

# MEET THE CANDIDATE

---

Participating on the GO Team can be a rewarding experience for all those who value the opportunity to make a difference in public education.

School name: **Brandon Elementary School**

Candidate Name: **Kimberly Jones**

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What has been your personal involvement with education in our community?

**n/a**

- 1) Why would you like to serve on the Local School Governance Team (GO Team)?

**n/a**

- 2) Describe your vision for our school.

**n/a**

# MEET THE CANDIDATE

Participating on the GO Team can be a rewarding experience for all those who value the opportunity to make a difference in public education.

School name: **Brandon Elementary School**

Candidate Name: **Lori Bibb**

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What has been your personal involvement with education in our community?

**I have focused my educational activities on my children's schools with fundraising and educator support. I have co-chaired a fundraiser, chaired a committee that matches new families with a mentor family, conducts orientation, plans a family meet and greet and a dinner with new families, mentoring families and teachers, chaired and served on various committees for a fundraiser including procurement.**

- 2) Why would you like to serve on the Local School Governance Team (GO Team)?

**I believe in the transformative power of education and believe that every child in Atlanta deserves access to a top notch education. My husband and I practice what we preach by sending our children public school. Exploring how to deliver that quality and formulating strategic initiatives to achieve it are the primary reasons I am pursuing the GO Team because Atlanta simply cannot prosper without a reputation for strong public school education.**

- 3) Describe your vision for our school.

**While Brandon is one of Georgia's few International Baccalaureate Primary Years World Schools, consistently designated as a National Blue Ribbon School by the DoEd and a Georgia School of Excellence by the Georgia Department of Education, it cannot rest on its laurels. My vision is that the school continues to achieve this level of success while affording our active community of committed parents a more dynamic role in decision making that is tailored to our community.**

# MEET THE CANDIDATE

Participating on the GO Team can be a rewarding experience for all those who value the opportunity to make a difference in public education.

School name: **Brandon Elementary School**

Candidate Name: **Deanna (Dede) LaPorta**

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What has been your personal involvement with education in our community?

**As a parent of two children at Brandon, I am involved in a variety of things. I volunteer weekly in the Media Centers and am a parent rep on the Media Center Committee. I am a Co Chair Elect for the Read A Thon and will be serving again next year. I am the communications liaison for our Local School Council, PTA and NAPPS to help keep our parents informed about what is happening in our area.**

- 2) Why would you like to serve on the Local School Governance Team (GO Team)?

**I would like to be involved in making our kids and our school be as successful as possible. The Charter School framework is the ideal avenue for parents and teachers to really impact what and how our kids learn and to make sure the resources are allocated in the most effective way. The only way to make a difference is to get involved.**

- 3) Describe your vision for our school.

**I would like to see Brandon be more creative and effective in how we serve our gifted students as well as our students who are underperforming. Incorporating STEM curriculums and a greater emphasis on math would expose our kids to their future now and set them on a path to success in these areas. Finding resources to help kids who need a little extra help in order to thrive is also a priority.**

# MEET THE CANDIDATE

Participating on the GO Team can be a rewarding experience for all those who value the opportunity to make a difference in public education.

School name: **Brandon Elementary School**

Candidate Name: **Andrew Tuck**

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What has been your personal involvement with education in our community?

**With two elementary-aged children, it has been an important focus for me to ensure that educational opportunities are available for kids in our area. To that end, I serve on the Local School Council and frequently volunteer at Brandon, and I also volunteer and serve in support of other community educational experiences (e.g. Cub Scouts and coaching basketball).**

- 2) Why would you like to serve on the Local School Governance Team (GO Team)?

**I believe my experience on non-profit boards (very similar to the new "GO Team" paradigm) will be helpful to leadership at Brandon and, in turn, to the Brandon community.**

- 3) Describe your vision for our school.

**I bring no agenda. Brandon is working well, and in fact it is thriving. My vision is to help ensure a stable transition into the new model of local control to continue the success already apparent at Brandon.**

# MEET THE CANDIDATE

Participating on the GO Team can be a rewarding experience for all those who value the opportunity to make a difference in public education.

School name: **Brandon Elementary School**

Candidate Name: **Sarah Kirsch**

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What has been your personal involvement with education in our community?

**I currently serve on the local school council at Brandon, with this being the first year of my service. I have held various volunteer positions through the PTA and in the classroom. We currently have two children at Brandon (5th/ 2nd) and beginning in fall of 2016 will have three in APS - Brandon (K/3rd) and Sutton (6). My husband, Brian, and I are both 13-year alums of APS, both graduates of NAHS**

- 2) Why would you like to serve on the Local School Governance Team (GO Team)?

**I am deeply committed to our public schools and believe they are strengthened through parent involvement at multiple levels. Having served for approximately seven months on the local school council, I have developed a deeper understanding of the issues and opportunities and believe I can offer some continuity as we transition to the Go Team structure. Brandon is a terrific school and I look forward to being part of it and success for our kids for years to come.**

- 3) Describe your vision for our school.

**Morris Brandon has tremendous opportunities to continue to be an exceptional neighborhood school with excellent teachers and strong leadership. We can more fully embrace being an IB school in an IB cluster and create more experiential learning opportunities. I think one of our challenges, given our large size, is to create more opportunities for small group engagement for kids and families, thereby creating some focused communities within the two-campus school.**

# MEET THE CANDIDATE

Participating on the GO Team can be a rewarding experience for all those who value the opportunity to make a difference in public education.

School name: **Brandon Elementary School**

Candidate Name: **Kristen Toliver**

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What has been your personal involvement with education in our community?

**I am a parent of a Morris Brandon student. I have been an active participant in my daughter's school by volunteering and staying involved in my child's academics. I ensure that I am abreast of not only matters that effect my child, but others as well. I am a part of the Inter-agency Directors Team(IDT) along with DOE to ensure the physical health and mental health needs of all children are met.**

- 2) Why would you like to serve on the Local School Governance Team (GO Team)?

**I want to be an involved parent who has a voice at my daughter's school. I want to be able to advocate for all children regarding the best interest of their educational success. I feel as if being a member of the GO team will allow me to be involved and have a voice in children's needs as it relates cultural and economical differences of all students. The GO Team will also allow me to have insight to other parents goals and ideas to better enhance our school and children.**

- 3) Describe your vision for our school.

**My vision is to continue to see our school grow and provide the best education to it's students. I envision a more cohesive parent, student, and teacher body by ensuring open communication and perspectives from a variety of parent, student, and teacher input. My vision is that no student slips through the cracks.**

# MEET THE CANDIDATE

Participating on the GO Team can be a rewarding experience for all those who value the opportunity to make a difference in public education.

School name: **Brandon Elementary School**

Candidate Name: **Caren Solomon Bharwani**

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What has been your personal involvement with education in our community?

**I am currently the N. Atlanta Cluster rep on the APS CRCT Remediation and Enrichment Advisory Committee, I participated in the APS School Turnaround Strategy Project focus group, I am an active participant in NAPPS & a regular participant in LSC meetings. I used to work for the Mayor of Atl. and wrote the city's federal legislative agenda which included significant requests for education funding.**

- 2) Why would you like to serve on the Local School Governance Team (GO Team)?

**I would like to serve on the GO team because I want to be an advocate for our school, our cluster, and APS whenever possible. With the implementation of the charter system and the GO teams, there will be new ways to set policies and make decisions for our school and I want to help lay that groundwork. My family will be at Brandon for many years to come so I have a lot to invest in the Go team.**

- 3) Describe your vision for our school.

**My vision for our school is continued growth in the direction of foreign languages, the ability of our administration to right size our classes and hire/allocate teachers as they see fit. Also, I would like to see not just our school but our entire cluster work with more of a 12-K mindset rather than only K-12. I want families to see our cluster as worthy education for all grades and not consider leaving after 5th.**

# MEET THE CANDIDATE

Participating on the GO Team can be a rewarding experience for all those who value the opportunity to make a difference in public education.

School name: **Brandon Elementary School**

Candidate Name: **Rachel Massey**

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What has been your personal involvement with education in our community?

**I currently serve as Volunteer for the Morning Moms at Brandon and regularly volunteer in my children's classrooms providing resources and support. We are annual higher tier club donors of the Morris Brandon Bee Fund, and I closely follow how resources are utilized to improve student achievement and innovation. I participate in school surveys to provide feedback and attend PTA meetings.**

- 2) Why would you like to serve on the Local School Governance Team (GO Team)?

**I would have the opportunity to serve as a voice of the community utilizing my diverse network of parent and teacher relationships. I want to ensure that every voice is heard for the improvement and growth of our school. I would also be curious enough to ask insightful questions to ensure there is an appropriate level of support and challenge for initiatives that deliver results for the school, APS system, and the community.**

- 3) Describe your vision for our school.

**Although Brandon is a high-achieving school, the challenge is taking a great school and making it exceptional. My vision would be that high expectations are set for student achievement underpinned by a shared sense of values. We will not accept status quo, but challenge every member of the community to be accountable for delivering results that are based on goal setting with routine monitoring to relentlessly drive excellence for EVERY child**



# MEET THE CANDIDATE

Participating on the GO Team can be a rewarding experience for all those who value the opportunity to make a difference in public education.

School name: **Brandon Elementary School**

Candidate Name: **Tiffany Tesfamichael**

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What has been your personal involvement with education in our community?

**I served with the Morris Brandon PTA for a two year period. As community enrichment chair, I engaged local vendors and hosted on- and off-premise events for parents and families. I also conducted an assessment to gauge optimal targets for enrichment experiences and general appetites for frequency of PTA outreach. I also volunteer with hospice, and have patients who reside in the Buckhead area.**

- 2) Why would you like to serve on the Local School Governance Team (GO Team)?

**I seek to direct my talents and experience in service to my community, especially one that is shaping my child's thinking. I believe in public education, and that I am fully capable of inspiring credible conversations and positive change in an education context. I have broad experience and training in governance, education, and technical marketing. I enrolled in Georgia Tech at 16, entering from a high school in the Georgia public school system. I hold a doctorate with a focus on policy and administration. I currently serve as lead architect with the technology governance team at InterContinental Hotels Group.**

- 3) Describe your vision for our school.

**I fully support Principal Stimpson's vision of "Intentionally Exemplary." In complement to that, I believe that building and sustaining a culture of evidence is what comprises such a legacy. A culture of evidence involves placing greater value on data than on anecdotes--it's about being thoughtful and deliberate in how we layer the two-fold challenge of learning and assessment. I see school, community, and district leadership as the custodians of balance, and key evangelists for common-sense approaches to**

how data is collected and interpreted. My vision for parents is that they are informed, and engaged.

# MEET THE CANDIDATE

Participating on the GO Team can be a rewarding experience for all those who value the opportunity to make a difference in public education.

School name: **Brandon Elementary School**

Candidate Name: **Gordon Benedict**

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What has been your personal involvement with education in our community?

**Alumni of Brandon Elementary & Westminster.**

**Father to two daughters at Brandon & one daughter at Sutton Middle.**

- 2) Why would you like to serve on the Local School Governance Team (GO Team)?

- 3) Describe your vision for our school.

**I'm very pleased with the current leadership and direction of Brandon Elementary. Having more control over our individual funds should only improve our school's performance in the future. In order to maintain & exceed our self-imposed high standards however, oversight is a necessity during this new charter system chapter. Along with my wife (current PTA President) we believe parental involvement is an absolute must in our kids' education & life.**

# MEET THE CANDIDATE

Participating on the GO Team can be a rewarding experience for all those who value the opportunity to make a difference in public education.

School name: **Brandon Elementary School**

Candidate Name: **Jamie Connelly**

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What has been your personal involvement with education in our community?

**As an attorney, I have volunteered to assist low-income families with children on the autism spectrum interface with schools and regional administrators, including developing goals for their children, in IEP meetings and in due process hearings when necessary. As a Brandon parent, I have been a mystery reader, a career-day speaker, a dad's breakfast attendee, and a homework/project assistant.**

- 2) Why would you like to serve on the Local School Governance Team (GO Team)?

**Two of our children presently attend Brandon, and the third will start there in two years. My wife has already been active in the MB Foundation, and I have seen first hand the benefits of dedicated volunteerism has on our school and our children. As a child of a 52 year high school teacher, I have long known the benefits of teamwork between involved parents and dedicated teachers and staff. I simply want to bring my experience and energy to bear to do my part to help our entire school.**

- 3) Describe your vision for our school.

**My vision for our school is complicated -- MB contains some of the best and most dedicated teachers and staff I have ever known, a committed group of parents who are generous with their time, their talents and their treasure, and an energetic hope and commitment to being even better. This enthusiastic vision is balanced by the realization that MB will face many difficult challenges in the coming years, including balancing competing needs for a limited set of funds.**