

Summary of notes from 2/7/08 meeting:

The following Q&A is the result of a meeting scheduled by Dr. Gloria Patterson at the request of the Morningside Collaborative Planning Committee*. Joining the meeting were Mary Lin representatives, Brian Mitchell, Kelly Mann (PTA), and Paula Kupersmith(LSC), as well as Jere Smith, Director of Capital Improvement, and Felicia Collin, APS Human Resources.

Until the sale of the property in December, the Howard School on Ponce de Leon Ave. was leased by APS to use as Morningside's kindergarten campus as a temporary solution to the school's overcrowding. Since the sale, plans have begun for a new K – 5 school with the planned enrollment of 450 students, and a building capacity of about 540. At present, the property holds three buildings, with one now hosting Morningside's kindergarten.

I. Lin Questions:

When and how will district lines be drawn?

Dr. Patterson will take this question the Chief of Staff to find out about dates to communicate back to Lin and MES about rezoning. As the projected opening date is August '09, lines would typically be drawn in the spring of '08. Dr. Hall promised some information by December '08 at this year's Town Hall CINS meeting at Lin. The group could not remember whether that promise was for redistricting possibilities or redistricting decisions. Dr. Patterson will find out.

How will community input on that process be solicited?

Some of this was covered during Dr. Hall's Town Hall Meeting at Lin in December and needs further clarification. Dr. Patterson recorded this question and will get back to the group.

How will changes be communicated to parents?

Dr. Patterson agreed that it would be a good idea to include an FAQ on the Morningside websites with answers to parents' questions being run through her department for accuracy before posting. The Morningside and Lin reps agreed to work together to put the same FAQ on the Lin website so that questions are being posed to APS only once.

What will the redistricting policy be for kids in higher grades? (e.g., would a 4th grader who falls under redistricting have the option to finish 5th grade at Lin?)

There were some questions as to grandfathering; as no one had a clear policy in front of them. Several people said they believe that the current policy is that grandfathering is only a possibility when redistricting to an existing school and that no grandfathering is

allowed when a new school is formed. Dr. Patterson seemed open to this idea, found it logical to take into consideration for rising 5th graders. Dr. Patterson added this to her list of questions to research and communicate back to the principals.

What role does Dr. Patterson see for the PTAs and LSCs in the process?

Dr. Patterson sees this as a new school, with a new population. In such a case, LSC and PTA members from all redistricted schools would work together with the new principal and staff until the school forms its own committees.

II. Morningside Questions:

Will the new school include students from Mary Lin's current district?

This will be determined when district lines are redrawn. As the property is fully in the present Mary Lin district, both Dr. Patterson and Jere Smith agreed that it was a strong possibility that some Mary Lin students will be redistricted to the new school. Both groups will be included in this process going forward.

What is the current construction time line?

Plans are currently undergoing UDC review. There is no approval yet, although they're about 90% through the process. Permits are needed for demolition of an annex in the back of the original structure to build the new addition, then renovate the front building. The plan is to have the school finished for Aug '09 opening, but there is nothing in writing as to points of the schedule along the way. The official project meetings were started in December and another held in January. The hope is a finished building by 6/15/08. We have asked that the Mary Lin representatives be included in future meetings.

A construction-related issue was raised regarding the school's gym. The current K-only school utilizes the gym of the neighboring church and APS' plan is to continue this practice. The church and school also have a relationship sharing parking and/or a driveway. The concern voiced from Morningside folks was that the gym is currently used as a homeless shelter in the evenings and, therefore, the school is unable to use it after 3pm on weekdays and any time on weekends. They feel this is not an ideal situation and may lead to problems going forward. Morningside's main campus is currently having issues with a neighboring church and a gym shared with the city.

Morningside reps also requested that the demolition of the Rutland building be performed during Spring Break, rather than the scheduled March date, to minimize impact on the Kindergarten children. This process will likely take longer than 1 week, but Jere Smith will see if they can begin during Spring Break. The middle building, Rutland Annex, will be demolished. The currently-unused Rutland building will be rebuilt, and then the Hirsch building (where kids are now) will be renovated.

Another concern raised was that the Northside school is slated for the same Fall '09 timeframe but seems to be progressing more quickly.

Principal selection process?

Ideally, the principal selection could begin as early as a year out, if possible. LSC, PTA, SRT3 members, staff, and community members have input in the hiring of the principal.

Teacher hiring process?

The principal and her/his administrative staff hire the teachers.

Will teachers be taken from Morningside to staff the new school?

There is a standard APS voluntary transfer period for teachers in the schools being redistricted, however, they are subject to the same principal hiring process as any new teacher interested in a teaching position.

Will the new school have extended days like Morningside?

No. Extended days were initially part of a funded pilot program. There is no more funding for extended-day attendance, so all new schools will have regular day schedules.

Will the new school be a year-round school?

The school will open on a traditional calendar schedule. Year-round attendance is established at the request of parents, not APS.

How will staffing allocation be determined?

Staffing numbers are based on a demography study that determines projected enrollment.

Will the school have a foreign language program?

Yes, as well as the usual customary “specials”. (The language to be taught is selected based on future use by the child, i.e., if Inman offers Spanish; it makes sense to offer Spanish in the feeder schools to give the child the opportunity for further study.)

***Morningside Collaborative Planning Committee:** a separate committee formed by Morningside’s principal, PTA, and LSC for the purpose of addressing over-crowding, redistricting, and community communication with regard to these topics.

Members in attendance:

Rebecca Pruitt rpruitt@atlanta.k12.ga.us Principal of MES
Susan Edlein Susan.Edlein@hklaw.com LSC parent rep
Karen Woodward kwoodward@cmlawfirm.com LSC parent rep
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Attachments:

Morningside “CPC” letter copy requesting meeting

Notes compiled and recorded by Paula Kupersmith and Kelly Mann 2/07/08

