

Gifted Child Committee Report: Elizabeth Enders, chair, eaenders@verizon.net

We are continuing to build our network of GT Liaisons at every elementary and middle school. If your school does not currently have a PTA GT Liaison, please find someone to fill this position and have him/her contact our committee.

This year's training for local PTA GT Liaisons occurred on Wednesday, October 11 and was attended by approximately 60 GT Liaisons and 100 interested parents. Speakers included Marty Creel, Director of the Office of Accelerated and Enriched Instruction (AEI) and Steven Bedford and Sherry Liebes of the Office of School Performance. GT Liaisons who attended picked up their information packets. Packets were also handed out to parents. Packets will be sent to the local schools to GT Liaisons who were unable to attend, or to the PTA president at schools which do not have a GT Liaison.

The Gifted Child Committee met on September 28, 2006. We discussed plans for the fall training and finalized our workplan, which was approved at the MCCPTA board meeting on October 5. We met with the Office of Accelerated and Enriched Instruction (AEI) to discuss the training and the role of the middle school AEIST (Accelerated and Enriched Instruction Support Teacher), which is a new 0.4 position developed by combining the old GT Coordinator and Success for Every Student positions. The two goals of the AEIST are to increase minority enrollment in GT/Honors classes and to support these new students (and underachieving students) as they make the transition from regular to honors classes. Along with the MCCPTA curriculum committee, our committee met with AEI and the MCPS Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, to discuss the resolution passed by the delegates last Spring, calling for a sequenced and systematic GT curriculum in middle school. Other meetings with these offices are planned for the coming month, including a meeting with Marisa Stemple, the MCPS gifted/learning disabled (GT/LD) instructional specialist. Our committee put together a short research paper describing to parents the potential uses of the RIT scores from the MAP-R tests, as well as how to understand their child's Lexile score and range. These assessments are currently being used primarily to aid teachers in understanding their students' progress in reading. These scores are not automatically mailed home to parents, but they are available to every parent upon request. Our committee is continuing our research into the potential use of these scores for instructional level/placement for GT students, as well as identification. The gifted child committee is also currently comparing the Lexile levels of anchor books offered to GT students in the magnet programs with the anchor books offered to GT students at local schools, and we are finding a discrepancy (higher levels of texts are being offered in the magnet programs, even though the Lexile scores of GT students at local schools are comparable).

During the upcoming month, our committee will actively reach out to other educational advocacy groups, such as NAACP, Equity in Education Coalition, Latino parents and Special Education groups to find common ground, build understanding and work together in our advocacy for children's educational needs.

Our listserv is for GT Liaisons to connect with one another and get regular information from the gifted child committee. To join our listserv, send an email to: GTLiaisons-subscribe@yahoogroups.com, or contact Christy Lyons at christylyons@verizon.net.