

Montgomery County Council of PTAs Delegates Assembly Standing Rules

Rule I – Eligibility to Vote at Delegates Assembly

Each local PT(S)A is eligible to receive three delegate (voting) cards for the president and two delegates. There is one vote per delegate, even if he/she represents more than one school. A delegate card is required for introducing and voting on resolutions, motions, and other issues during the delegates assemblies. The lack of a delegate card will not preclude anyone from speaking to a motion or during other discussions.

In order to receive delegate cards, each local PTA must first:

1. Submit the names of delegates to the MCCPTA Office after the delegates have been elected or appointed, using the MCCPTA Blue Book information form. This form should be sent to the MCCPTA office upon election of PT(S)A officers in the spring; and
2. Pay dues (\$1 per member) for at least 25 members to MCCPTA. MCCPTA will mail the delegate cards to the PT(S)A after receiving dues for a minimum of 25 members.

Note: Delegate cards are valid until November 1. Delegates are asked to obtain their predecessor's card. If unable, delegates will be allowed to vote at the September and October delegates assemblies on an honor system as long as he/she possesses a valid local PTA membership card.

Each local PTA may have one or more alternate delegates attend the delegates assembly when a regular delegate is unable to attend. The alternate delegate must have a delegate card to vote. The alternate delegate can use the regular delegate's card or request an alternate delegate card from the MCCPTA Office one week before the delegates assembly. This alternate delegate card is valid for one delegates assembly only.

Rule II - MCCPTA Procedures for Resolutions

MCCPTA has a formal process for the identification of issues for which we take a position, development of a resolution that communicates the position, discussion and debate of the resolution, and adoption of the resolution. The goal of the process is to ensure that MCCPTA speaks with one voice that supports all students.

Identification of Position Issues

MCCPTA adopts positions on priorities for the MCPS Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) each year. If needed, MCCPTA may amend the positions during the year.

MCCPTA may adopt positions on other issues, if they are consistent with the mission and scope of PTA and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Issue under discussion by the Board of Education
- Issue under discussion by County Council
- Issue of broad interest across MCPS (i.e. affects multiple clusters)
- Issue addressed in the Governor's budget or under discussion by the Maryland General Assembly

The following groups can bring issues to MCCPTA for consideration as a position:

- MCCPTA Committees
- Local PT(S)As
- PT(S)A Clusters
- MCCPTA Executive Committee
- MCCPTA Board of Directors

With the exception of Operating Budget and CIP priority resolutions, the group that identifies the issue must contact the MCCPTA vice president for educational issues (VPE) and indicate the need for an MCCPTA position. The VPE will ensure that the appropriate committee is involved in development of the position. If an appropriate committee does not exist, the MCCPTA executive committee will help develop the position or will assign an ad hoc committee.

Development of an MCCPTA Position

If the position does not originate from a committee, the group that proposes the position provides the appropriate committee with background information that allows it to understand the relevance and impact on students, families, and schools.

A committee may determine that an issue is not appropriate for development of an MCCPTA position statement for the following reasons:

1. The issue is addressed by positions or resolutions from MCCPTA, Maryland PTA, or National PTA. (In some cases resolutions that are addressed by other layers of PTA may be reaffirmed by resolution if extra emphasis on the issue is deemed important.)
2. The proposed position is contrary to the Objectives and Mission of PTA.
3. The scope of the issue is deemed too narrow.

If the committee determines that the issue is not appropriate for development of an MCCPTA position statement, it will first inform the Board of Directors of its decision and the reason. Next, it will respond to the proposing group and direct the group towards resources to address the issue at a local level. As needed, the group can request input from the committee. The group

can request that their issue and the committee's decision be reported at the next delegates assembly.

If the committee determines that it is appropriate to develop an MCCPTA position addressing the issue, the steps below will be followed. This preferred process allows initial input by the relevant committee, the MCCPTA board of directors and further discussion by the delegates assembly and local units. Expedited processes for time sensitive issues are presented later in this document.

1. The committee drafts a resolution that includes background information and a recommended MCCPTA position. It is expected that the committee is comprised of individuals who are experts in the subject matter or who have a high interest in the subject and will conduct thorough research. Thus, an in-depth discussion of the topic should occur at the committee level.
2. The draft resolution is presented to the MCCPTA board of directors for discussion, debate, and vote. The purpose of the vote is to determine whether the resolution is sent to the delegates assembly for further discussion, sent back to the committee for further development, or not developed into an MCCPTA position.
3. The draft resolution is presented to the delegates assembly. The delegates assembly does not vote on the resolution when it is first presented. The committee presents the resolution and provides relevant background information to ensure the delegates understand the rationale and context of the resolution.
4. Delegates take the resolution to their local PT(S)A for discussion and input. Each delegate should request time at the next PT(S)A meeting for discussion of the resolution. To aid broad discussion of the resolution, the topic should be publicized to the local PT(S)A prior to the meeting. The PT(S)A considers the issue and provides guidance to the delegate, so the delegate can vote on behalf of the local PT(S)A.
5. The resolution is presented for vote at the next delegates assembly. The committee chair summarizes the background information and presents the proposed MCCPTA position in motion form which, coming from a committee, does not require a second. Debate on the motion is conducted by the president, with the committee chair serving as a resource person for questions from the floor. The amendment and voting process is also conducted by the president. The delegates assembly can amend the resolution or send it back to the board of directors for further work. Delegates represent the opinion of their local PT(S)A when they present and/or vote on amendments, and vote on resolutions.

Time sensitive issues

In some cases time constraints make the above procedure impossible. For example, an earlier position statement by MCCPTA may be needed prior to action by the Board of Education, County Council, or other official body.

Depending on the time constraints, one of the following expedited procedures is followed. The expedited procedures are presented in decreasing order of preference. The goal is to allow input from as broad a representation of MCCPTA members as possible. The board of directors will be notified by E-list prior to initiation of any expedited process.

Expedited process one

Skip the discussion at the board of directors meeting and begin the process at the delegates assembly, followed by local PT(S)A discussion and a vote at the next Delegates Assembly.

Expedited process two

Following discussion at the board of directors meeting, present the position for discussion and vote at the next delegates assembly. The draft resolution, which includes background information and a recommended MCCPTA position, is sent to the delegates at least 15 days prior to the next delegates assembly. Delegates should get input from their local PT(S)A prior to the discussion and vote at the delegates assembly. It is recognized that elementary school PTAs, in addition to secondary school PT(S)As that do not meet every month, may not meet prior to the delegates assembly. Delegates should work with the school PT(S)As to solicit input on the issue, holding a special meeting if needed. *(At the delegates assembly, a motion to consider the resolution on an emergency basis must be proposed and then approved by a two-thirds majority. Adoption of the emergency resolution is accomplished by a majority vote.)*

Expedited process three

The board of directors takes an official position (motion by the board), without any discussion at a delegates assembly. *(At the board meeting, a motion to consider the motion on an emergency basis must be proposed and then approved by a two-thirds majority. Adoption of the emergency motion is accomplished by a majority vote.)*

Debate of a Motion or Resolution at Delegates Assembly

All motions shall be presented in writing. Debate shall be limited to 15 minutes per motion. The recording secretary or a board member designated by the president shall serve as timekeeper during each meeting. Motions to extend debate should be made prior to the time expiration. Debate is limited to members of the delegates assembly; the members of the delegates assembly may grant a non-delegate the privilege of speaking by a majority vote.

In debate, each speaker will be limited to two minutes per turn. Each individual has the right to speak more than once on the same question on the same day, but may not make an additional speech on the same question so long as anyone who has not spoken on that question desires the floor.

A Resolution Illustrating its Own Proper Form

Whereas, That portion of a resolution comprising the phrases starting with the word "whereas" is known as the preamble of the resolution; and

Whereas, The preamble includes only statements of fact or background information comprising the reasons for the action proposed in the resolving clauses that are not common knowledge or self-evident and may be overlooked if not stated; and

Whereas, The action taken on a resolution is really only action on the motion incorporated solely in its resolving clauses, not the preamble; and

Whereas, Brevity creates a good listener; therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is directed that the resolutions submitted to MCCPTA for consideration shall follow this sample resolution in structure, punctuation, and content.

(This sample resolution adapted from New Jersey PTA and National PTA materials.)

Note in particular that PTA policy consists solely of the "Resolved" portion of the resolution and that the "Whereas" clauses exist for background and rationale only.

Announcing an MCCPTA Position

- **Letter to Appropriate Official** - An MCCPTA position is usually conveyed by a letter from the president to the appropriate official, sometimes with copies to related officials.
- **Testimony** - An MCCPTA position may be presented as testimony at a Board of Education or County Council public hearing, or at a meeting of a committee at which testimony is appropriate.

The president or his/her designee presents testimony that represents an MCCPTA position. The president's testimony is based on MCCPTA positions developed for this purpose.

- **Board of Education Public Comments** - An MCCPTA position may be briefly presented before the Board of Education during the public comments time that is scheduled as part of two monthly business meetings.
- **Press Release** - An MCCPTA position may be presented in press release form and submitted to area newspapers. The president works with the appropriate MCCPTA leaders or relevant committee to develop and submit a press release.
- **Letter to the Editor** - An MCCPTA position along with summarized background information may be submitted to area newspapers as a Letter to the Editor from the MCCPTA president. While any citizen can submit a letter to the editor as an individual, letters that include the MCCPTA position title or office as part of the signature must be coordinated with the president before submission.