

To Whom it may Concern:

The proposed schedule for the 2018-2019 school year has been drastically changed; the most significant change is the amount of time students spend in their specials classes. We understand this has been done to accommodate more time in the classroom each day to use the newly purchased Wit and Wisdom program. This proposed change in the daily schedule results in the students going from two specials per day to one special each day. The proposed schedule has our students attending specials on an 8 day rotation. This means they will only attend an individual special every ninth day of school.

Morris Brandon is an IB school. The IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) identifies six equal subject areas: language, social studies, mathematics, arts, science, and personal, social and physical education. The IB PYP brochure emphasizes, "**The most significant and distinctive feature of the IB Primary Years Programme are the six transdisciplinary themes.**" <https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/digital-tookit/brochures/pyp-programme-brochure-en.pdf>

In addition to going against the principal feature of the IB PYP, the proposed schedule is a cause for concern for us for the following reasons.

Art -

Historically, Art has been offered 45 minutes once a week at Morris Brandon. This equates to 36 Art classes for each student each year. This is consistent with APS Standards of Service requirements (pre 2017) and recommended practices (current).

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Under the proposed schedule, students have Art only once every eight days. Four of the classes will have Art 22 times, and three of the classes will have Art 23 times. Under this new proposed plan, students will have Art class only 62% of the time versus what they have historically had, what they currently have, and what is recommended by the Standards of Service.

- Visual Arts is currently taught in units of study (approximately 6 per year). Within each unit, there is an art history component, an art criticism/appreciation component, and a studio art component. This allows the students to experience a discipline-based art experience that is enriching and creates the transdisciplinary experience that an IB school aims to provide.
- Currently, the lessons in art are able to connect to what is happening in the homeroom classroom and collaboration between art teacher and homeroom teacher happens on a regular basis. With the proposed schedule, the lack of instructional time would make this difficult.

- The art projects will have to change to a more “craft” type project that can be completed within one Art period because fluidity of a project would be difficult with how far apart proposed classes will be.
- The clay/ceramics unit will be difficult to teach. Clay dries quickly and it will not be possible to keep clay pliable between lessons that happen a minimum of 11 days apart (8 day schedule plus weekends/holidays). The ceramics unit will most likely have to be dropped or condensed to a small, one day project.
- Currently in Art, the International Travelers program is reinforced throughout the entire year. We traveled throughout Asia this year, stopping in many countries throughout Asia. Students learned art history and cultural traditions during Art specials. Due to time constraints, it would be difficult to complete these additional lessons.

French -

At Morris Brandon, French has historically been offered 3 times a week or 108 classes per year. Currently, French has 3 classes per week per class for a total of 108 French classes.

Under the proposed schedule, students will attend class 45 times during the 2018-2019 school year. This is less than 42% of the French classes students currently attend (108 vs. 45). The APS Standards of Service recommend a minimum of 2 classes of foreign language per week or 72 classes per year. Under the proposed schedule, the students will receive 67% of the classes versus the minimum recommendations.

- The Holiday French program is a Morris Brandon tradition. Using the proposed schedule, it would be difficult to find time to teach the French songs that are performed for this program.
- Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. Learning to communicate in another language is critical to our students' ability to succeed in a global society.
- The APS Office of ESOL and World Languages envisions a future of bi-literacy in which all students will develop and maintain proficiency in at least two languages. The focus is to insure students receive quality instruction in the target language through an articulated, sequential program which prepares them for a global society.
- The proposed schedule changes the French program at Morris Brandon from a "proficiency" program to an "exposure" program.

PE -

At Morris Brandon, PE has been offered twice a week for 45 minutes. This equates to 72 PE classes for each student each year, which is consistent with APS Standards of Service requirements (pre 2017) and recommended practices (current) of two classes per week.

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Under the proposed schedule, students have PE twice every eight days, or 45 PE classes for each student during the school year. Under this new proposed plan, students will have PE class only 62% of the time versus what they have historically had and as recommended by the Standards of Service.

- PE is currently taught in units of study. Each unit usually lasts 8 lessons. Because of the reduction of PE time under the proposed schedule, we will only be able to teach approximately 5 units compared to the 9 units taught this school year.
- Using the proposed schedule, there is not time for Jump Rope for Heart to be incorporated during PE specials. The jump rope unit will have to be cut to allow time for required APS lessons such as the health unit and fitness testing. If the jump rope unit is cut, then the jump rope team may not fit into the PE curriculum.
- Using the proposed schedule, the dance unit would most likely have to be eliminated. This would end the tradition of each grade level doing a dance for field day.
- The proposed schedule has two homeroom classes coming per period, but under the proposed schedule, different homeroom classes will be combined each time. This will make the combined classes less manageable and result in less activity time per class period. In addition, lessons would need to be one day lessons to avoid repeating material.

Music -

At Morris Brandon, Music has been offered 45 minutes once a week, which equates to 36 Music classes for each student each year. This is consistent with APS Standards of Service requirements (pre 2017) and recommended practices (current).

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Under the proposed schedule, students have Music only once every eight days. Four of the classes will have Music 22 times, and three of the classes will have Music 23 times. Under this new proposed plan, students will have Music class only 62% of the time versus what they have historically had, what they currently have in the 2017-2018 school year, and as recommended by the Standards of Service.

- With the decrease in time in music class, it will be difficult to complete instruction for state standards and have time to practice for holiday performances. Instruction would have to begin holiday songs in August in order to have enough days of instruction to be performance ready. The first semester will essentially be preparation for the holiday performances.
- Currently in Music, the International Travelers program is reinforced throughout the entire year. We traveled throughout Asia this year, stopping in many countries throughout Asia to learn about music traditions.

It is important to note that Art, Music, French, and PE are integral to the education of the “whole child”. Although these subjects are not assessed on the Georgia Milestones, they contribute to the overall education and experience of each child at Morris Brandon. We strongly believe the students at Morris Brandon are well prepared for Middle School and beyond in large part due to their exposure to Art, Music, PE and French. Although we understand the need for a designated ELA block each day, we ask the GO team and administration to consider the above mentioned and alter the proposed schedule. We are asking for this change so that we are able to spend the maximum amount of time with your children in order to instruct and influence them in our specific subject areas.

Thank you,
Morris Brandon Specialist teachers

Ryan Carr
Michelle Courtney
Julia Dalbom
Elyse Darlis
Jennie Dumont
Katie Ingram
Lindsay Lander
Sandy Lambert
Jennifer McCarren
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