

2018-19 MCCPTA ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) is comprised of 193 local PT(S)As advocating for more than 200,000 students, parents, family members, teachers, staff and administrators of Montgomery County Public Schools. MCCPTA's priority is to ensure that **every** student feels safe, welcome, and valued for being exactly who they are.

• ACCESS TO EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES

All children in MCPS should be offered equitable opportunities to engage in challenging programming, including multiple career paths. Academic options should be made available as needed, including distance learning through technology or by providing transportation to schools with specific programs. Adequate support should be provided to schools when implementing the homeschool models for special education and enrichment, especially at the primary and middle school levels. Additional resources for children who receive FARMS should be available to each child, no matter which school they attend.

• CAPITAL FUNDS AND FACILITIES

To accommodate the growing student population, MCCPTA supports an increase in the capital budget to reduce overcrowding and maintain existing infrastructure. MCPS should publish all Key Facility Indicator data and how it was obtained. The socioeconomic makeup of the school population should be a factor in prioritization of projects. Due to scarcity of funds, solutions beyond building new schools and additions should be implemented to relieve overcrowding, including filling empty seats in underutilized schools by incorporating programming solutions, analyzing boundaries, and utilizing non-traditional facilities. MCCPTA supports exploring alternative calculations of student generation to better project student enrollment and ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with development. The State and County capital budget should include improvements to infrastructure around schools, including roadways and adjacent pedestrian facilities, to provide safe routes to schools.

• CLASS SIZE TASK FORCE

MCCPTA supports the creation of a task force to study the impact of class size on all educational outcomes, on operating costs, and on capital costs.

• COMMUNICATION

MCCPTA-MCPS partnership is required to ensure that parents are informed of major policy, funding, procedural, and programmatic changes proposed or implemented in schools. Outreach should be implemented in multiple languages and non-traditional approaches as needed, including community-based organizations, to ensure community feedback when implementing any new program or policy.

• CURRICULUM

MCCPTA supports MCPS's decision to provide an improved curriculum for grades K-8. MCPS should engage all stakeholders in this review and curriculum selection. The curriculum should include support enrichment and appropriate challenges for all children, including children with Special Needs, enrolled in ESOL, and the Highly Gifted. Professional development for staff implementing new curriculum must be a priority. The curriculum for all grades should include diverse content and culturally-relevant teaching strategies, reflecting the diversity of the student body. MCPS should follow evidence-based best practices for use of digital content in the classroom and review how time spent on screens relates to outcomes.

- **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY**

MCCPTA supports thoughtful approaches to make MCPS a system of schools that are more reflective of our county's diversity. MCPS is a diverse school system, but many of our individual schools are not. We recognize the research showing that truly diverse schools enhance learning for all students. We believe the staff of MCPS, at the school and central level, should reflect the diversity of the MCPS student body.

- **HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

MCCPTA supports an expansion of available wellness resources to ensure that all MCPS students have access to appropriate physical and mental health services, suicide prevention, and supports to students addicted to substances, as well as training for trauma-informed practices among school staff. To ensure a healthy physical environment, MCPS should appropriately test air and water quality and use health-based standards to guide remediation if the quality does not meet standards. School fields should be appropriately installed, maintained, and monitored to ensure the safety of children during outdoor activities. Additionally, MCCPTA recommends improving the nutrition and quality of school-provided meals.

- **OPERATING FUNDS**

MCCPTA supports state funding formulas that address increasing enrollment, operational needs, and the needs of Montgomery County's diverse population of learners. MCCPTA expects The Kirwan Commission (Maryland State Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education) to promote proven high-quality instruction, promote reducing class sizes in Montgomery County, and provide high-quality early childhood education. The county budget should strive to decrease class sizes and increase resources aimed at closing the achievement/opportunity gap. We support the State Constitutional Amendment to require that casino revenues supplement, not supplant, education spending.

- **SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SECURITY**

MCCPTA supports continued assessments of school climate and maintenance of safe conditions and positive school environments that protect all students and adults from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and assault. MCPS should expeditiously improve security in all school buildings by providing secure vestibules, expanding video surveillance in and around all buildings, and ensuring adequate security staff at all schools. MCPS must also work to ensure fidelity in the implementation of policies and protocols related to child protection and safety within all schools and on school buses. MCPS should provide prompt and transparent reporting of incidents within schools, school buses, and criminal activity near schools or involving students; work to reduce disproportionality in discipline; promote restorative practices; and prevent, address and track incidences of bias, discrimination, hate, and sexual harassment.