

## MORNINGSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Date: Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Time: 5:00 pm

Location: Amy Mather Library @MES

I. Call to order; Start Live Stream - 5:05 pm, by Brooke Linefsky

II. Roll Call; Establish Quorum - Quorum established by Kristina Benavides Davis

Role	Name (or Vacant)	Present or Absent
Interim Principal	Brian Baron	Present
Parent/Guardian	Kristen Cincotta	Present
Parent/Guardian	Chappelle Washington Freer	Present
Parent/Guardian	Brooke Linefsky	Present
Instructional Staff	Kristina Davis	Present
Instructional Staff	Allison Espelosin	Present
Instructional Staff	Amelia Morel	Present
Community Member	Betsy McKay	Present
Community Member	Kristen Pollock	Present
Swing Seat	Kareem Hall	Present

III. Action Items

- a. **Approval of Agenda:** Amelia Morel motion to approve, seconded by Kristen Cincotta, passed unanimously
- b. **Approval of Previous Minutes:** Allison Espelosin motion to approve previous minutes, seconded by Amelia Morel, passed unanimously
- c. **Strategic Plan Review and Update**
  - i. **Accept/Amend Work Session Edits** - Priorities had already been voted on during our last meeting. During the work session in early January, school strategies were organized according to the newly organized priorities.
  - ii. **Vote** - Amelia Morel motion to approve, seconded by Allison Espelosin, passed unanimously.

IV. Discussion Items

- a. **HR Presentation on Principal Search: Matt Rogers**
  - 1. A principal profile will be sent out to staff, parents, and community members.

This will be set to launch after winter break. Participants will have a 2 week window to complete the survey. Data will be compiled, a zoom or in person meeting will be held to review and share the data, any other traits or qualities will be added and data is published. There will be separate meetings for staff and community members.

2. The job will post February 3rd with other principalships in the Atlanta area. The position will be open for a month, then the principal profile will be used to filter through applicants. The process is broken into 4 tiers. Tier 1, applications are accepted and the principal profile is looked through. A Hire View is created where questions are developed by leaders and principals in the district to narrow down applicants. Applicants get the Hire View and answer the questions. Tier 2 involves Matt Rogers, Audrey Sofianos, GO Chair, and Co-Chair. They will narrow the applicant pool to 6. Tier 3, the GO Team, 2 cluster principals, Foundation and PTA presidents will narrow the applicants to 3 people. All of these members vote except Matt Rogers and Audrey Sofianos. This team will develop all questions asked, then candidates will be interviewed by the team. The team will score each candidate on each question using a rubric. Each team participant will have a named rubric. Each candidate then presents a 90 day plan during the last part of the interview where candidates and team participants can have a back and forth. By the end of this day, the team will have narrowed down the 6 candidates to 3. Tier 4, Superintendent interviews before May 5th. Matt Rogers notifies the chosen candidate. The board is notified first, then the school, then the community. The start date of the hired candidate is determined by the candidate's current role and how quickly they can transition. The goal is to start working in the new role as close to May 5th as possible.
3. Amelia Morel asked whether names can be redacted on the rubrics. Matt will check on whether or not names can be redacted for open records after interviews have been conducted.
4. The principal profile follows through the entire process and all tiers. Community and staff voice remains a centerpiece throughout the process. Dates for each tier are not yet public.
5. 2 participating principals are picked from the midtown cluster.
6. The question was asked, Foundation and PTA have co-chairs, are they both invited to tier 3? Participants have to be there for the entire event, 8:00am-4:00pm. Matt Rogers and Audrey Sofianos said they would look into whether both co-chairs can participate.
7. Amelia Morel asked, if co-presidents for PTA and Foundation are present at Tier 3, can an additional teacher voice be added? Matt Rogers and Audrey Sofianos said they would look into balancing the participants.

#### **b. Review Budget Development Process**

- i. NEW Dates of 1/29 at 5:00pm and 2/12 at 3:00pm for budget meetings, both in Library (and hybrid on Zoom as needed) - February 27th will be the Principals HR Staffing Conference.

#### **c. Budget Allocation Presentation**

1. All information can be accessed on the GO Team website. Budget allocations have been given and the team is making sure budget allocations align to the mission, vision, and strategic priorities. Brian Baron gave an overview of the budget and the investment plan to accommodate positions, not people.

2. Brian Baron showed an overview of 3 columns showing FY2026, FY2025, and the change between the two.
3. Regarding earned position allocations, there is no school-level flexibility, the funded column does have flexibility, the staffed column shows the current year's staffing. Brian Baron discussed the current staffing in each grade level. We currently have one additional position in first grade, fourth grade, and two positions over in fifth grade. There is an error on the presentation, the Speech Language Pathologist position is actually balanced. For school administration, there is an open position currently for Assistant Principal. For school support, we are funded two counselors, but have staffed one.
4. Amelia Morel asked about the SST, the position was not earned, it was just staffed by us last year. Brian Baron confirmed. Amelia Morel asked about staffing one counselor instead of two and why, or whether that position was filled elsewhere. Brian Baron said he was not sure and would find out.
5. In reserve, we must keep a certain amount of money per the district. This amount can be adjusted slightly if we need to. This reserve also includes field trips, teaching supplies, and library. \$45,000 has been given to us as a security grant. It can be allocated after determining the budget.
6. Brian Baron said the main difference in this FY26 budget, there is a zero-based budgeting for Signature Programing. We must request funding for Signature Programing. Last year, we staffed a signature program coach as well as a STEAM teacher that aligns with our Signature Programing. On February 7th, this will be either be approved or denied by the district. If these positions are not funded, we as a school need to find \$281,365 to continue these positions. These two positions align to our School Strategic Priorities. The coach will help with our STEAM certification and the STEAM teacher helps students access rigorous and relevant curriculum.
7. On February 12th, Brian Baron will come back to the GO team to share whether these two positions have been approved or denied by the district and the GO team will vote on funding. March 5th will be the final vote on the budget.
8. Brian Baron opened up discussion and gave the team a document (below in meeting minutes) to help guide discussion regarding where the team wants to go with funding, starting with the STEAM teacher and STEAM signature coach being aligned with the school strategic priorities. Building Substitutes are not being funded next year. A suggestion was posed to fund two paraprofessionals next year for building substitutes. A solution to fund these positions would be to abolish an Assistant Principal position, a bookkeeper position, and add a School Business Manager in addition to the two paraprofessionals.
9. Brian Baron suggested next year we bring third grade back to six teachers, bringing class sizes to about 20 students versus 24. In fifth grade, bringing five teachers instead of six teachers would put class sizes to 23 which is where we are at now. This would allow an additional teacher position to focus on student growth, but we would need to abolish one of the teacher leader positions to add both the third grade teacher and a school wide teacher to focus on growth.
10. A second scenario would be to bring third grade back to six teachers, fifth grade remains at six teachers with 20 students on average instead of 23, then an additional flex teacher would not be able to be funded. This would include abolishing one of the teacher leader positions to put a teacher back in third grade.
11. Amelia Morel asked about the additional counselor. Brian Baron responded that

he will need to look at last year's budget. Amelia Morel also asked if we get that additional teacher, but class sizes in a particular grade level get too big with more students in one grade level than projected, can that flex teacher go into a grade level. Brian Baron said yes, this is possible. Amelia Morel said we would need to be careful to ensure this position is an additional teacher, and not give a specific title to prevent that teacher from filling a gap.

12. Allison Espelosin commented that having a smaller class size in third grade would be beneficial since this is the grade level where students start reading to learn instead of learning to read. Kristen Cincotta added that it would be beneficial to have bigger fifth grade classes to prepare students for the larger class sizes in middle school. Allison Espelosin and Amelia Morel discussed the possibility of an influx of students in particular grade levels. Amelia Morel added that this is the beauty of having an additional teacher to help alleviate one grade level if needed. Brian Baron mentioned that the cost of a teacher is in reserve if needed. This year, reserve was given back to the district. Amelia Morel added that this additional teacher would allow flexibility for someone to work with students that do not necessarily fit inside a gifted, intervention, or other, bucket. This additional teacher would provide more flexibility, added Allison Espelosin. Their time could be purely devoted to kids.
13. Brooke Linefsky added that fifth grade teachers, in the current model, teach two classes so their numbers are actually doubled. Amelia Morel responded that it is almost harder to teach all of the subjects to all of the kids. She acknowledged that it is more difficult when you have double the students and double the parents to interact with, but they are planning for half of the subjects. Amelia Morel added that we can discuss this with the staff to get their perspectives on staffing.
14. Regarding school administration, Brian Baron asked what the team thinks about eliminating an assistant principal and bookkeeper, and instead staffing a business manager and two paraprofessionals. Brooke Linefsky asked if Brian Baron can share the differences between assistant principal, business manager, and bookkeeper. He responded that an assistant principal has a student and operational focus. Operational focus includes field trips, budget, facilities, and interaction with a variety of different stakeholders. Any non-instructional items go to a school business manager. Kristen Cincotta added that having a business manager in the past made it very easy to know who to go to when a problem arose. Amelia Morel added that having two paraprofessionals is important in the building and gave the example of printing MAP scores and distributing them to families, or a teacher being approved for professional development, especially considering that providing substitutes in FY26 will be taken out of the school budget. Team planning time for teachers can also be provided by paraprofessionals.
15. Brooke Linefsky added that communication is key and that these ideas should be shared to the community. Especially when discussing losing an assistant principal, it will be best to communicate the differences between an assistant principal, bookkeeper, and school business manager. GO Team is encouraged to have conversations and invite people to the table.
16. Brian Baron added that if the two positions on the Signature Program become staffing positions, to staff one only of the positions, a school business manager, flex teacher, and two paraprofessionals would not be an option anymore. Brian Baron mentioned that these two positions are less than what we have asked

the district for in the past. Amelia Morel asked if we could add anything to the Signature Program Fund Request. Brian Baron said yes, but we want to prioritize the STEAM teacher and coach. Kristen Cincotta mentioned that we could share a STEAM teacher with another school. She also mentioned that with a Makers Lab, if we wanted to ask for more than just the two positions, that may take time away from another position's responsibilities for planning and preparation. Brian Baron clarified that we are asking for a dollar amount to be used towards our Signature Program. Allison Espelosin and Amelia Morel added that adding a Signature Program Support Specialist or Signature Paraprofessionals could help support Signature Programming overall. Or, we could ask for 2 STEAM Teachers.

17. Brian Baron summarized, with the Signature Programming, there is a possibility that the school could ask for a coach and 2 STEAM teachers. Third grade would move to six teachers, fifth grade would move to five, with a flex teacher and school business manager, two paraprofessionals and no assistant principal or bookkeeper.
18. Brooke Linefsky discussed that the deck is published and the document Brian Baron shared would be published.

## **V. Information Items**

### **a. Principal's Report (data presentation)**

1. CCRPI (College Career Readiness Performance Index) Content Mastery scores, we received 100 points. Readiness scores, including attendance, specials, and preparation for the next level, we dropped slightly to 95.4. Progress score, showing how much growth, including ELL language proficiency, students demonstrated, we dropped slightly to 91.6. Closing Gaps scores, improvement targets for academic achievement in subgroups specifically, we dropped to 68.2. Small groups have been implemented as well as universal screeners to make sure we improve in closing the gaps for subgroup populations. This score is solely based on ELA. Our focus area will be black, hispanic, english language learners, and students with disabilities subgroups. Allison Espelosin asked how many points we had last year. Brian Baron responded that in ELA and math we had about 80 points.
2. Kareem Hall asked what the difference is between the green flag and the green flag with a star on the chart. A star is met improvement target and went above and beyond based on the prior year's target. The green flag is did meet the improvement target. Brian Baron pointed out that some performance level scores are very close to the target. We are currently working on this category of closing gaps and it is part of our school strategic priorities.

## **VI. Announcements**

1. Go team members must do their budget training on Elis before the March 5th meeting.

**VII. Public Comment** - No public comments were given before this meeting.

**VIII. Adjournment** - Motion to adjourn by Amelia Morel, seconded by Kristin Cinotta, passed unanimously at 7:00 pm.

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**Minutes Taken By:** Kristina Benavides Davis

**Position:** Secretary

**Date Approved:**

## 25-26 MES BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

<p>Signature Funding (pending approval)</p>	<p>STEAM Teacher</p>	<p>1A. Create a schedule that increases teacher planning while supporting student learning.</p> <p>2A. Offer a rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students, supported by the focus of our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) Signature Program. Priority 3. Focus on individual student needs by strengthening our intervention and enrichment programs.</p> <p>3A: Offer a rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students, supported by the focus of our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) Signature Program.</p>
	<p>STEAM Signature Coach</p>	<p>2A. Offer a rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students, supported by the focus of our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) Signature Program.</p> <p>3A: Offer a rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students, supported by the focus of our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) Signature Program.</p> <p>6A. Prioritize support personnel such as coaches and master teacher leaders.</p>
<p>Permanent Substitutes (no</p>	<p>2 paraprofessionals To support grade levels as well</p>	<p>Priority 1. Focus on eliminating academic achievement gaps among student groups including African-American, Hispanic, and Special Education student groups</p>

## 25-26 MES BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

<p>longer district funded)</p>		<p>Priority 3. Focus on individual student needs by strengthening our intervention and enrichment programs.</p> <p>Priority 6. Create an environment that motivates and retains staff members, builds teacher leadership, and focuses on teacher wellness.</p> <p>Priority 7. Build capacity of talented and knowledgeable staff to meet student needs.</p>
<p>School Administration</p>	<p>Abolish 1 AP position Abolish Bookkeeper</p> <p>→ Add School Business Manager</p> <p>→ Allows for 2 paraprofessionals above</p>	<p>Priority 1. Focus on eliminating academic achievement gaps among student groups including African-American, Hispanic, and Special Education student groups</p> <p>Priority 3. Focus on individual student needs by strengthening our intervention and enrichment programs.</p> <p>Priority 6. Create an environment that motivates and retains staff members, builds teacher leadership, and focuses on teacher wellness.</p> <p>Priority 7. Build capacity of talented and knowledgeable staff to meet student needs.</p> <p><u>Trade off</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Greater focus on instruction for Principal and AP</li> <li>○ In house additional support for staff coverage (planning, absences)</li> </ul>

# 25-26 MES BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

PROJECTIONS  
for FY26

Grade	APS Projection 11/1/24
K	120
1st	120
2nd	125
3rd	119
4th	93
5th	117
	<b>694</b>

Grade level  
staffing

Scenario 1:  
3rd grade to 6  
5th to 5

Priority 1: Focus on eliminating academic achievement gaps among student groups including African-American, Hispanic, and Special Education student groups

- 1B. Reduce class size K - 5

Trade off

- Abolish 1 MTL
- 5th grade class size at 23 (same as FY25)
- Add additional teacher for focus on growth

Teachers 24-25	Class Sizes 1/28/25	Teachers 25-26	Projected Class Sizes
6	19	6	20
6	22	6	20
6	20	6	21
5	19	6	20
5	22	5	19
6	23	5	23
<b>34</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b>

# 25-26 MES BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Scenario 2:  
3rd grade to 6  
5th remains at 6

Priority 1: Focus on eliminating academic achievement gaps among student groups including African-American, Hispanic, and Special Education student groups  
1B. Reduce class size K - 5.

Trade off

- Abolish 1 MTL
- 5th grade class size to 20
- No additional support teacher

Teachers 24-25	Class Sizes 1/28/25	Teachers 25-26	Projected Class Sizes
6	19	6	20
6	22	6	20
6	20	6	21
5	19	6	20
5	22	5	19
6	23	6	20
<b>34</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>20</b>

Bottom line considerations:

- 3rd grade to 6 positions and 5th grade to 5 positions
  - 1 MTL abolished
  - 1 additional teacher to support remediation and acceleration
  
- 3rd grade to 6 positions and 5th grade remains at 6 positions
  - 1 MTL abolished
  - No additional teacher to support remediation and acceleration
  
- Abolish AP and Bookkeeper
  - Add School Business Manager
  - Add 2 paraprofessionals

- Keep Bookkeeper and AP
  - No School Business Manager
  - No additional paraprofessionals