

Since December 1-- Meetings/Calls/Events:

- 12/1 AVP Discussion – Quarterly Meetings
- 12/2 Excomm Meeting with Superintendent
- 12/2 OCIP Meeting
- 12/2 Excomm Meeting – Prep for Dec BOD
- 12/3 Discussion with Black and Brown Leadership – Principal Placements
- 12/3 Testimony – Board of Education Meeting (Course load at Secondary Level)
- 12/7 Meeting with Derek Turner – Questions on MCPS Metrics
- 12/8 Interview MyMCMedia – School Reopening Concerns
- 12/9 Meeting with Niki Hazel – Course load concerns
- 12/9 AVP Meeting with Area Associate Superintendents – Principal Process; Grading Concerns
- 12/9 MCCPTA Board of Directors
- 12/10 Recovery Team – Policy and Regulations
- 12/11 MCCPTA Comms Committee – Website Design
- 12/11 MOCO Students for Change – SRO Discussion
- 12/14 MCPS Education Foundation – Art Supply Discussion
- 12/16 NAACP Community Meeting
- 12/17 OFSE Meeting – Virtual Learning Supports
- 12/18 MCPS Communications Briefing
- 12/21 National PTA/MDPTA -- Discussion
- 1/4 MCCPTA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Discussion
- 1/4 MCCPTA Operating Budget Prep
- 1/7 Antiracism Audit Steering Committee Meeting (part 1)
- 1/8 MCEA Legislative Kick-off Session
- 1/11 Antiracism Audit Steering Committee Meeting (part 2)
- 1/11 Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board – SRO Discussion
- 1/11 BOE Operating Budget Testimony

Top 10 -- Activities/Concerns:

- 1) **MDPTA Concerns/National PTA** – MDPTA issued language permitting local units to conduct “business” remotely. (Yes! Finally!!) At present, no clarifying information has been provided by MDPTA (though guidance was promised). National PTA has provided in writing a status report (attached). Council Presidents held a meeting with National Support Team and the remaining MDPTA officers on December 21. This meeting largely centered on Council leaders expressing concerns about MDPTA current leadership, lack of transparency with MDPTA financials, and concerns about the credentials of the current officers. National PTA has pledged to provide routine updates. I’ve sent several follow up requests for information. To date, no response.
- 2) **Operating Budget Testimony** –With operating budget before us, worked with Laura Mitchell to prep cluster coordinators and provide opportunity to engage in discussion with MCPS staff. MCCPTA President testimony will be delivered on January 19.
- 3) **School Resource Officers (SRO)** – MCCPTA has been asked to engage in discussions related to SROs. Rob Wilcox, MCCPTA Chair of School Climate and Safety, has been serving on the SRO work group with MCPS. Related, MCCPTA’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee has worked on testimony from the committee and will be presenting a resolution to the MCCPTA Board of Directors for review and possible transmittal to the Delegates.
- 4) **Recovery Education** – Continued in discussions with the Policy and Regulations Design Team feedback/comment on MCPS planning process. Also continued to participate with the Recovery Education team that is made up of

the broader county leaders – County Council, MCPS, Montgomery College, USG, Independent Schools, HHS, etc. on how to best support students going forward.

- 5) **Principal Selection/Placements** -- Following conversations MCCPTA held last year regarding principal selection process (and timing/role of community/transparency in that selection), the last Area VP Meeting included discussions on process being followed and opportunities for upgrades. Related, MCPS conducted a study on the principals, focusing on principal turnover and attrition. Included in the study is data on the current demographics of the principal pool as compared to the demographics of the school and other interesting details related to longevity.
[https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/sharedaccountability/reports/2019/Final%20Principal%20Study%20-Graph%20corrected%20%201_23_20%20\(002\).pdf](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/sharedaccountability/reports/2019/Final%20Principal%20Study%20-Graph%20corrected%20%201_23_20%20(002).pdf)
- 6) **Ombudsman** – MCCPTA Executive Committee engaged in discussions with the Superintendent’s office about the Ombudsman position last month. Particularly during an appeals process, it seems very few parents know how to avail themselves of the ombudsman services. MCCPTA has included the following in the 20-21 Advocacy Priorities “Designate an impartial ombudsman to guide families in navigating the complexities of the system and ensure fair treatment.” The current structure does not seem impartial as the same individual that is to advocate on behalf of the family is also the Chief of Staff for the Board of Education, where appeals eventually may lead. In the January meeting with the Superintendent, we hope to get information requested in the last meeting – history of why the positions were merged, percentage of time currently spent on ombudsman duties vs. chief of staff role, and information on how many appeals are filed each year and how many of those result in overturning a MCPS decision.
- 7) **BOE Testimony – Course Selection (repeated from last month)** – In response to the numerous concerns raised by parents, particularly of high school students enrolled in AP/IB courses that have external assessments administered, I testified before the BOE. At present, we have students taking up to 8 academic courses, with a high percentage of the work having to be self-taught. MCPS has an option for students to reduce course load but few families know of this option. Full testimony here – https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zbDemVTOx7IKnw_kklpXq7qwKxanQg/view
- 8) **Option to “W”ithdraw** – Related to the BOE testimony above, MCPS has JEC-RA that outlines how courses that are dropped after 25 days are to be treated on the student transcript.
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/jecra.pdf> Students that struggled with course loads and attempted to drop classes were often counseled they had to maintain a full schedule, accommodating dropping one class but required to replace with another. Students that tried to drop courses after the 25 day period were advised the “W” and grade would still appear on their transcript. The inclusion of “W” on the transcript and the grade averaged and included is not a requirement of MSDE but is a MCPS requirement and offering this option could be an opportunity to relieve student stress for the duration of the pandemic/recovery period. I’m advocating for giving the students as many options as possible.
- 9) **Pass/Fail (Credit/No Credit) and Opportunity**– MCPS has a current policy restricting the options for students. ISB-RA, <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/isbra.pdf> includes the option of Credit/No Credit (Pass/Fail) but MCPS has restricted the use so severely, making 541+ courses ineligible for this option because the classes carry the Certificate of Merit (CM) designation, a MCPS-developed honor. Because this is a MCPS policy, not driven by COMAR, I’ve been engaging in conversation with the Curriculum Committee and BOE members about the possibility of extending this option to students that are struggling with maintaining grades in this pandemic/virtual model.
- 10) **Food Security** – MCPS Policy Committee proposed a new draft policy Board Policy JPH, *School Food and Nutrition Services Programs*, and is seeking public comment from now until February 12, 2021. The presentation reviewed by the Board on December 3, 2020 is available [here](#). Comments can be submitted [here](#). Several PTAs have supported community garden/school garden efforts.