

INFORMATION ABOUT MCCPTA BUDGET RESOLUTIONS AND MCPS OPERATING BUDGET PROCESS

Background on MCCPTA advocacy:

As you probably already know, this year and next will be very tight budget years for MCPS and the County. It's important that parents communicate their funding priorities to our elected decision makers. MCCPTA formal advocacy begins with testimony on the Strategic Plan (see below) in Sept. The next steps are forwarding the adopted Compact and Resolution to Supt. Weast and the Board of Education and then testifying at Operating budget hearings before the School Board in January and before the County Council in April. Cluster coordinators will also be invited to testify at these hearings. In addition, our President Kay Romero and VP for Legislation Merry Eisner will be participating in budget planning meetings with MCPS and their union representatives throughout the Fall. They rely on these two documents to guide them on providing input during these discussions. In the end, of course, the budget is adopted by the BOE and the County Council, and neither they nor MCPS staff are bound to follow our recommendations. But to the extent that MCCPTA can speak as a unified voice for our 50,000 members and the broader parent, student and teacher community, we hope to improve the product they adopt.

Background on the MCCPTA Documents:

The Budget Compact is a comprehensive document meant to represent MCCPTA's vision of the expected requirements for an adequate public education. MCCPTA has adopted a version of this for many years (at least 10 in my personal memory). In recent years, it has been organized to conform to the format of MCPS's own planning document: the Strategic Plan. Thus, the Goals 1-5 that you see in the document are the five goals stated in MCPS's Strategic Plan. The bullet points under the goals are the items MCCPTA is saying we would like to see funded to address those Goals. This year's proposed document was taken from last year's official document, with no substantive changes. It may be amended at the DA, either adding or subtracting bullets. The Priorities Resolution is a newer document – this will be the third year for it. The purpose is to focus advocacy attention on a few agreed-upon items. The resolutions for the prior two years (fiscal years 2008 and 2009) were developed with the thought that we were advocating for new initiatives. This year, in light of the much tighter budget conditions we are facing, we are stating priorities for areas to avoid budget cuts. The resolution was prepared based on discussion during the meetings MCCPTA officers attended with local PTA members in each Area over the summer. The topics that were raised in these meetings were summarized and discussed in the September meeting of the MCCPTA Board of Directors (cluster coordinators, Area VPs, committee chairs, and officers). Board members were asked to indicate their highest priorities on the list. Prior year Operating Budget Compacts and Priorities Resolutions can be found on the MCCPTA website under Committees\Operating. You will need to scroll down to get to them.

Background on the MCPS and County Budget Process:

The operating budget funds the day-to-day operation of the school system: the largest component is teacher salaries. It also includes most other salaries (including administration), utilities, building upkeep, transportation, and educational materials. There is a separate budget, the CIP, for capital items – buildings, buses, and the like, which runs parallel. (I'll leave it to the CIP people to describe that.) MCPS staff has already started gathering public input for the Operating Budget for the fiscal year 2010 school year (which starts on July 1, 2009) with their first forum on the MCPS Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan sets forth MCPS's goals and strategies for advancing these goals. MCCPTA's testimony (based on last year's budget documents and notes from the summer Area meetings) was circulated to the listserve and is posted on the MCCPTA website. The Superintendent will release a proposed budget to the School Board in December. We are making a special effort to adopt our MCCPTA budget advocacy positions early this year so that we can have input before those recommendations come out. The School Board will vote on the budget in February, and forward it to the County Executive. Before voting, the school board will hold public hearings, where MCCPTA President Kay Romero will testify on behalf of the whole organization, and cluster coordinators will

testify on behalf of their clusters. The County Executive makes recommendations to the County Council in March, and then the County Council works on it for through March and April. They are working on the capital budget (“CIP”) at the same time. The two are finally reconciled and adopted in June.

Operating Budget Timeline for Fiscal Year 2010

September 18, 2008 High School	Board of Education (BoE) Community Forum, Watkins Mill
October 16, 2008	BoE Community Forum, Albert Einstein High School
December 11, 2008	Superintendent presents Recommended Operating Budget
January 14 & 21, 2009	BoE Operating Budget Hearings
February 10, 2009	BoE Operating Budget Adoption
March 16, 2009	County Executive issues Operating Budget
April TBD 2009	County Council Operating Budget Hearings
May 21, 2009	Council approves Operating Budget
June 9, 2009	BoE final action on Operating Budget