

To: MCCPTA Board

From: Julie Reiley, MCCPTA Special Education Committee Chair

Cc: Rachel Tate; Maria Blaeuer

Date: October 2019

On October 7th we held the first of our three annual committee meetings. These meetings are for the special education chairs, but are also open to all parents. At the October meeting we welcomed all parents, but the meeting was largely focused on explaining the role of the local special education chair, support to serving chairs, general advocacy tips, IEP meeting tips, and updating the audience on common, and current, topics and issues in special education. We had a formal presentation, handouts, Q&A, and general discussion. The event was very well attended.

We are in the process of creating a database of chairs, getting chairs signed up for our listserv, and continuing to recruit volunteers.

The special education committee has recommended an MCCPTA advocacy priority.

• **Issues of Concern in Special Education**

- Provision of para-professional support in general education classes
- Sufficient co-taught classes
 - Common concern – schools that allocate support based upon current staffing instead of students’ needs
 - Per IDEA, all IEPs must provide the support actually needed by the student
 - If the school needs to request extra staffing from central office, they are obligated to do so.
- Accommodations, e.g., extended time, for mock SAT and ACT tests at all high schools
- Roll out of new Dyslexia intervention – Orton-Gillingham – and training of staff
- Overly long bus rides
- Lack of sufficient continuum of placements/ programs
 - This refers in part, but not exclusively, to the loss of the secondary learning centers
 - BOE member Rebecca Smondrowski has granted a parent advocate request to conduct a survey
- Access to iPhones for instructional use

- Access extracurricular programs and activities
- Data privacy

Planning Annual MCCPTA Special Education Committee Awards

We are in the process of soliciting volunteers for the 2020 award ceremony.

For the 2020 ceremony, I highly recommend:

1. **Forming a multi-member award ceremony committee in the early fall**, with a ceremony chair (this could be the special education committee chair), and three or more members who are assigned specific responsibilities;
2. Specifically stating on the nomination form that submissions by any single person are limited to one nomination per category (or stating that under special circumstances, permission may be given to submit more than one nomination per category, but it must be requested and received in advance for the additional submissions to be processed);
3. Specifically stating on the nomination form that individuals must be nominated by a third party (*i.e.*, you can't nominate yourself);
4. No longer *ensuring* that everyone receives at least an HM; and
5. Specifically stating on the form (and in the emails soliciting nominations) that the top half of the form requesting the contact details, *including the nominee's email address*, **must** be filled out in order for the nomination to be accepted and processed.

Parent Outreach / Support

We have continued to support parents who contact us.

Local PTA/PTSAs Special Education Chairs

We need to continue to fill special education committee positions on local PTAs.

Quarterly Meeting with Kevin Lowndes, Associate Superintendent for Special Education

We will continue quarter meetings with Kevin Lowndes, Associate Superintendent for Special Education.