



Proposed 2021-2022 Advocacy Priorities

Mission: To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Communication: Ensure clear, simple, accurate, and timely communication to our diverse population in multiple languages and through multiple channels regarding the education (including performance metrics, selection criteria, standards, and school/program choice options) and wellbeing of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) students. Implement feedback tools and procedures to eliminate the inequities speakers of other languages experience in participating in their student's education. Conduct robust outreach to obtain feedback from diverse groups proportional to the population before any major policy change and ensure transparency in reporting the results of any surveys and feedback. All data should be released as accessible data files, consistent with applicable student privacy standards. "Recruit and retain additional substitute teachers so that schools have a full complement of substitutes and do not need to pull teacher resources from supporting students in order to ensure that all classes have coverage."

COVID-19 Response and Recovery: *Academics* – Deliver the curriculum with fidelity to every student through the utilization of virtual and in-person learning in a developmentally appropriate manner, including evidence-based best practice innovations like expanding outdoor learning to support academic and behavioral and mental health recovery. Provide resources such as tutoring and counseling support, to students who are experiencing significant learning loss, behavioral and mental health challenges, social or emotional distress, or other stressors so that they may thrive. Provide necessary resources to all students to ensure equitable access to education by providing streamed or recorded instruction as needed, nutrition, and other supports to ensure holistic wellbeing. ***Facilities and Transportation*** – Continue to support the return to school buildings in the COVID-19 environment, guided by evidence-based, specific, and transparent criteria, including securing any additional space, equipment and supplies that may be needed. Continue to maximize outdoor dining and learning as efforts continue to improve HVAC, ventilation, and air filtration systems in every school and on every bus with fidelity and transparency. ***Policy*** – Engage a medical/public health adviser to provide, and a volunteer advisory panel to review safety and health policy and procedure recommendations. In consultation with health experts, craft prevention and mitigation policies and procedures that prioritize evidence-based best practices in health and safety protocols strategies that limit staff and student impact and learning disruption. Communicate these policies clearly to each school's leadership. Ensure random COVID-19 testing is available in all schools for staff and students. Develop and implement effective plans for the rapid vaccination of K-6 students as soon as the COVID-19



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vaccines become available and encourage vaccinations for those eligible. Prioritize medically vulnerable children as well as children living in more geographically, economically, and demographically vulnerable communities, using an equity lens.

Curriculum: Promote an equitable and inclusive classroom and school environment by implementing an inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of our diverse student population by including enrichment and appropriate challenges for all children using culturally relevant materials, training for teachers to implement evidence-based teaching strategies and approaches for different types of learners, hands-on experiential learning, and alternate demonstration of learning methods. Provide additional rigorous enrichment, accelerated learning opportunities, support, and tutoring programs to ensure that all students, across the academic achievement spectrum, receive equitable and appropriate instruction and curriculum support to be successful. Provide on grade level instruction, with adequate enrichments for students performing above level, and more support for students who are learning below grade level or have disabilities that impact learning. Evaluate the effectiveness of strategies, approaches, and programs by defining their objectives and the metrics for assessing outcomes both for current and past students.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Ensure access to equitable opportunities and an excellent education for all MCPS students, especially students historically disadvantaged including those that are Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color, LGBTQIA+, English language learners (ELL), those requiring Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) and 504 plans, and others and work to eliminate intolerance and discrimination.

Ensure comprehensive data collection, and transparent reporting of said data, within MCPS for all groups. Ensure inclusion of marginalized communities in the development and implementation of programs targeting equitable allocations of resources for school facilities and operations, sports and other extracurricular activities, and school support with funding, use of facilities, transportation, and opportunities to participate. Provide clear direction and assistance to schools to reduce the disparity, and resultant inequities, in application of programs and policies.

Empower all students and families by facilitating intentionally inclusive family and community engagement with MCPS that encompasses easily accessible continuous feedback and improvement. Identify and remove barriers to family access to participation. Identify goals and actions based on the findings of the Anti-Racist System Audit, the



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countywide boundary analysis, and the evaluation of the ESOL model. Develop protocols for addressing racial, ethnic, gender, disability, religious, or LGBTQ-motivated incidents within and among MCPS schools, including communication protocols with students, parents, caregivers, and staff. Promote the consistent use of restorative justice practices in schools to create and build an inclusive school community and, when needed, to foster repair/healing among students involved in such incidents.

Health, Wellness and School Climate: Mental and Behavioral Health – Increase access to opportunities including academic, nutritional, mental health, trauma informed care, and other holistic support services. Develop/strengthen formal connections between MCPS counselors/mental health professionals and other Montgomery County mental health resources and services available to families. Provide all students equitable access to appropriate physical, behavioral and mental health support. Conduct a thorough and transparent study to address the efficacy of starting school later for high schools and middle schools. **Food and Nutrition** – Provide nutritional support, indefinite continuation of destigmatized access to free and healthy meals, appropriate for families with varied dietary or cultural needs. Provide access to safe water by employing primary exposure prevention strategies. Include information about access to additional food resources in multiple languages with student meal deliveries. Ensure sensitivity to students who are fasting when scheduling tests and other high value assignments. Actively promote and support implementation of outdoor learning, outdoor classrooms, and school gardens as a component of health and wellness. **Wellness and Safety** – Ensure that every school has multiple staff trained to administer life-saving medications, such as naloxone (Narcan) and epinephrine (EpiPens), with the commitment to meet or exceed the national student to nurse standard, and student to counselor standard, and provide training and staff to support the social and emotional wellbeing of all students and staff. **School Climate** – Provide age-appropriate and evidence-based gun safety, violence, online bullying, childhood obesity, suicide, and substance use prevention guided lessons at all schools and grade levels. Address, track, report in a transparent manner, and reduce incidences of bias, discrimination, bullying, hatred, and sexual and other harassment, abuse and assault of students. Engage MCCPTA in serious incidents so the appropriate members can be appropriately proactive and responsive in conversations and actions with PTAs and school communities. **Staff support** - Provide resources and personnel to ensure that these advocacy priorities are implemented without unduly burdening teachers and staff, while safeguarding and supporting their health and well-being. Address labor shortages,



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wages, scheduling, etc. to promote an environment of academic excellence, wellness and health in school communities."

Ombuds: Designate an impartial ombuds, external to MCPS and the Board of Education, to guide families in navigating the complexities of the system and ensure fair treatment.

Transportation and Facilities: Ensure a healthy environment for students in facilities and buses, providing spaces which are comfortable, safe, and not overcrowded. Work with other entities to provide safe and timely passage to schools, including arrival and dismissal configurations and procedures. Expedite installation of the bus tracking systems to keep families informed of where their student's bus is and when it will arrive. Improve transportation routes and timing to avoid early bus arrivals at schools, late departures from schools, and to minimize the length of special education and magnet bus routes. Ensure clear, consistent, regular tracking and sharing of data around incidents on buses. Consider ways to leverage outdoor spaces to enhance academic performance, equity, and social emotional learning and wellbeing for all ages.