwan Commission should promote:
  - Safeguarding current funding formulas, and avoiding untried/unproven alternatives;
  - Every child receiving high quality (accountable) instruction to meet students' particular needs;
  - Class sizes remaining limited, to advance appropriately individualized education;
  - Early childhood education accessible to all Montgomery County residents.
- **REVITALIZATION/EXPANSION.** MCPS should engage in a robust dialogue with the community in creating/implementing an equitable process to determine how and when schools are modernized. It is imperative that options are fully explained to parents and staff before decisions are made to relieve students affected by aging buildings. MCPS should solicit considerable input from the community throughout the process. MCPS should work to ensure student-staf ratios and new facilities are optimized to reduce school overcrowding and specialized instruction.
- **MCPS FUNDING.** Distribution of MCPS funding, programs, resources and staff should be equitable based on the needs of individual schools and student populations and should ensure that class sizes are appropriately limited across the County. Boundaries and resources should be adjusted with community input, as needed to ensure that students in low-performing schools receive equal opportunities as those in high-performing schools.
- **ADVANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS.** Academic options such as International Baccalaureate or Advanced Placement programs should be made available to all eligible students, including through creative, research-based means, such as distance learning, to address the Achievement/Opportunity gap. MCPS must ensure that all students - high achievers, grade-level learners and those with special needs - are offered the most challenging coursework suitable to their abilities.

- **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.** In furtherance of closing achievement gaps and supporting Montgomery County families, MCCPTA supports implementation of universal pre-kindergarten schooling across the county. Such an initiative would broaden access to such educational opportunities beyond other worthwhile federally supported programs such as Head Start and Early Childhood), which have demonstrated to address the Achievement Gap that currently exists in Montgomery County Schools.
- **WELLNESS.** MCCPTA supports expansion of available wellness resources to MCPS students, including mental health services. Additionally, MCCPTA recommends an increased focus on the social-emotional benefits of improving nutrition for the well-being of both students and staff.
- **SECURITY.** MCPS should ensure the safety of all children in its public schools by establishing secure buildings, an increased focus on adequate security staff at all schools, and prompt and transparent reporting of incidents within schools and criminal activity near schools or involving students. MCCPTA encourages MCPS to evaluate the impact of new disciplinary policies on school safety/security.
- **COMMUNICATION.** Continued MCCPTA-MCPS partnership is required to ensure parents are thoroughly aware of major policy, funding, or procedural changes, such as myMCPS, new elementary report cards, math pathways, course options and other systemwide efforts that affect the success of students.