

**April – May 11 -- Meetings/Calls/Events:**

- 4/2 MSDE Meeting with Free State – Upcoming Listening Session
  - 4/6 MCCPTA BOD Meeting
  - 4/6 Anti-Racist Audit Steering Committee Meeting
  - 4/6 District Assessment Committee Meeting
  - 4/19 Pat O’Neill Memorial Event
  - 4/20 Executive Committee Meeting with Interim Superintendent – Athletics/Mental Health Supports
  - 4/21 COAT Meeting
  - 4/21 COG-RA Discussion/Recommendation Meeting
  - 4/26 Discussions with Insurance regarding MCCPTA D&O coverage
  - 4/26 MCCPTA Delegates Assembly
  - 4/27 – Transition items with incoming MCCPTA President; tying up MCCPTA business; transitions with present MCPS officials
  - 4/28 District Assessment Committee
  - 4/28 Interview with Attorney to possibly represent MCCPTA
  - 4/30 Free State Listening Session with MSDE
  - 5/5 COAT Meeting
  - 5/6 Meeting with MCCPTA Insurance Carrier on Legal Representation/D&O Coverage
  - 5/9 Discussions on food security/options
  - 5/10 Meeting with MCCPTA Legal Counsel re: National PTA vs. LaTonya Carrera, et al
  - 5/10 Celebration/Reflections Meeting
  - 5/11 Vaccine Providers Meeting
  - 5/11 Prep for Deposition w/ Legal Counsel re: National PTA vs. LaTonya Carrera, et al
  - 5/11 Antiracist Audit Steering Committee Meeting
- Anticipated between now and end of actual term on 5/19*
- 5/12 MCCPTA Gifted Education Committee Meeting with Ombuds
  - 5/18 Executive Committee Meeting with Interim Superintendent
  - 5/18 MCCPTA/League of Women Voters’ – BOE Candidate Forum
  - 5/19 Celebration of Excellence, including Reflections Awards Celebration

**Key Activities/Concerns:**

- 1) **MDPTA/Free State** – As mentioned at the last Delegates Assembly (and reflected in the meetings list above), I’ve been subpoenaed by the defense attorney in the civil litigation case National PTA has brought against LaTonya Carrera, et. al. The Directors and Officers insurance is paying for MCCPTA to be represented and will provide support to me through the deposition. I will continue to provide updates to the MCCPTA Board of Directors through the deposition process.
- 2) **COAT/Vaccine Sites** – MCCPTA continues to be recognized for our tremendous partnership with MCPS, and our county partners, in providing vaccine information and access throughout the county. Huge gratitude to Laura Mitchell, MCCPTA VP of Advocacy, who has spearheaded this effort and her valiant assistant, Lima Abdullah, the MCCPTA Advocacy Chair. With the \$30,000 in grants from National PTA to support vaccine-resistant communities, we are well positioned to assist in providing numerous opportunities for families to access. This has been a tremendous opportunity for MCCPTA to be seen as a true partner within the community organizations. I look forward to seeing how this grows.
- 3) **School Security and Safety** – MCPS instituted a new MOU with the police department. As I leave the leadership position of MCCPTA, I’d urge MCCPTA to be deliberate in the request for data and ensure the reporting follows as designed (with all CEOs data reporting to a central place rather than to their individual organizations). I would also remind the Delegates, MCPS promised years ago they would provide more timely data of serious incidents.

At present, we are able to access School Safety reports through an annual report [here](#). These reports often drop mid-way through the next school year making it impossible to see the integrity of the reporting. By the time these summaries are available, it is often 18-20 months after an incident occurred. Included in this summary is instances when police are called to our schools. My encouragement is to ensure MCPS provides more timely updates to the public than this report.

- 4) **MCPS Committee Representation** – This year, I asked our BOD Secretary to capture the committees where MCCPTA had representation. What I observed the last couple of years were instances where I would attend meetings and see individuals that were very active in the MCCPTA Board/Delegates Assembly 3 or 4 (or in one case, 12 years ago) that were still sitting on committees, presumably representing MCCPTA. Having been so involved in MCCPTA the last 6 years, I know these MCPS-led committees can be very influential and if individuals are representing MCCPTA, then they really should be engaged with MCCPTA. If individuals are no longer part of MCCPTA structure but MCPS wants to keep them involved, they should be recognized as individuals, not as part of the organization. Here is what I would encourage:
  - a. The Executive Committee/President should ensure each year, MCPS revalidate the list of participants representing MCCPTA. We often have individuals on these committees for 2-3 years (and that is fine, actually, it is very helpful when there is continuity) but when they tap out of MCCPTA, they should also tap out of representing the organization on countywide committees.
  - b. Routine updates to the Delegates outlining who is sitting on what county-wide committees.
  - c. Expect periodic reports from the individuals representing MCCPTA on committees. I sit on several (which are often, but not always, captured in my monthly reports) but that is a reasonable expectation if the point of being on the committee is to represent MCCPTA.
- 5) **Follow the Money:** This was the first year I sat on the Operating Budget Committee and I'm not sure I really know more now about the MCPS Operating Budget now than I did before I participated in 20+ hours of meetings. If you have an acumen for finance, this would be a great service to the organization to volunteer to be on the Operating Committee and keep asking the critical questions to bring transparency to MCPS's financial practices. Many services that are contracted out seem to be masked within large categories. How the temporary part-time staffing is working, particularly with regard to hiring back former employees immediately following retirement through contracts, is particularly interesting and worth exploring further (especially when most of those contracts involve increasing the staffing at central office).
- 6) **MCPS Athletics** – This is an “open loop” with the Interim Superintendent as we've asked MCPS Central Office to audit some of the practices surrounding athletics. If MCPS wants the athletics programs to be more equitable, then let's audit the programs. Where is transportation provided and where is it not? Why do some sports always have buses and other sports are dependent on parent drivers? Why are some sports always given preference on the stadium field and others are never given the prime location to practice? Last month I [asked PTA leaders](#) to give us an idea of what is happening in the field. Athletics plays a huge role in some student's mental health and can be a great intersection for students. If we are going to say we have an equitable system, let's make sure it really is an equitable system.
- 7) **The Arts** – As mentioned last month, it was very sad (for me) that MCPS did not make the spring musicals/shows taking place across the district a priority to advertise and support. I'm grateful to the PTA leaders that crowdsourced [this document](#) but just as athletics plays a huge role in some students' mental health, the same is true about the arts. I hope MCCPTA will use their voice in the coming years to ensure the students that find their voice and the arts are rightfully celebrated.
- 8) **Policy for Public Comment Opportunities** – I have presided over enough meetings to know it is HARD to get DA coordination on comments. But, I know of no greater opportunity to influence the system than to get comments into the public record when policies are coming up for review. In today's BOE meeting, we saw the power of the MCCPTA voice as MCPS adjusted their original intention with a policy around school lunch debt. Our School Food and Nutrition Committee, led by Lynn Amano and our friends at Healthy School Food Maryland, were unyielding in advocating that students should not be singled out by giving them an “alternate meal” when their parents have

allowed their lunch account to go above a specific threshold. I'd urge MCCPTA to include a routine update to the Delegates on what [policies are up for public comment](#) (even if it is just listing the due dates at the bottom of the DA agenda) so PTAs across the county can focus on the advocacy issues that empower our families.

- 9) **Community Mindedness** – Part of our mission includes empowering communities... It has been my great privilege to engage with community leaders, particularly those likeminded individuals that are also aiming to empower communities to advocate for children! MCCPTA is well-recognized and there are so many organizations that would love to tap into the communities we serve. The challenge is the parts of our county that would benefit the most from these community connections are often the same communities that struggle with forming PTAs and getting their memberships off the ground. We have a number of PTAs that have defaulted in the last couple of years – which is no surprise as the pandemic created lack of coordination and many of the routine functions seemed unimportant in the midst of everything else occurring. If you have a passion for community building, please join the membership committee and lend your support in helping these PTAs re-establish.
  
- 10) **One of the Greatest Honors** – As many of you know, I did not seek out the MCCPTA Presidency (I was very happy in the number two position) but sometimes, things happen. Of course, I didn't know days after assuming the Presidency, a virus would take hold that would transform everything. I have a list of individuals that mentored me in my early days of MCCPTA and supported me during these last couple of years. I often get credit for our successful advocacy, but I acknowledge, it is because theirs are the shoulders I've stood on as I've led this organization. In a few short days, I'll assume my new role "Immediate Past President" with a new email address [pastpresident@mccpta.org](mailto:pastpresident@mccpta.org) and an empty inbox! It has been a great honor to lead the largest advocacy organization in Montgomery County and I look forward to cheering on the next administration and seeing where the Delegates will take us in advocating for all children because that, my friends, is what we're here to do tonight. Be well.