

# THE SPARK GO TEAM NEWSLETTER

February 2019

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## NEW NEWS- SPARK's Strategic Plan

All GO Teams need to **update their strategic plan** according to the APS schedule. SPARK established a strategic plan in 2016, and it can be found here: [https://springdaleparkelementary.org/wp-content/uploads/10\\_5BSC-SPARK-Strategic-Plan.pdf](https://springdaleparkelementary.org/wp-content/uploads/10_5BSC-SPARK-Strategic-Plan.pdf)

Currently, we are looking at this plan and seeing how we did as a school!

Next year, the plan will be updated to reflect and incorporate some new ideas as our school continues to grow and evolve. The Go Team will help establish these strategic objectives, ensure we have mechanisms in place to measure progress and evaluate the goals so that we can make incremental and impactful positive changes for SPARK!



## Get to know your Go Team

### **MEET Dr. Meredith Evans**

#### **1: What is your affiliation with SPARK and why are you passionate about?**

I am midtown parent of a third grader, who has served on the PTO. Selfishly I am involved because it makes me a better parent and my son is thrilled every time I enter the building.

#### **2. How do you describe the GO Team to others?**

The GO Team is a school governance team made up of parents, school staff and community members that are elected to assist the principal in strategic, long-term planning for the school. Collectively we represent the ideas and opinions of most of our school population.

#### **3. What is your favorite thing about SPARK?**

The fun learning environment, care and collaboration among staff, teachers and parents.

#### **4. How do you spend your workdays and free time?**

I manage people and projects, relationships and resources to preserve and promote culture, history and civic engagement at the federally administered Carter Presidential Library and Museum. I spend my free time sleeping or with my son going to the movies, live performances, the Carlos Museum, High Museum of Art, his soccer games, Atlanta United games and to Five Guys.

## District Happenings & SPARK Impacts:

We are part of the Grady Cluster, and there are several items which may be short and long term impacting for our students. Many of you already know about the new [middle school](#) and APS's work on the [new school calendars](#). There is also a new athletic field built in OFW called [Walden Field](#). This newsletter is intended to keep you abreast of these happenings and be connected to our cluster.

## Where does the money go?

This is probably one of the most asked questions by parents and families in our community. Yes, many homeowners pay a lot in taxes, but SPARK does not receive all of the funds from our immediate community. It goes into a pool of funds which is allocated by APS (with the APS Board's approval) on a per student and programmatic basis (some federal programs contribute to APS budgets overall). The APS funding is determined by the tax millage rate, set by your county tax assessors for your property. When parents ask why we don't have more, the answer is how APS allocates the budgets for schools.

The GO Team has continued to request additional funding based on the needs of our students but APS has offered little flexibility with their decisions to be able to meet these requests. The reality is that being a larger school means that instead of receiving additional support, we are asked to continuously do more with less. All while APS invests in smaller schools, closes some schools and has changed the student based funding model to account for factors like grade levels, number of gifted students, EIP, poverty level, etc.

The GO Team justifies the requests for additional funding based on projections and enrollments. We use all the data available to position for the most funding, but decisions are made at the District level. Also, SPARK has invested in high caliber and well educated teachers and staff. Their experience and expertise are accounted for inside the budget, with the **largest percentage of the SPARK budget going to teacher salaries**.

Yet, SPARK has the lowest per student funding in all of APS. Formerly, this position was held by Morningside Elementary. It means that *per student*, SPARK receives the least amount of funds from our District. APS has algorithms it uses to determine the budget offered for each school population, while considering APS obligations like facilities and other aspects that go into running a school district. It is important to note that the funding model from APS is intended to be blind of foundations and fundraising efforts. The reality is that SPARK sees increased enrollment year on year, but have not seen an increase in base level funding from APS with those enrollments.

What's next .... The Go Team continues to advocate and position for additional funding, recognizing that APS strives for equity across all of our districts, many of whom are defined as extreme poverty. We will continue to use logic and financial based positions and examine the released budget statements. We recognize that ours is one community in a cluster system that we want to excel and we will do our best to get the funds to make that happen, and question anything that squanders that.

## Atlanta Board of Education - Policy Changes to be aware of

From Pierre Gauthier

Did you know that the Atlanta BOE reviews and adjusts its policies throughout the year? The BOE operates on a consent agenda and the format involves an opportunity for public comment at its meetings. Also, at these meetings, students speak first – so look for the published agendas and show up at 5:30 on meeting days to sign up to speak! Here are some latest policy changes:

- **Revisions to Policy IHA, Grading Systems** (final approval) 5.02 Policy IHA, Grading Systems (final approval) 5.02 was accepted and full documentation is forthcoming for the policy language
- **Adoption of Policy JGBA, Student Support Services - Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking** (first reading) 5.05

For BOE briefs and latest news, visit this page: <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/domain/11363>

### **Board of Education Corner- Know who votes and how**

SPARK's APS Board of Education representatives are decided by your address and District and they are [Michelle Olympiadis](#) and [Leslie Grant](#).

- Power Up Summer Academic Enrichment Programs Solicitation No. 2019-0011 7.04, voted to continue funding
- Authorization to purchase the Motorola radio system (Moto TRBO) for buses from Motorola Solutions Inc. using Georgia Statewide contract: SWC980-2800008 7.07
- Adoption of FY 2020 Budget Timeline and Parameters 8.01 It was moved by Nancy Meister and seconded by Eshè Collins to adopt the FY 2020 budget timeline and parameters. Voting Result: Motion Carried
- Monthly Budget Adjustments 8.02 It was moved by Nancy Meister and seconded by Cynthia Briscoe Brown approve the proposed adjustments to the FY2019 budget.