



MCCPTA Mission

To Make Every Child's Potential A Reality by Engaging and Empowering Families and Communities to Advocate for All Children.

Hacer Una Realidad El Potencial De Cada Niño Al Comprometer y Apoderar Las Familias y Comunidades Para Que Intercedan Por Todos Los Niños.

As an organization, MCCPTA holds the following as our Advocacy Priorities for the 2023-2024 School Year:

ACCESS TO EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES:

- Give all students equitable opportunities for challenging programming, whether core academic, elective, Career Technology Education (CTE) and other career paths, or out of school time ¹ activities. Fund stipends and transportation for elementary students' out of school time activities.
- Provide equitable resources so all students, at all schools and regardless of gender or other differences, have access to sports. Resources include safe playing fields, equipment, practice time, away-game transportation, and staffing.
- Provide adequate support for special education, gifted education, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs in every school.
- Provide additional resources to all students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Meals (FARMS), no matter which school they attend. Implement coordinated campaigns to narrow the gap between FARMS eligibility and enrollment.
- Increase support of and funding for music programs, particularly for middle and high school students who were precluded by the pandemic from full participation in their earlier years, and for English language learners.

CAPITAL FUNDS AND FACILITIES:

- Increase capital improvements funding to reduce overcrowding, to properly maintain existing infrastructure to extend the useful life of our schools, and to ensure Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance in every building.
- Before making recommendations for Major Capital Projects in the capital budget, engage students, staff, families, and area communities when gathering Key Facility Indicator² (KFI) data so that it transparently reflects the full school experience.
- Equitably identify and prioritize projects for remediation of issues related to accessibility, health, and safety (including security, condition, and utilization of buildings). Provide funding to keep aging schools in an acceptable, safe condition and meet standards, including American with Disabilities Act (ADA), temperatures, air quality, and other safety issues, that would trigger emergency renovations.
- Reduce disparities in utilization of school facilities across the county. Use existing facilities more efficiently and innovatively, brainstorm a wider range of options together with MCCPTA and school communities.
- Ensure adequate state and county capital funding to cover roadway and other infrastructure improvements around schools to provide safe routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit riders. Install bike racks at all schools.

¹ Out of School Time (OST) is a supervised program that young people regularly attend when school is not in session. Source: CDC Healthy Schools, [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/ost.htm#:~:text=Out%20of%20School%20Time%20\(OST,school%20is%20not%20in%20session,9/29/2023](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/ost.htm#:~:text=Out%20of%20School%20Time%20(OST,school%20is%20not%20in%20session,9/29/2023).

² KFIs assess major infrastructure elements in a variety of categories. KFIs are components of a facility that taken together provide an overall description of an individual school's facility condition. <https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/performance/>, 9/28/2023.

- 47 • Examine enrollment projection forecasts methods and compare to actual enrollment annually to
48 ensure accuracy. Set a threshold to reexamine and correct forecasting methods whenever the
49 threshold is reached.
- 50 • Communicate the need for and results of any boundary study directly to parents using multiple
51 communication methods, and include an independent assessment of facility utilization, transit
52 safety, and safe routes to school in each study.

53

54 OPERATING FUNDS:

- 55 • Ensure ample County funds to decrease class sizes and increase resources aimed at
56 overcoming learning loss, the achievement/opportunity gap, and lifting underperforming students.
- 57 • Apply best practices and innovative strategies in human resources including diversity and flexible
58 schedules. Develop and fund a robust plan for teacher recruitment and retention to combat
59 countywide teaching staff attrition and replenish the available substitute pool. Focus particularly
60 on recruiting and retaining Special Education educators in light of the significant adverse effects
61 of the current severe shortage.
- 62 • Provide equitable funding for graduations, trips, and other school activities, in part by making the
63 Independent Activities Funds more equitable, the needs are not equal.

64

65 COMMUNICATION:

- 66 • Maintain a strong MCCPTA-MCPS partnership with meaningful, two-way communication to
67 ensure that families are informed of major policy, funding, procedural, curriculum and
68 programmatic changes proposed or implemented in schools, school climate, and security issues,
69 and to ensure that families' views and concerns are actively sought and factored into those
70 proposals and changes.
- 71 • Raise minimum requirements, support, and measures of accountability around the School
72 Improvement Plan (SIP) process to facilitate school-based data transparency, community
73 engagement, participation and collaboration in the development and ongoing evaluation of
74 school improvement at every school.
- 75 • Implement outreach in multiple languages and both traditional and non-traditional approaches
76 including community-based organizations, to ensure community feedback when implementing
77 any new program or policy. Communications should reach current as well as future students and
78 families, as well as area communities. Expand translation and interpretation services for family-
79 school engagement.
- 80 • Ensure that all communications, presentations, and conversations are clear, concise, and
81 accessible, and enhance understanding and engagement. Eliminate or reduce use of acronyms
82 and jargon ("edu-speak").

83

84 CURRICULUM:

- 85 • Create and publish, online and in print, curriculum guides for all courses.
- 86 • Include and support enrichment, differentiated instruction, and appropriate challenges for all
87 students, including students receiving special education (Individual Education Plans and 504
88 plans), ESOL, and/or gifted education services.
- 89 • Provide professional development for all staff implementing new curriculum and technology.
- 90 • Shape the curriculum for all grades to include diverse content and culturally relevant teaching
91 strategies that reflect the MCPS student body along all dimensions of diversity. Acknowledge
92 and address the fear and exclusion students experience when they do not feel "seen" or
93 represented in the curriculum. Develop programs to prevent hate and bias and to promote
94 inclusion, understanding, and respect for differences.
- 95 • Follow evidence-based best practices for use of digital content in the classroom and review how
96 time spent on screens relates to outcomes.
- 97 • Include more hands-on and experiential learning and, use of manipulatives, and less use of
98 "paper" (i.e., worksheets) and electronics-based instruction.

- 99 • Work to maximize student success by matching skills and specialties of long-term substitutes
- 100 with the subject matter they are required to teach.
- 101 • Retain tutoring services and free summer school for all who need it or request help and make the
- 102 resource better known to students, families, and staff.
- 103

104 **DIVERSITY, EQUITY INCLUSION AND BELONGING:**

- 105 • Examine every action through the lens of DEIB (Diversity, Equity Inclusion, and Belonging).
- 106 • Improve experiences for families who are new to MCPS with welcoming environments in all
- 107 schools and provide students and families with the information, services, and encouragement
- 108 they need for the students to be successful.
- 109 • Improve the Family-School Partnership by facilitating intentionally inclusive family and
- 110 community outreach that empowers all students and families to participate in easily accessible
- 111 communication methods that include continuous feedback and improvement opportunities.
- 112 • Implement proactive measurable actions based on reports from the Anti-Racist System Audit, the
- 113 countywide boundary analysis, and the evaluation of the ESOL model, and the respective
- 114 community discussions of the findings, ensuring accountability for evaluation of each
- 115 recommendation and timely implementation, where appropriate.
- 116 • Continue training staff, guardians, and students in restorative justice practices, which enhance
- 117 equitable outcomes and conflict resolution skills.
- 118

119 **HEALTH AND WELLNESS:**

- 120 • Expand all students' access to and awareness of mental and physical health and wellness
- 121 resources, including, prevention and intervention for suicidal ideation, and support to students
- 122 with mental health and substance use disorders.
- 123 • Train all staff to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health and/or substance use
- 124 challenges and how to refer students for help, the use of trauma-informed practices, and
- 125 effective classroom management for adjusted maturity levels post-pandemic.
- 126 • Seek to identify, understand, and address root causes of concerning behaviors and work
- 127 collaboratively with Montgomery County agencies and community organizations to provide
- 128 intervention, diversion, and treatment rather than isolating punishments that often exacerbate
- 129 impacted students' conditions and risk further harms or death. Expand wellness resources to
- 130 middle schools, implement a "counselor of the day/on duty" program to improve access, and
- 131 return the link to wellness and crisis resources to the banner of every school website and place
- 132 the resources on the wallpaper of all MCPS owned Chromebooks.
- 133 • Use non stigmatizing language and images in all substance use and mental health curriculum,
- 134 communications, forms, and policies.
- 135 • Meet student requested substance use prevention goals, including updated curriculum with more
- 136 depth, realistic and factual information about the reasons for and risks of specific substances
- 137 (versus blanket statements), and frequent inclusion of stories shared by individuals with lived
- 138 experience. Access and utilize recent settlement funds to address vaping and other substance
- 139 use, including prevention, treatment, and recovery resources.
- 140 • Explore the establishment of a post hospitalization re-entry program for students.
- 141 • Monitor and publicly post air, water, and athletic field quality at all schools. Avoid exposure to
- 142 harmful fumes and materials during school days and hours, including from ongoing construction
- 143 and repairs. Equitably update schools, as necessary, to provide comfortable facilities with clean
- 144 air and water, and safe outdoor infrastructure, prioritize Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
- 145 (HVAC) projects and other quality of life and safety projects. Maintain filters replacement
- 146 schedules to maximize effectiveness.
- 147 • Meet the goals of the MCPS Sustainability Policy and of the 2017 Climate Action Resolution of
- 148 reducing carbon emissions by 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035 and increasing and maintaining
- 149 MCPS participation in the MD Green Schools Program with equity and inclusion of all voices.
- 150 Commit to climate resilient land management, reducing paved surfaces, and replacing
- 151 impervious parking areas with pervious paving.

- 152 • Advocate for universal, higher quality, culturally appropriate, locally sourced, school meals with
153 options for vegetarians and students with other dietary needs.
- 154 • Ensure sensitivity to students who are fasting when scheduling tests and other high value
155 assignments.
- 156 • Allow for age-appropriate movement in the classroom, to avoid long periods of sitting, and
157 encourage the use of outdoor recess when there is no significant condition or weather event that
158 precludes the safe use of outdoor spaces.

159 **SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SECURITY:**

- 161 • Better inform all students, families, and staff about how to report incidents of hate/bias, bullying,
162 harassment, etc., how to escalate their concerns if not properly addressed.
- 163 • Maintain safe conditions and positive school environments to protect all persons from bullying,
164 discrimination, harassment, and assault.
- 165 • Expediently improve security in all school buildings by providing secure vestibules at all
166 remaining schools, expanding video surveillance in and around all facilities, including elementary
167 schools, and ensuring adequate MCPS security staff at all schools, and updated and functioning
168 security and audio/visual equipment. Regularly audit schools and procedures to ensure all
169 schools are safe from intruders.
- 170 • Ensure that public use of facilities when students are present is closely monitored to ensure
171 student safety.
- 172 • Inform students, families, and staff of the purposes, training requirements, and oversight of
173 security staff and armed law enforcement personnel utilized in and around school facilities and
174 events. Expand family engagement in all schools with creative programs such as “Dads on
175 Duty”.
- 176 • Provide safe, reliable, equitable, and timely passage to and from schools and school-related
177 activities, including arrival and dismissal configurations and procedures, sidewalks, crossing guards,
178 and protected bus stops. Fund and undertake a study for multi-source student transportation
179 consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U. S. Surgeon General, and
180 National PTA guidelines on bell times.
- 181 • Address, track, reduce, and transparently report to the MCPS community incidences of bias,
182 discrimination, bullying, hate, sexual and other harassment, and abuse of and assault on
183 students within schools, on school buses, and during school activities. Develop, share, and
184 implement policies and procedures to ensure timely communication with students, staff, and
185 guardians of these incidents.
- 186 • Develop, share, and implement policies and procedures to ensure timely communication with
187 students, staff, and families during emergency situations and avoid breakdowns in
188 communication during crises. Provide advanced notice of emergency drills, support for students
189 and staff as needed during and following drills, as they can be anxiety producing, even
190 traumatizing.
- 191 • Advocate for education on policies and laws that increase safety and reduce access and
192 proximity to firearms by students and school communities, to reduce violence, including self-
193 harm. Annually distribute information on Maryland laws regarding firearm safe storage
194 requirements via MCPS communication channels as previously approved by the Board of
195 Education.
- 196 • Provide “upstander” intervention training/education to all staff and students. Provide age-
197 appropriate, evidence-based lessons at all schools and grade levels for violence prevention,
198 online and in person bullying and harassment, childhood obesity, suicide, and substance use
199 prevention.