**President’s Report Submitted by: Cynthia Simonson**

**May 12, 2021 president@mccpta.org**

**Since April 1-- Meetings/Calls/Events:**

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| 4/6 | MCCPTA Curriculum Committee Meeting with OCIP |
| 4/6 | 2.5 Meeting |
| 4/7 | Charter School Review – Pick Up Materials |
| 4/7 | Delegates Assembly – Continuance Meeting |
| 4/8 | Community Meeting on Math – Associate Superintendent of Curriculum |
| 4/10 | Community Representatives – Discussion on MCPS Math Rollout |
| 4/12 | 2.5 Meeting |
| 4/15 | Meeting with Associate Superintendent of Curriculum |
| 4/15 | MCCPTA Virtual Learning Committee Meeting |
| 4/16 | Meeting with Operating Budget Chair |
| 4/20 | Meeting with SSL subcommittee Chair |
| 4/20 | Interview on MSDE graduation changes |
| 4/25 | 2.5 Meeting |
| 4/22 | Deputy Superintendent Advisory Group – 2.5 Review/Discussion |
| 4/22 | Discussion with Chief of Teaching, Learning and Schools – Resource Equity |
| 4/26 | 2.5 Meeting |
| 4/27 | Delegates Assembly |
| 4/28 | MCCPTA Executive Committee Meeting with Superintendent |
| 4/28 | Antiracist Audit Steering Committee Meeting |
| 4/29 | Meeting with MCCPTA Communications Chair |
| 4/29 | Meeting with Associate Superintendent of Curriculum |
| 5/3 | 2.5 Meeting |
| 5/4 | Resource Equity Discussion with Chief of OTLS and Area Associates |
| 5/5 | Meeting with MCAAP re: Principal Participation in Filling PTA Board Positions |
| 5/10 | Watkins Mill Presidents Meeting |
| 5/11 | Public Comment – BOE Meeting on SRO |
| 5/11 | Hallie Wells PTA Meeting – guest |
| 5/12 | Resource Equity Discussion with Chief of OTLS and Area Associates |

**Top 10 -- Activities/Concerns:**

1. **National PTA –** National PTA pulled the Charter of MDPTA on March 26, 2021. I’ve continued to message to National about concerns raised by our constituents. Worked with Communications Chair to craft FAQs to address concerns related to impact of MDPTA’s dissolution. Distributed via elists any information. Continue to advocate for Reflections to be adjudicated and students updated ASAP.

1. **School Resource Officers (SRO) –** Last month, the 2021 Resolution was amended, passed, and the 2010 Resolution rescinded. Provided testimony before the BOE on May 11 reporting the MCCPTA resolution and raising concerns about the MCPS “stakeholder feedback” that included focus groups of community members involving only 7 individuals. With all the concerns about this particular program, I am concerned MCPS found 7 an acceptable number for the focus groups.
2. **Food Security** – Worked with the Nutrition and School Food subcommittee to craft testimony asking BOE to delay implementing JPH policy that would give an “alternate meal” to students whose accounts are in arrears – putting the impact of negative balances on the student, not the parent. Interview with Bethesda Beat (which was picked up on Twitter) resulted in BOE delaying discussion. I’m hopeful the Board’s delay will allow MCPS to address some of the concerns [food security advocates have raised](https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/schools/mcps-considering-alternate-meals-for-students-with-lunch-debt/).
3. **Resource Equity** – Multiple conversations in this timeframe with Area Associate Superintendents regarding principal requests. In some instances, principals are requesting items in warehouse (copy paper, pencils, pens). In other instances, principals have requested items from the PTA that are prohibited by MCPS to purchase (plexiglass shields for the classroom). This spurs a larger conversation about guidelines from MCPS on what principals should be [requesting of PTAs](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JJeP_6XBOm8Z-P3rSlw6_m6Aolgw0r9lCdaqhRdgNHI/edit), how to treat our schools more equitably, and how the PTA resources and the Principal’s Independent Activity Fund are linked. (Related – followed up regarding a HS that was charging $40 for “dues” to participate in graduation – covers water, flowers, decorations, and security – how is this monitored and why would some HS charge “dues” for graduates and others don’t?) In coming months, exploring with MCPS what principals are requesting – is that “appropriate” use of PTA funds and how can MCPS reallocate resources to flatten the “additional supports” available at one school over another.
4. **Reopening/Waitlists/Participation Limits for MCPS** – Testified before County Council on event limits (e.g., 4000 person stadium limited to 50 spectators) and continued conversations with Associate Area Superintendents around collapsing A/B weeks. We recognize some schools are at the “capacity” outlined in January but as vaccine rates climb, cases plummet, are we remaining responsive to our customer – the student. Also asked for clarity on graduation plans, promotion ceremonies, unity day, etc. and how the CDC reports of low transmission at outside events is adjusting prior plans.
5. **2.5 Recovery –** As part of Recovery, MCPS has established a Recovery Advisory team to support 4 areas. MCCPTA has representation in each committee. I serve as a community advisor in the Digital Learning Committee that is currently crafting the framework for the Virtual Academy.
6. **Curriculum/HS Graduation Requirements/Math Pathways**– Sigh… this has taken up a lot of bandwidth but all worthy, noble discussions. VP Education and Curriculum Chair will discuss in more detail but I wanted to flag here because these are near and dear discussions that are the reason I got involved with PTA in the first place. This week, we sent public comments for the MSDE graduations requirement changes that would affect rising 9th graders (class of 2025 and all classes following).
7. **Establishing Rules/Process/Updating Materials** – Worked with MCCPTA Office manager, bylaws chair, and communications chair to establish more clarity around processes and hopefully, empower advocacy by streamlining approaches. Began working with Office manager on updating the Guidebooks MCCPTA has on the training page (last updated in 2015). We’ll aim to get those updated and available for incoming officers in June 2021.
8. **MCCPTA Statements** – Recently, we’ve aimed to get more process aspects related to how we interact as a body. When there is something a committee wants to speak out on, solicit, comment, etc., establishing a process so at a minimum, anything going out has been reviewed/approved by the Executive Committee to ensure the “body” is all moving the same direction. Several items have gone through this process including Statement on Asian Hate, Bodycam footage of East Silver Spring Student, MSDE public comment.
9. **Ombudsman** – MCCPTA Executive Committee met with the Superintendent in April to continue conversations regarding the current Ombudsman office. When families raise concerns with a school, if the initial response is not satisfactory for the family, the process becomes very circular with the inability to easily elevate and have an impartial review of a situation. 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 superintendent has agreed to review the situation but has not committed to stand up a separate and independent office for this purpose. In the next (and last) excomm meeting, we will be discussing the appeals process in more detail to better understand how the process is designed to work and where there is opportunity for improvement.