

Morris Brandon GO Team Meeting

Date: May 21, 2018

Time: 7:15 a.m.

Location: Main Campus – Science Lab

I. Call to order

Caren Bharwani called the meeting to order at 7:18 AM.

II. Meeting Protocols

a. Roll call; Determine quorum status;

All members were present.

b. Approve previous meeting minutes

The previous meeting's minutes were reviewed. A request was made to amend the minutes to reflect the fact that the social worker will be in the school 10 hours/week next year.

SK moved to approve the minutes, as amended, and KL seconded the motion. All approved.

c. Approve agenda

KL moved to approve the agenda. SK seconded the motion. All approved.

III. Public Comments

• Brian Williams, a parent of a current and former student, and spouse of a staff member, spoke and stated the following (Note: See attachment for entire text of comment):

- He encouraged the GO Team to live up to its full responsibility in the principal selection process and to collectively commit to finding the right kind of leadership for our school.

b. He asked that the GO Team and administration determine a way to get objective feedback on principal performance.

c. In the last 4 years Morris Brandon has seen the departure of many of its highest caliber teachers due to low morale and a culture of leading by fear and intimidation.

d. GO Team needs to make it a priority to have leadership that supports the teachers. Ways to do this are to conduct an annual survey of teachers and be sure the teachers have an advocate as they have not had one over the last few years.

Caren Bharwani read a written comment from Deena Earnest saying that she does not want the students to lose any instruction time in art, music, PE or any other specials

Caren Bharwani read a letter from a group of 10 Morris Brandon teachers expressing the following (see attachment for text of entire letter):

- A concern with a decrease in the instructional time students will have next year in the areas of French, Art, PE, Music and other specials. The amount of time students will spend in these classes is decreasing by between 30% and 40% next year from current state.
- A concern that the instructional time the students will receive is less than what is required by the

APS Standards of Service, which specify a minimum requirement for each of these areas “per period”, and Morris Brandon will not be meeting these requirements on a weekly basis.

- A concern that the decrease in instructional time will cause us to lose many Morris Brandon traditions including Field Day Opening Ceremonies grade level performances, the choral holiday concert, the ceramics unit in Art and the art projects the students do in conjunction with International Travelers week.
- A concern that the teachers of these subjects will have their teaching loads significantly reduced and will function as para-professionals for much of their day, working in areas other than those for which they were hired and trained.
- A concern that this decrease in instructional time negatively affects the education of the whole child.

IV. Discussion Items

a. Principal’s update

- As of 5/18/18, we have 123 kindergartners enrolled for next year. Normally we have about 100 by this time, so we are ahead of projections, and Ms. Stimpson feels we are in good shape for next year.
- A schedule is being implemented next year that increases ELA instructional time by 45mins to 1 hour per grade. This will mean 120 minutes of ELA for 3rd-5th grade and 135 minutes for K-2nd grade. The additional 45mins – 1 hour per day is causing the reduction in arts/PE/French and other specials offerings. The administration is exploring the possibility of offering arts clubs during recess for those students who want to attend.

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- Increasing ELA performance is a high priority in the strategic plan of the school.
 - CB and KL expressed that the GO Team voted to prioritize ELA but never discussed that it would be at the expense of another subject. GO Team might not have prioritized this way if it understood this at the time.
 - KS indicated that we need more time in the day to improve ELA.
 - KT said that other high performing schools, including those with ELA scores higher than Morris Brandon’s, are able to offer their students specials classes more frequently than Morris Brandon will.
 - KS indicated that these schools do not offer all of the things Morris Brandon does.

b. Finalize Tier 3 Interview Panel

The Tier 3 Interview Panel is comprised of current GO Team members. It is only possible to add members to the panel if the GO Team has a vacancy. Since the Morris Brandon GO Team has no vacancies, we will not have any additional members.

c. Review survey results from community feedback form

SK asked Ms. Stimpson what she sees as the key issues for Brandon over the next 3-5 years. Ms. Stimpson said the GO Team should look for someone who can come in and respect what is going on and not wipe it away. We do not need a “fixer”. We need someone who is creative and willing to work. As the hour had reached 8:00 and the teachers had to tend to their classes, GB made a motion to adjourn

the meeting and continue Discussion Item c at a meeting on 5/23/18 at 7:00 AM. This motion passed unanimously.

On 5/23/18 at 7:10 AM, Caren Bharwani reconvened this meeting, and the discussion continued about the feedback the GO Team has received about the principal selection.

The community survey conducted by the GO Team, which was sent to parents and teachers, showed:

Key Strengths to Maintain

- Academic Excellence and Parent/ Community Involvement
- Excellent teachers and sense of community/ school traditions
- Communication, the DLI program, and inclusive culture

Key Concerns:

- Mentioned significantly more than anything else is poor teacher morale and teacher turnover due to morale issues.
- Second is discipline issues in the classroom (lack of consistent consequences, disruptions, etc.)
- Third is concerns about support and training for, teacher turnover in DLI
- Generally tied for 4th and all with more than 10 votes are: ability to effectively address learning differences; teaching to the test; ineffective/weak challenge model; and large class sizes

First Thing the new principal should change:

- Again, the first tier was related to the relationship with faculty and staff (morale, communication, rebuilding trust, appreciation, etc.)
- Second tier: Smaller class sizes
- Third tier: Time for music and other specials; Addressing behavior/ discipline; and evaluating/ supporting DLI
- Other/ 4th tier themes: More recess; better serving kids with learning differences; improving challenge; communications; and building security

Based on the survey feedback, and data gathered in the teacher and community leadership profile workshops (led by APS) the GO Team identified the following as key priorities/items to look for when it interviews candidates.

1) Experience

- Has taught in elementary school, 5+ years classroom experience preferred
- Experience working in high performing elementary school.
- Leadership in elementary school setting (AP, Principal, Instructional Coach)

2) Management/Leadership Skills

- Must have good relationship with staff, be supportive, open to feedback and questions
- Visible and accessible to parents
- Select and hire effective faculty and staff
- Intelligent/Bright/Well spoken
- Able to work with large parent community
- Be able to empower and delegate

3) Teacher Morale

- Listen to teachers
- Restore and Build trust
- Teachers need to feel validated
- Responsive plan to discipline/PBIS

Meeting Minutes

At the close of the GO Team discussion two individuals offered public comment:

- Kathryn Edgecomb stated that Morris Brandon needs a strong leader, someone skilled in change management. We need a CEO who allows everyone to do what they do best and manages from the top.
- A parent stated that Morris Brandon needs a leader who leads and knows the importance of listening to feedback and being flexible. Someone who explains things in a way that is not alienating. Someone who is able to build consensus and have people feel like they are working together for the common good, not a head-butting or adversarial situation.

V. Adjournment

. CB adjourned the meeting at 8:30AM.