



## From the PTA Co-Presidents:

On Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, the School Council hosted a Brandon Community meeting to discuss the results of the **APS Demographic / Capacity Study**, and the four options that were presented by the demographers on Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. If you were not able to attend that meeting, you can find lots of information on the APS website (click on "Demographic Study" in the Quick Links section). We are in the process of creating a dedicated page on the Brandon website as well, and will post information there as soon as possible.

APS is currently seeking feedback from our community on the four options; based on this feedback, the demographers will craft two new options, which will be presented to the community again in January. **Your feedback during this initial period is vital.** Please understand that these four options are simply a starting point, and most likely, none of these options will be presented "as is" in January. The two new options will probably be hybrids (bits and pieces) of the existing four. Please make your voice heard by filling out the **survey on the APS website** (click [HERE](#)) or sending an email to the following address: [apsdemographicstudy@atlantapublicschools.us](mailto:apsdemographicstudy@atlantapublicschools.us). Although the survey asks you to rank the four options, the demographers are really looking for very specific feedback about what you like and do not like about each option, and this should be entered in the "Open Comments" section at the end of the survey. [For example, simply saying, "I don't like Option #1" won't carry as much weight as "Option #1 is not acceptable to me because my neighborhood would need to cross a very busy 4-lane highway / 5-way intersection to get to my school." **Your input is needed by December 16, 2011.**

As you are completing your survey and voicing your concerns, please consider the following:

1) Morris Brandon is part of the Northern Cluster of Schools in SRT-4. Currently, our cluster is the only one within APS that has vertical integration (K-12) of the **International Baccalaureate curriculum**. Is the IB curriculum important to you? Do you believe that our cluster (and therefore our IB integration) should remain intact?

2) The concept of a **9th grade academy** has been presented in order to accommodate the projected increased enrollment at the new North Atlanta High School (the new NAHS facility is planned for 1,800 students, however, the demographers' numbers indicate a peak projected enrollment of 2,400 students). How do you feel about a 9th grade academy? Would you

prefer the academy be located in a separate facility (the current Sutton MS building) or on the campus of the new North Atlanta High School? For your information, the feedback we have received from NAHS and the Sutton Community is that they are fine with an academy, but it should be located on the same campus.

3) The **overall size of a school** is a consideration. Are you okay with a larger school size (e.g. 2,400 students at the new high school campus or 2,000 at one middle school campus) if these campuses can physically accommodate this population and are staffed appropriately? Or, would you prefer separating into two schools, which would involve redistricting? Note: the APS guidelines indicate that the new high school should be capped at 1,800 students on the campus; however, if the community gives feedback supporting 2,400 students on the campus (which is the projected maximum according to the demographic study), then a second high school (redistricting) is not needed.

4) At the elementary school level, whether we expand Brandon's facilities or not, **a new elementary school will most likely be needed** in the Northern Cluster. If so, redistricting is inevitable. Is it important to you that APS provide information regarding its commitment to IB and how the IB authorization and teacher training will be funded? Note: We understand that a new school (located within an IB cluster) could receive authorization within a two-three year period.

5) Is **class size an important factor** for you? The demographers are using a teacher-to-student ratio at the elementary level of 1:22 (1:25 at the middle school level) to determine each school's capacity level. If this ratio were increased and more children were added to each classroom, the capacity of our school would also increase and it is possible that redistricting would not be necessary. Is this acceptable to you as a long-term solution?

6) Do you believe **neighborhoods should be kept together**? When drawing district lines, should consideration be given to natural traffic patterns, physical boundaries (railroad tracks, major thoroughfares, etc.) and established neighborhoods?

7) The PTA leaders of all schools in our cluster believe that **diversity is an important part of our culture** in the Northern Cluster, and we are committed to maintaining diversity within our schools. Is this an important issue to you?

Again, your input during this first phase of feedback is so important. **Please complete your survey or send your comments via email by December 16, 2011.** Please feel free to contact Katie Mori, School Council Chair, or either of us if you have any questions about this process.

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