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Aesha Rasheed, MJCS Board President
aesha.rasheed@gmail.com
(504) 473-9515

Patricia Perkins, MJCS Principal
pperkins@morrisjeffschool.org

Rowan Shafer, Morris Jeff Association of Educators
rowan.shafer@gmail.com

Morris Jeff Community School Recognizes Formation of Teachers Association

In a continuing effort to build a public school that is a center of excellence at every level and a supportive environment for students, family and faculty, the Morris Jeff Community School Board of Directors voted unanimously to recognize the Morris Jeff Association of Educators, a new teacher organization at the school. Born out of a positive effort to ensure a long-lasting strong relationship with the board and administrators, this move opens up a process through which the school's leaders will craft and define a formal relationship with the teacher's group.

"The Morris Jeff Community School has from its founding supported the right of teachers to organize" MJCS Principal Patricia Perkins said. "We look forward to continuing our strong, positive working relationship that furthers our commitment to creating a community of adult learners whose key purpose is to teach, prepare, and support the students of our school towards achievement both now and in the future."

Emphasizing a desire to continue working collaboratively in the school's growth and development, teachers introduced the association at the board's May 16th meeting and asked board members to indicate their support for formally engaging with the organization. MJAE leaders presented the MJCS board with support cards from the overwhelming majority, 94 percent, of the school's staff members as well as from several parents.

"This effort was born out of a deep commitment on the part of our teachers to improve education at our school and in our city," said Aaron Forbes, MJCS Spanish teacher and MJAE leader. "As educators, our number one commitment is to improve the quality of education for our children. Creating a union of educational professionals to work toward that goal in an official capacity is a big step in working to help fulfill our mission as a school."

"This has grown out of a positive desire on the part of teachers to ensure a strong partnership with school board and administration that is long lasting and systematic," added Rowan

Shafer, a 4th grade teacher and MJAE leader. “We look forward to working together to better our school.”

MJCS founders included professionalism among the school’s core values in acknowledgement of the importance of creating an educational environment that deeply values excellent teaching professionals and supports their on-going growth and development.

“From the beginning we designed our school as a place of vision and collaboration because we know that the challenging and critical work of nurturing and educating our children requires the thoughtful shared effort of all of the adults in our building and community,” MJCS Board President Aesha Rasheed said. “The formation of a teacher’s association at our school is a natural development in that collaborative process. I’m excited about the possibilities that will be created at our school through the establishment of a formal channel for collective teacher voice.”

Morris Jeff Community School was founded in 2009 as an open-access public charter school by a community of parents, teachers and neighbors committed to creating an excellent public school grounded in values of open-access, diversity, rigor, professionalism, community and world language. The Mid-City school has blossomed into a thriving school community with more than 360 children in grades PK through 4th grade. The school will grow by one grade level each year until it’s a full PK through 8th grade school.

More about Morris Jeff Community School – www.morrisjeffschool.org

Morris Jeff Community School embraces learners of all backgrounds and holds each student to the highest expectations. Students are provided with a deep, rich curriculum that engages them in inquiry, develops strong critical thinking skills, and challenges them to a new level of learning. We prepare students of Morris Jeff Community School to become lifelong learners.

We see ourselves as part of movement to transform public education in our country. Our school was imagined and built out of thousands of conversations, with parents, community members and professional educators. This grassroots approach to educational reform has created Morris Jeff as one of the most racially and economically diverse public schools in the history of New Orleans.

Our Mission

Morris Jeff Community School will offer an education that is a source of freedom and possibility for children, permitting them to develop their talents fully, become contributing citizens in our democracy, and attain the foundation they need to excel at high schools, colleges, careers, and pursuits.

Our Values

OPEN-ACCESS – Holding this truth to be self-evident, that all children have the potential to learn at the highest levels and develop into life-long learners.

DIVERSITY – Creating a school where the students, parents and faculty reflect the racial and economic diversity of our City and our neighborhood.

RIGOR – Fostering practices that develop children’s capacity to master basic skills, think critically, engage creatively and develop intellectual confidence.

PROFESSIONALISM – Attracting the highest quality educators, by respecting their capacity as professionals and creating an environment in which teachers are supported to develop their full potential.

COMMUNITY – Engaging the talents, time and imagination of parents and community members to be co-creators in the vision and the work of our educational community.

WORLD LANGUAGES – Exposing children to language diversity from a young age to develop their linguistic capacity and global awareness.

ADVOCACY – Believing that it is our job to organize ourselves to be a powerful voice for the success of public education.

About Morris Jeff Association of Educators

Morris Jeff Association of Educators Vision

We are driven by two unwavering goals: providing the highest quality education to ensure all children achieve their maximum potential and transforming the landscape for teacher organization and development in New Orleans. Morris Jeff Association of Educators understands that to provide the highest quality education, we must strive towards excellence as educators every day. We collaborate, learn, plan, and support one another with the individual expertise each of us owns. We are stronger and more successful as a team than we ever could be alone.

We aim to provide a paradigm for communication between teachers and administrators in New Orleans and the world. We want to be a model in our city of how to give teachers the voice, structure, and inspiration that can make great educators, leading to the success of our students.

Morris Jeff Association of Educators Mission Statement:

Morris Jeff Association of Educators will offer a voice to our teachers and a vehicle for effective collaboration school-wide. Our organization and leadership will allow for the needs of our children to be met by empowering teachers with formal systems for effective communication and problem solving. We strive to develop a learning environment that encourages teachers to fully develop their talents and be active members of our school community.

We acknowledge that teachers are more effective to their students when they work together and are able sustain their long-term dedication to education. Together, we will excel as educators and be role models for our children.