

Work Plan for MCCPTA 2008-2009

Committee: Safety

Chair: Laurie Halverson

Members: Pam Moomau (Pammoomau@gmail.com); Dale Ryan (dale.j.ryan@lmco.com); Charles Wilkes (c.wilkes@wilkestech.com); Carol Lovelace (clovelace3@comcast.net); Suzanne Weiss (siwassoc@att.net); Susan Beckwith (psdarpa@comcast.net); Donna Pfeiffer (NBPDL@comcast.net); Andrea Bernardo (andrea@cosmosettlements.com); Jud Ashman (judashman@aol.com)

email: lauriehalverson@verizon.net

Vision: Every student and teacher have an inherent right to be in a safe and secure environment while they are under the care of the public school system. MCCPTA will support the safety and well-being of children and will collaborate as partners with the communities involved (parents, business leaders, social service agencies, law enforcement and juvenile justice agencies, community organizations, students, elected officials and government agencies) to ensure this right. Will ensure the committee works to support and promote MCCPTA budget priorities and resolutions for safety issues and concerns. Will seek guidance and input from MCCPTA and local PTAs for any proposed recommendations.

We will work to support National PTA position statements and resolutions (see *Appendix*.) as well as support MCCPTA resolutions and positions.

Goals: Evaluate MCPS policies and practices to determine areas of concern for the safety and well being of students/teachers and work as a partner with MCPS and other community leaders to advocate for improvement:

1. Promote safe access to and from school for students. This includes safety while riding on the bus, safe walking routes, safe pick-up and drop-off of students, and raising awareness of safe driving practices in our community.
2. Advocate for improved maintenance standards for buildings and portables facilities which will enhance the indoor air quality in which our children learn and our teachers teach. Support "green technologies" which will improve the physical quality of our facilities and have the added benefit of saving money over time in maintenance costs. Educate our members about the current problems.
3. Advocate for better quality portables that can withstand a code red emergency situation and improved portable specifications to improve their security and air quality. Educate our members about the current problems.

4. Promote safety of children on playgrounds. Encourage methods of reducing undesirable behaviors, ranging from bullying to substance abuse and gang membership, and assist with education, programs or changes.
5. Promote continuing improvements to building security.
6. Continue to promote awareness among parents, students, and their organizations in emergency preparedness.
7. Follow up with MCCPTA on how MCPS and the state work together to notify and enforce rules on sex offenders and determine if this is a need for advocacy this year.

Action Steps to include:

General activities

- Work with MCPS to continually identify and resolve any safety and security issues that may be facing students. Relevant MCPS staff include Directors of School Performance, Security, Transportation, and Facilities.
- Encourage local PTA's to form Safety Committees that can focus on issues of safety and security in each school and encourage these local Safety Chairs to be members of the MCCPTA Safety Committee.
- Work with MCPS to improve communications with parents regarding safety and security incidents.
- Monitor school budget process for adequate resources devoted to safety and security related functions.
- Participate on Montgomery County School Health Council.

Activities related to promoting safe access to and from school

- As a follow up to last year's Resolution on Crossing Guards, we will continue to advocate for more crossing guards, focusing on adding crossing guards at middle schools.
- Work with MCPS to ensure that no new walking routes will be added before the safety of these routes is ensured and parents have given appropriate feedback.
- Encourage local PTA Safety Chairs to monitor pedestrian and bus safety at their schools and seek help from MCCPTA as needed in advocating for their safety needs.
- Continue working with the county and MCPS on improving walking routes to school.
- Continue to advocate for education in driver safety while encouraging students and parents that buses are the safest (and "greenest") form of transportation to and from school.
- Work with Division of Construction to make pedestrian safety an explicit criterion for new construction and safe access plans.

Activities involved in increased maintenance standards, indoor air quality and other environmental concerns

- A picture often speaks more than words. So, we will encourage our local PTA's to photograph physical facilities that are a threat to student safety and will compile the pictures to possibly present at a Delegates Meeting and to any MCPS leaders and BOE members who wish to see them. This will help to raise awareness and contribute to advocacy efforts for this critical safety issue as budget constraints threaten non-academic programs.
- Work with MCPS on developing effective and feasible solutions to environmental hazards within MCPS facilities, such as mold.
- Continue to monitor the enforcement of water flushing procedures for schools listed, and continue to promote clean drinking water in schools.
- We will work to collaborate with MCPS Maintenance and Facilities Departments to understand their limitations and needs for additional resources to help us reach our goals.
- We will communicate MCCPTA concerns to County Council and BOE members.

Activities involved in improving the quality of portables and portable specifications and education

- Encourage MCPS to actively seek better quality portables.
- Work with MCPS and other knowledgeable experts to evaluate current practices in the installation, repair and maintenance of portables and determine what improvements can be made.
- Encourage MCPS to provide information proactively with the Principal and PTA President when portables are being added to their school. This information should include the age of the portable, it's previous site locations, the Assessment Checklist, the repair and IAQ history of the portable, the maker of the portable and the site plan of how and where it will be installed.
- Encourage Safety Committee chairs of locals to share pictures of portables that need attention which may be presented at a Delegates Meeting. Help our local PTAs understand what red flags to look for and help them advocate for safe portables. This will help raise awareness of this issue which often goes unnoticed until a disaster occurs with sick children or accidents such as a chair falling through the floor.

Activities involved in promoting safety on playgrounds and reducing undesirable behaviors

- Research further to provide data to back our support for last year's MCCPTA advocacy of more recess aides and share this with our members, MCPS and the BOE.

Taken from the National PTA website: NPPS (playground safety association) recommends that the playground supervision ratio be equal to the indoor classroom ratio. However, a recent study in Iowa found that many supervisor-child ratios were extremely high compared to the recommendations. The largest ratio found the study was one supervisor to 125 children, and the most frequent ratio was one supervisor to

50 students. Two percent of the schools surveyed have parents volunteering to be supervisors.

- Continue to encourage PTAs to support bullying legislation (pending the support of Maryland PTA) and keep local PTAs apprised on alcohol and substance abuse.
- Assist and promote gang prevention and awareness among parents.
- Work with groups such as Montgomery County Drawing the Line to promote prevention of teen drinking. Will continue to advocate for and support the efforts of volunteer parents in Montgomery County, Maryland who coordinate alcohol-free and drug-free Post-Prom and Post-Graduation events.

Activities relating to building security

- Discuss and educate committee on new 6-year plan for CCTV Systems in High Schools and Middle schools and the new Visitor Management Systems in all schools. Monitor new system and provide feedback to MCPS as the first 12 schools are implemented this year.

Activities relating to protection from sex offenders

- Discuss and educate committee about the process of informing and enforcing rules with schools about sex offenders.
- Follow up with Delegates to inform them about how the state and MCPS work with the schools with shared databases which include daily updates on sex offenders and their locations. Sex offender information will be built into the new Visitor Management Systems in schools, using drivers licenses and a scanner in the front office.

Activities relating to emergency preparedness

- Evaluate implementation of recent emergency situations (such as the storm in June 2008 that shut down power at many locations) and determine if additional safety measures should be implemented such as emergency radio announcements.
- Keep PTAs informed of emergency preparedness protocols developed by MCPS.
- Work with MCPS safety officials to identify ways parents and PTAs can assist in emergency preparedness.
- Work with MCPS officials on planning for special challenges presented by portable classrooms.

Expenses

\$75 would go toward snacks/water during meetings.

Appendix

The MCCPTA Safety Committee supports the following National PTA Safety position statements and resolutions:

An environmental position statement: “Over the years, National PTA has recognized the growing importance of environmental issues and the impact they have on the health and welfare of children and their families. PTA members have a responsibility to promote environmental health and safety, and to help protect our world’s finite natural resources.”

A resolution on Indoor air quality:

Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent bodies inform their individual school districts and Department of Defense Civil Engineering and Housing, when building or remodeling schools or using portable classrooms, to reduce sources of contaminants, improve maintenance practices, and reduce use of toxic products around school buildings and portable classrooms for cleaning, decorating, in science labs, vocational classes, computer labs, arts and crafts; and be it further

Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent bodies urge its local units to work with school administrators and boards of education, and Department of Defense Civil Engineering and Housing to ensure that school heating, ventilation, and air conditioning operation and maintenance plans comply with the highest current standards supplied by accepted experts; and be it further

Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent bodies work with and urge the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to adopt guidelines to ensure the quality of schools’ indoor air; and be it further

Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent bodies seek and support legislation and funding for protection from indoor air contaminants as research continues to reveal sources and for improved ventilation standards and building codes for schools.

A position on bullying: “National PTA supports initiatives that foster a safe and supportive school climate. Such initiatives include violence and delinquency prevention, counseling programs, and health and welfare reforms that aid needy children and families. National PTA believes that school health and counseling programs and professionals should collaborate with their community counterparts. National PTA supports policies that teach respect for diversity. National PTA supports policies and programs that address the prevention, intervention, and elimination of bullying, as well as policies and programs that address the rehabilitation of youth that have entered the criminal justice system.”

A resolution on bullying:

Resolved, That National PTA and its constituent organizations endeavor, via educational literature, programs, and projects for parents, students, and school personnel, to bring about an atmosphere of zero tolerance for bullying behavior, and an attitude that bullying behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in homes, schools, playgrounds, buses, school activities, or any place children congregate; and be it further

Resolved, That National PTA and its constituent organizations work with the appropriate agencies and organizations in a national effort to inform the general public about the risks and cost of bullying for both the bully and the target, as well as those who witness bullying, and bring about a change in societal attitudes toward bullying.”

A position on drugs: National PTA’s commitment to the health and welfare of all children and youth is the basis for its long-time support of alcohol, drug, and other substance abuse education, treatment, and prevention efforts.

The solution to the problem of alcohol and drug abuse requires a sustained and collaborative effort on the part of agencies and organizations at the federal, state, and local levels. National PTA believes in strong efforts to prevent substance abuse.