

**Montgomery County Council
of
Parent Teacher Associations**

**DELEGATES
GUIDEBOOK**

2012-2013

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**Please note the MCCPTA office will be moving to a new location in the
Fall of 2012. Please check the website for more information as it
becomes available.**

**Hours of Operation: 9:30 am - 1:30 p.m. Monday – Friday (School Year)
10 am - 12 pm Tuesday and Thursday (Summer)**

THE OBJECTS OF PTA

The Objects of MCCPTA, in common with those of the National PTA, Maryland PTA, and local PTAs are:

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship.
- To raise the standards of home life.
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.
- To develop between educators and the general public such united effort as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

THE MISSION OF PTA

The Mission of PTA is threefold:

- To support and speak on behalf of children and youth in our schools, in our community, and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
- To assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children; and
- To encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of the nation.

MCCPTA DELEGATE: The Voice of PTA

Congratulations on being chosen to serve your PTA as an MCCPTA Delegate. Participating in Delegates' Assemblies and your local PTA's meetings allows you to serve as a crucial link between the PTA council and the local PTA. You will share information about what is happening across the school system with the members of your PTA, and you will bring the perspective of your PTA members to the discussions at the county level.

The purposes of the Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) are as follows:

- "To unify and strengthen local PTAs in the council."
- "To provide for the conference and cooperation of the local PTAs/PTSAs in The PTA council membership in order to create a public opinion favorable to the interests of children, to encourage programs and projects in the various local PTAs which will carry out the mission and purpose of PTA, and to assist in the formation of new PTAs according to the plan of the Maryland PTA."
- "To promote the interest of the National PTA and of the Maryland PTA."
- "To provide leadership training and support for local PTAs in Montgomery County. "

Founded in 1944, MCCPTA has grown from fifteen PTAs to more than one hundred ninety local PTAs and PTSAs. This growth reflects the vital role PTAs have had - individually and in council – in meeting the needs of our children and families.

Regular MCCPTA meetings (Delegates' Assemblies) are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month during the school year at 7:30 p.m. at Carver Educational Services Center in Rockville and are open to all PTA members (Special informational programs may be presented from 6:30-7:30pm with the Delegates' Assembly immediately afterward). The privileges of introducing motions, debating, and voting, however, are limited to the voting body which consists of the delegates from local PTAs (the president, or alternate, and two accredited delegates) and the members of the MCCPTA Board of Directors (the officers, area vice presidents, cluster coordinators, committee chairs). The monthly meetings provide an opportunity for delegates to present ideas, debate issues, become better informed, make personal contacts with other PTA leaders, and vote on MCCPTA business.

Expectations and Responsibilities

1. Report on the delegate assemblies at local PTA executive board meetings and general membership meetings and in newsletter articles, on schools list serves, including any action that might require a vote by the local PTA.
2. Represent the views of the local PTA at delegate assemblies, including any vote taken on issues.

3. Keep the local PTA informed of projects and activities of MCCPTA, including opportunities for local PTA members to serve on MCCPTA committees and information distributed at the Delegate Assemblies.

4. Be familiar with Robert's Rules of Order, parliamentary procedure, and MCCPTA's bylaws.

5. Notify local PTA members of upcoming delegate assemblies, workshops, and forums and encourage attendance.

6. Be familiar with the MCPS Operating Budget and Capital Improvements Budget and the views of the local PTA regarding specific items in the budgets.

- Attend the special MCCPTA delegate assemblies on the Operating or Capital Budgets in preparation for public hearings conducted by the Board of Education and the County Council.
- Encourage the local PTA to discuss and develop priorities, possible solutions, and ideas of their own and communicate their views to the Board of Education or the County Council as appropriate.

7. Be prepared to make or amend motions, discuss motions, and cast one vote per delegate on issues relating to the education of children - sometimes with out prior direction from the local PTA.

8. Be familiar with local, Maryland, and National PTA legislative issues affecting children and education.

- Be prepared to represent the local PTA at the MCCPTA Legislative Delegate Assembly in January and participate in adopting and supporting legislative priorities for the Maryland General Assembly session.
- Be an active advocate for the children of Montgomery County; attend BOE and County Council hearings, write letters, and send emails and encourage your local PTA leadership to do the same.
- Encourage local PTA members to participate in legislative advocacy activities of the Maryland PTA and National PTA - Convention, PTA Night in Annapolis, Maryland PTA Summer Leadership Conference and Annual Convention.

9. Join the MCCPTA Bulletin and/or Delegate eList in order to stay on top of current information, and to discuss issues.

10. Keep a procedure book containing

- MCCPTA and local PTA bylaws,
- List of MCCPTA officers and executive board members,

- Calendar of events/meetings of MCCPTA and the local PTA,
- Information items handed out at delegate assemblies,
- Minutes of MCCPTA delegate assemblies,

11. As a Delegate, you must have your voting card to vote at the Delegate Assembly. Each local PTA is mailed three Delegate voting cards and the MCCPTA Bluebook (directory) when dues are paid by each local PTA to MCCPTA. The PTA President distributes the voting cards to their PTA Delegates. Please make sure your local president knows to give you a delegate card. You should also make sure that you have a membership card from your local PTA.

The delegate is chosen to represent the views of the local PTA. MCCPTA leadership tries very hard to present major issues and background material early enough so the delegates may have a full month to assess the views of their local PTAs before they vote at the next delegate assembly. Sometimes, this is not possible. If MCCPTA is to make its voice heard on an issue pending before the Board of Education, the County Council, or the Maryland General Assembly, sometimes a month's delay will render such action useless. In these instances, the delegates must have the confidence of their PTA in order to vote on emergency issues. They must also make every effort to proceed democratically whenever time allows. Occasionally, the timeliness of an issue requires that the MCCPTA Board of Directors take a position, identified as such, on an issue of importance; such an action is allowed by the MCCPTA bylaws, but does not happen often.

Tips for Keeping Your PTA Informed and Representing Your PTA

Many delegates have a standing place on the agenda of their local PTA meetings; some only ask to be on the agenda when hot issues arise; and others have trouble getting any time at meetings because their PTA is very caught up in local issues and/or has a jam packed agenda. Have a conversation with your local president and encourage him/her to regularly give you time on the agenda. If the agenda is jam packed, there are things you can do to keep your members informed outside of the meetings, and keep your time at the meetings brief but meaningful.

Delegates can write brief summaries of each delegate assembly and send this out via the list serve or PTA newsletter. This can be a very effective way to keep people informed. You might even collaborate with other delegates within your cluster to take turns writing summaries. Having a regular format with categories may make it easier for members to follow. For example: Actions taken; informational items; Resolutions and Motions introduced for action next month.

When time allows, resolutions and motions are introduced at least a month before the vote takes place at a delegate assembly. This gives you time to put the resolution before your PTA. It can be much more effective to circulate the MCCPTA resolution to your membership through a list serve ahead of time with a short synopsis and any supporting materials that MCCPTA has supplied, or links to this material on the MCCPTA website. This gives people familiarity with the issue before the meeting and allows you to briefly restate the purpose of the resolution rather than going through it in detail.

Many times, resolutions are a starting place, and there will be amendments from the floor that you will be asked to vote on. You may not have had the opportunity to discuss the particulars of specific amendments with your membership. Some delegates bring up potential amendments at their local meetings to get direction as to how their membership would feel given certain changes. It can be difficult to anticipate everything and you sometimes have to go on your best judgment to represent your PTA.

A practice that is not encouraged is to bring issues and resolutions up at local PTA meetings and then ask anyone with an opinion to email or call you later. This is sometimes done to save time and/or because not everyone feels comfortable with the procedural steps of taking a vote on an issue (that's why you watch how the MCCPTA president does it at delegate assemblies☺). This is not a democratic process and also does not generate the kinds of discussions that help delegates get a sense of how their PTA feels about the nuances of a resolution. It is much better to work with your local president to make sure that there is an opportunity for the membership to vote on resolutions and motions at your meetings.

MCCPTA Procedures for Resolutions

In order to assure a consistent, fair, and effective process for bringing resolutions to the MCCPTA delegates, the following procedures will be used.

The maker of a resolution (local PTA, individual delegate, or MCCPTA committee) will submit the resolution in writing (by email, fax, regular mail) to the MCCPTA office. The proposed resolution will be reviewed by the appropriate MCCPTA committee before the next MCCPTA Board of Directors meeting and then reported to the Board of Directors with a recommendation for further action. If the resolution needs further research or additional materials, the committee could request additional time to work with the maker of the resolution. If the resolution is already addressed by PTA positions and resolutions (from MCCPTA, Maryland PTA, or National PTA) or is contrary to the Objects and Mission of PTA, the committee could recommend that the resolution not be sent to the delegates. If the committee recommends that the resolution be brought to the delegates, the Board of Directors can refer it to the next Delegates' Assembly for consideration. A resolution presented in this way to a delegate assembly would not be voted on until the next delegate assembly so that the local PTAs could consider the issue and instruct the delegates.

Delegates may amend or refer any resolution back to the MCCPTA Board of Directors for further work. A delegate may propose a resolution from the floor at a delegate assembly, and that resolution will be referred either to the Board of Directors or appropriate committee for review.

If an issue is deemed time-sensitive or an emergency, the MCCPTA committee reviewing the resolution can request that the delegates receive and vote on the resolution immediately without taking it through the Board of Directors. The delegates would be able to consider and vote on the resolution at the delegate assembly that month as long as five days' notice had been given. The delegates would have to move to declare it an emergency resolution, and it would take a two-thirds vote of the delegates to agree to consider it.

Adoption of the emergency resolution would be by majority vote. If two-thirds of the delegates agree to consider the resolution, it may be voted on immediately.

MCCPTA Delegates may take positions on issues of county-wide concern by adopting resolutions, simple motions, or position statements such as the Operating Budget Compact. The positions taken are forwarded to the appropriate agencies of government and to the local PTAs. They put all on notice that what began as one local PTA's concern for all children is of sufficient importance to all of us.

A Resolution Illustrating Its Own Proper Form

Whereas, That portion of a resolution comprising the phrases starting with the word "whereas" is known as the preamble of the resolution; and
Whereas, The preamble includes only statements of fact or background information comprising the reasons for the action proposed in the resolving clauses that are not common knowledge or self-evident and may be overlooked if not stated; and
Whereas, The action taken on a resolution is really only action on the motion incorporated solely in its resolving clauses, not the preamble; and
Whereas, Brevity creates a good listener; therefore, be it
Resolved, That it is directed that the resolutions submitted to MCCPTA for consideration shall follow this sample resolution in structure, punctuation, and content.

(This sample resolution adapted from New Jersey PTA and National PTA materials.)

FACTS

FACT: Each local PTA is entitled to three (3) voting Delegates - the President and two Delegates.

FACT: The local PTA may have one or more alternate Delegates to attend when one of the regulars cannot.

FACT: The local PTA bylaws determine whether Delegates are elected (and by whom) or appointed.

FACT: Each school will receive three (3) voting cards upon payment of MCCPTA dues

FACT: Delegates represent the position of the local PTA membership at Delegate Assemblies.

FACT: There is one vote per Delegate, even if he/she represents two different schools.

FACT: Delegates can make or amend motions without prior direction from their local.

FACT: Delegates' Assembly is the 4th Tuesday of each month, 7:30 PM, at the Carver Educational Services Center, aka the Board of Education.

Enjoy being a delegate. You'll meet others who share your interests in education and children and become effective advocates together.