

MORRIS BRANDON SCHOOL COUNCIL
2741 HOWELL MILL ROAD
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(404) 802-7250

February 4, 2010

Dr. Beverly L. Hall
Superintendent, Atlanta Public Schools
130 Trinity Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Re: Urgent Need for Capacity Evaluation and Possible Expansion

Dear Dr. Hall:

The Morris Brandon School Council is increasingly concerned about the continuing enrollment patterns and the resulting apparent and imminent need for expanded capacity at Morris Brandon Elementary School. Pursuant to the School Council's responsibility to make recommendations to the local school board and school superintendent on matters of student performance and school improvement, we request the opportunity to work with your team at APS to validate our concerns and develop an action plan to address the expected capacity shortfall and facilitate effective communication of the plan to the Morris Brandon community.

Specifically, we request that APS undertake an updated study of the long-range enrollment projections as compared to capacity ("Demographic Study"). To our knowledge, a Demographic Study has not been conducted since the commencement of the last redistricting cycle in August 2006, and that study did not take Brandon's current enrollment zone into consideration. As explained further below, Brandon's new district lines and Primary Center have been in place for less than six months, yet it is already apparent that enrollment will greatly exceed capacity in the 2011-2012 school year. Therefore, if not already in progress, we request the completion of an updated Demographic Study as soon as possible so that an optimal range of options can be identified to address the capacity shortage.

Current Student Enrollment and School Capacity

Based on records maintained by the school and input from the school administration, it is our understanding that current enrollment and capacity is as follows:

Morris Brandon Current Enrollment & School Capacity	2009-2010		
	Students	Homerooms	Av.Class Size
Primary Center Enrollment	419	21	19.95
Main Campus Enrollment	605	30	20.17
Total School Enrollment	1024	51	20.08
Primary Center Capacity	460	23	20
Main Campus Capacity	640	32	20
Total School Capacity	1100	55	20

Rough Estimates of Student Enrollment & Capacity Shortfalls 2010 – 2012

While not precise, simply rolling forward current-year class sizes indicates a shortfall of 4 homerooms for the 2010-2011 school year and 8 homerooms for the 2011-2012 school year. It may be possible to work around the estimated 2010-2011 shortfall by transitioning some of the Special Area classrooms from dedicated to shared. However, the estimated 2011-2012 capacity shortfall cannot be solved with such a workaround.

Rough Enrollment Projections & School Capacity	2010-2011			2011-2012		
	Students	Homerooms	Av.Class Size	Students	Homerooms	Av.Class Size
Primary Center Enrollment	423	23	18.39	423	23	18.39
Main Campus Enrollment	708	36	19.67	819	40	20.48
Total School Enrollment	1131	59	19.17	1242	63	19.71
Primary Center Capacity	460	23	20	460	23	20
Main Campus Capacity	640	32	20	640	32	20
Total School Capacity	1100	55	20	1100	55	20
Primary Center Excess Capacity (Shortfall)	37	0	1.61	37	0	1.61
Main Campus Excess Capacity (Shortfall)	-68	-4	0.33	-179	-8	-0.48

Proposed Action Plan

The Morris Brandon School Council (or potentially a subcommittee or task force established by the School Council) would like to work with your team at APS to facilitate an open dialogue with the Morris Brandon Community on this matter. We believe that effective, proactive communication regarding these issues and proposed solutions by APS and the School Council to the Morris Brandon community (and from the community to APS) will greatly reduce resistance to changes that may be necessary to solve the capacity issues.

To this end, we request the following:

1. To the extent that work is in progress to address the capacity issues, a status report in draft form from APS to the School Council for review and comment in advance of release to the entire Morris Brandon community.
2. To the extent that work is not already in progress, hold a project organizational meeting between APS personnel and the School Council as soon as possible.

3. Results from an updated Demographic Study in draft form to be provided to the School Council for review and comment in advance of issuance of the final version.
4. An outline by APS of the possible short-term and long-term solutions to the projected capacity shortfalls along with the APS recommendations.
5. An overview of the project approval process, and anticipated timeline and milestones for implementation of the recommendations.

Please let us know your thoughts regarding our concerns and on the proposed action plan. If you agree that a project status report is a proper first step, please let us know when to expect the first draft. If an organizational meeting is a more appropriate first step, then please have the appropriate APS representative contact us to schedule. We look forward to working with the APS team on this project.

Sincerely,

Morris Brandon School Council

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