

Atlanta Public Schools became a charter system on September 25th, 2015 to increase student achievement and improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency. APS's charter contract is effective July 1st, 2016. A key component of operating as a Georgia charter system is the establishment of Local School Governance Teams at the 71 APS neighborhood schools. Local School Governance Teams are also known as LSGT's and/or GO Teams.

GO Teams work with school leadership and the community to help determine the long term direction of the school, design innovative solutions to increase student achievement, and serve as school ambassadors to the local community.

Karim Shariff

Karim is a native of Atlanta and regularly participates in civic engagements that help to further improve the community. He is the Managing Partner of PacificPoint Realty, LLC, a residential real estate development firm. Prior to PPR, Karim has been involved with numerous small business enterprises, including ventures such as a packaged ice business and residential solar panel company. Karim's diverse and business background are a strong asset in his voluntary roles - allowing him to bring a good balance of vision and execution.

Karim is very active in the community. In addition to the role as Vice Chair of the MES GO Team, he is on the executive committee of the Board of Directors for Dad's Garage Theatre Company. He played a vital role in the acquisition, financing, and renovation of the non-profit's new theatre in O4W (www.dadsgarage.com). He is also currently the Program Co-chair for the LEAD Atlanta Class of 2017 (www.leadershipatlanta.org). He helps to oversee several dozen alumni volunteers and the coordination of the program year for 50 participants who have been identified as Atlanta's brightest young leaders.

Karim is a graduate of Emory University. He and his wife Zahra are excited to recently welcome their new baby girl, Khaliya, in July. They enjoy traveling and the outdoors, but lately will settle for a full night of sleep!

Catalina Sibilsky

Catalina and her husband, Dave, have three children and have lived in the Morningside community for ten years. Currently they have one student at MES – Alek, a third grader. She has worked in public and private school education for over 20 years in Atlanta. She would like to support Morningside by bringing both her education experience and her personal commitment to the school and to the Grady Cluster school community.

Lauren Parkerson

As one of the Community Members on the GO Team, Lauren is passionate about public education and doing what she can to serve. She developed a desire to impact education while at Georgia Tech, where she volunteered at a local elementary school and interned for Teach for America. Lauren and her husband, Michael, have two boys, 2 1/2 and 4 weeks old. While she is still a few years away from being an MES parent, she brings her background as a consultant and eagerness to implement a strategic vision to the Team and is excited to learn from the collective experience of the GO Team members.

Liz Davis

Liz Davis has served as Manager of Education Services with the Woodruff Arts Center since June 2015. In this role, she utilizes 10 years of combined experience in arts education administration and classroom instruction to support collaborative education initiatives across the Woodruff Arts Center Arts Partners: the Alliance Theatre, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and High Museum of Art. Originally from Princeton Junction, New Jersey, Liz's second home is Washington, DC. She holds an undergraduate degree from

The George Washington University (BA, English) and a Masters degree from the University of Maryland, College Park (M.Ed, Secondary Education, English). Liz's professional career started in the Education Department at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where she coordinated the Dance Theatre of Harlem Pre-Professional Residency, Musicals in the Schools, and the DCPS Partnership. Liz then answered the call to teach, serving as a highly qualified English and Special Education teacher in DC area schools. In July 2014, she relocated to Atlanta to join Arts for Learning, a division of the Woodruff Arts Center, as Manager of School & Community Partnerships. Liz was a member of the 2015-2016 Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE) Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP) and currently serves as a Governing Board Member of Tapestry Public Charter School, which offers an innovative, individualized, and inclusive learning environment for middle and high school students. She resides in Grant Park with her husband, Brian, and their dog, Peach.

Marshall Norseng

Marshall and his wife Aimee have twin boys, Luca and Liam, who are currently in the fourth grade. They came to Atlanta (for her job with CDC) via Colorado and California and feel very fortunate to be part of the MES community. Marshall currently manages a small manufacturing operation in the suburbs and also serves on APS's Citizens Budget Advisory Committee.

Debra Smearman

Debra and her husband, Jeremy have two daughters at Morningside Elementary. Their older daughter, Sadie, is in the fifth grade, and their younger daughter, Erin, is a second grader. She moved to Atlanta in 1992 after graduating from law school and has practiced law in Atlanta since that time. As a family and members of the Morningside community, Debra and her husband are dedicated to Morningside Elementary School and the Grady cluster. She looks forward to working with the other members of the Go Team as well as the Morningside community, parents and teachers as we transition into and implement the new charter system.

Sarah Richards

Sarah Richards is a Fifth Grade Language Arts teacher at Morningside. This is her third year teaching at Morningside and her 15th year as an educator. Prior to joining the faculty here at Morningside, Sarah worked in the Fulton County school system as a teacher and administrator. Most recently, she served as the Curriculum Support Teacher at Ison Springs Elementary School in Sandy Springs. Mrs. Richards holds a Masters degree in Education Administration and Policy from the University of Georgia, and a B.A. in Elementary Education from the University of Iowa. Sarah and her husband Mark live in Morningside, with their two sons: Evan, a first grader at Morningside, and Adam, age 3. Mrs. Richards is excited about the opportunity to serve on the School Governance Council.

Val Taylor

Valerie Taylor is a 5th grade science teacher at Morningside. This is her 15th year at Morningside and she is very excited about our 2016-2017 GO Team. She is a strong believer in goal setting and student achievement for each child and school. She finds it a pleasure to serve both her school and community as a GO Team teacher representative.

Kelli Balloon

Kelli Balloon is the Response to Intervention/Student Support Team Specialist at Morningside. Kelli has worked in this position three years. Prior to that, she was an Early Intervention Program teacher and a second grade teacher at MES. Kelli holds a Specialists degree in Teacher Leadership from Piedmont University and a Masters degree in Educational Leadership from Kennesaw State University. Kelli comes from a long line of educators dating back to her great grandmother. Like her mother, she has an affinity for intervention and remediation. Kelli and her husband Vincent enjoy traveling and caring for their three dogs, Sasha, Sigmund, and Waco. Kelli is delighted and enthusiastic to serve on Morningside's GO Team.