*** * * D R A F T for BOD - Updated after 9/3/15 BOD* * ***

2015-2016 Advocacy Priorities

MCCPTA Mission: To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) is an association of 192 local PT(S)As in Montgomery County, chartered by Maryland PTA, representing almost 50,000 members. MCCPTA advocates for the students, parents, and teachers of Montgomery County Public Schools on educational priorities, determined by the membership.

As an organization, MCCPTA holds the following as our Advocacy Priorities for 2015-16.

Support School Construction & Capital Improvements
Schools should be safe, modern, comfortable, and welcoming environments for students and staff to facilitate learning.

- In scheduling school capacity and revitalization/expansion (rev/ex) projects, MCCPTA encourages MCPS to consider projected student enrollment and the school's physical condition, as well as the impact of overcrowding on building systems (such as HVAC), lifecycle costs of relocatable classrooms, student and staff safety, quality of the education experience, suitability of the educational environment, and student achievement.
- MCCPTA encourages MCPS to re-evaluate the conditions of all schools in an unbiased, objective manner to determine an appropriate rev/ex schedule.

Focus on Enrollment Growth
MCPS continues to experience tremendous annual enrollment growth due to the county's ongoing development, neighborhood turnover, and population increase.

- MCCPTA encourages MCPS and other county agencies to communicate and coordinate planning and policy for necessary school capacity in concert with residential development.
- MCCPTA continually emphasizes that teacher staffing at a level to keep pace with student growth and the restoration of smaller class sizes are essential.
- MCCPTA advocates for adequate school personnel in teachers, para-educators, support professionals (counselors, nurses, etc.), school staffing and administrators in each school. We support staffing in proportion to the school size and need, not only by the grade level of the school, so that larger schools or those with diverse needs have additional professional staff.

Focus on Closing the Achievement Gap
All students should have the opportunity to be successful in school, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, native language, and ability, and deserve teachers who have high expectations for every student. MCCPTA continues to support targeted efforts by MCPS to close the opportunity and achievement gaps experienced by minority students, including, but not limited to:

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- teacher diversity and cultural sensitivity training;
- providing students with additional, relevant instructional resources and training in their use;
- providing academic interventions;
- increasing parent outreach through appropriate MCPS staff; and
- smaller classes in schools.

Encourage Improved Communications

Parent access to information is important for their engagement in and support of students' academic success. MCCPTA supports uniform, consistent, easily accessible, and timely communication between MCPS and parents regarding anything that affects the academics, safety, or health of our students.

Support Fully Funded School Operating and Capital Budgets

Quality and equitable education must be a priority for our community and public officials. MCCPTA will continue to advocate at the County and State levels for adequate funding for public education.

- We maintain that Montgomery County should receive operating (GCEI) and construction funds from the State in proportion to MCPS' need, growth, and size.
- We will urge the County Council to restore per pupil spending to previous levels (2009?) for the operating budget and recognize that our aging and overcrowded buildings have reached a point of crisis. There is no choice but to increase funds for school construction.

Support Resources for Specific Learning Groups

Children have different levels of ability and needs. Each one deserves and is entitled to an education in our public schools that meets his or her needs.

- MCCPTA continues to advocate for the appropriate resources, accommodations, and technology for students receiving special education services, whether mainstreamed or in special programs.
- MCCPTA calls for appropriate resources and curriculum for all English language learners.
- MCCPTA continues to support appropriate resources and curriculum for advanced level learners.

Support Up-to-Date Classroom Technology

Students are growing up in a world that is increasingly technology dependent, and computer competency is essential. MCCPTA continues to advocate for the implementation of an up-to-date and functional system-wide technology plan that supports the needs of curriculum and educational standards, provides flexible technology to meet the needs of diverse learners, and meets the requirements for statewide PARCC assessments.

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