

**MORRIS BRANDON SCHOOL COUNCIL  
2741 HOWELL MILL ROAD  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30327  
(404) 802-7250**

**August 10, 2011**

**RE: Update on Capacity Issue**

Dear Morris Brandon Community:

Welcome back! Thank you to all who participated in the Brandon Capacity Survey, which was conducted in the spring of 2011. We received responses representing approximately 500 students, and we were particularly pleased at the number of respondents who offered thoughts and opinions in the open comments section of the survey. In order to provide you a response to this survey your Brandon Council would like to provide a summary of the survey results and update you on the most recent council actions regarding capacity.

As a preface, registration for newly entering kindergartners at this point is a little lower than over the past two years. Because fewer 5th graders graduated than the number of incoming kindergartners, the growth in total enrollment continues, but is less drastic than what was expected. In addition, while we still believe that capacity is a real concern for our near future and that both campuses are being stretched, we want to emphasize that we have amazing teachers and that instruction to our children is not being compromised.

**Survey Results**

The survey identified several key findings:

Brandon parents exhibited a strong desire for a well-considered, long-term solution to capacity issues.

Approximately 86% of parents indicated that their first choice to solve Brandon's capacity issues was to expand the Brandon Primary Center.

Respondents in favor of expanding the PC are split as to whether they would then prefer to remain a 2-campus school (K-2 and 3-5) or to become two separate schools.

The next favored solution was construction of a new elementary school in the northern cluster.

A strong preference was also exhibited for using portable classrooms versus redistricting if a short-term solution is needed to bridge to a longer-term solution.

## I. Most Recent School Council Actions:

Based on the strong community support for the above, the administration and school council have taken the following action:

- 1) Formal Request to APS: on March 31, the School Council sent a letter to Dr. Hall and the Board of Education sharing the results of our survey in full, restating our situation and belief that this is a cluster-wide challenge and calling for APS to:
  - a. Immediately (before the end of Dr. Halls' contract term on 6/30) move to secure the funding necessary for facilities improvements or new school construction to meet the capacity needs by adding to the bond offering being prepared for the site purchase of the IBM facility for a new high school;
  - b. Verify the feasibility of adding capacity to the primary center and details thereof; and
  - c. Begin the search for a site of a new elementary school.

We have not received a formal reply, but understand through conversations that APS is not prepared to commit funding at this point in time, though potential funding in SPLOST IV for elementary capacity in our cluster has been moved higher in the budget.

## II. APS Demographic Study and Capacity Planning

On Wednesday, May 18 APS held a community meeting to present a plan and timeline for the completion of a comprehensive system-wide demographic analysis and formulation of potential capacity adjustments throughout the system. The presentation and a video of the meeting can be found at:

<http://www.atlanta.k12.ga.us/atlantaps/cwp/view.asp?A=3&Q=299687>

In summary, the starting point is that APS has system-wide capacity for 62,500 students but only 46,000 students are currently enrolled. So, there are areas of great over-capacity as well as areas of under-capacity. The goal is to first enhance the early demographic study with 2010 Census data second to run cost-benefit analysis on various scenarios that would meet enrollment needs for the next 10 years while reducing costs where possible and present the next superintendent with options.

We believe that the process itself is very rational and thorough in its approach, but are concerned with the timeline that has potential solutions and public meetings presented in the fall and then runs to an eventual May 2012 system-wide plan approval by the board.

We plan to work with the demographers and APS staff to keep apprised of new demographic projections and to keep our issue front-and-center, pushing for independent or more immediate action when appropriate.

Parents should feel free to address any concerns or questions to Council Members at [brandonschoolcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:brandonschoolcouncil@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Brandon Council

<http://www.morrisbrandon.com/AboutUs/SchoolCouncil.aspx>