Morrell Park Elementary Middle School 220
Principal: Sean Conley

Sean Conley is in his third year as principal of Morrell Park Elementary Middle School and his fourth year as a principal. He was part of the first New Leaders for New Schools cohort in 2005.

When Sean began his principalship, Morrell Park was an historically failing school in which student achievement remained consistently below 50 percent proficient and advanced, with scores often in the teens and twenties. In his first summer, the focus was to change the culture and climate. The school was zero-based, which meant that every teacher had to reapply for their positions. With the assistance of the University Partnership Schools (a partnership with Towson University), Sean was able to decide which teachers to rehire. This process led to a complete focus on student achievement, teacher development, student engagement and meeting the needs of individual students.

Meeting the needs of individual students meant that Morrell Park had to focus on creating strong collaborative planning sessions. These sessions focused on creating common assessments, analyzing data to determine student strengths and weaknesses, as well as identifying deficit skills to address during whole-class instruction, small group re-teaching or individual support. Writing rubrics were created and revised to help students better understand the demands of extended written responses on the state test. In addition, teachers created instructional calendars to help them better understand the demands of the state curriculum and its alignment to testing standards. Most importantly, these collaborative planning sessions were designed to teach teachers how to consistently provide effective instruction by implementing best practices, delivering explicit instruction, ensuring that students are engaged, providing ample opportunities to practice using skills and strategies in authentic ways, and meeting individual needs through small group sessions or conferencing. As these meetings evolved, true professional learning communities emerged.

In 2009, 86.3 percent of students at Morrell Park were proficient or advanced in mathematics and 83.7 percent were proficient or advanced in reading. Some of the recent highlights include:

- 100 percent of students in 3rd grade scored proficient or advanced for two consecutive years.
- In math, 24.7 percent of students increased from proficient to advanced between the 2008 SY and 2009 SY.
- 77.1 percent of students in the 7th grade scored proficient or advanced in reading.
- In reading, 28.1 percent of students overall increased from proficient to advanced between the 2008 SY and 2009 SY.
- Morrell Park met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status in 2008 and 2009, exiting school improvement.

According to City Schools’ 2009 Climate Survey, 87.9 percent of parents and 100 percent of staff feel that their students are safe, and 77.6 percent of the students feel they are safe. Additionally, 89 percent of parents are satisfied with Morrell Park and 95 percent feel that they are welcomed at this school.
Morrell Park offers numerous school activities. These include Middle School Athletics (Girls and Boys Basketball and Girls and Boys Track and Field), Technology Club, Art Club, Book Club, Girl Scouts, Parent Engagement Activities, PBIS School-Wide, Paths to Pax in the Primary Academy, After-School Tutoring, and Middle School Coach Class.

**Focus Groups for Morrell Park Middle School:**

**Staff:**
1. Melissa Hausmann - Primary Intervention Teacher
2. Sheila Burke – Math IST/Middle School Academy Leader
3. Sharonda Eley – Gr. 3-8 Literacy IST/Intermediate Academy Leader
4. Natalie Gibboni – PreK-2 Literacy IST/Primary Academy Leader
5. Noel Lugay – 4th Gr. Language Arts Teacher
6. Melanie Everhart – PreK Teacher
7. Thomas Ventre – 7th & 8th Grade English

**Parents (* = confirmed):**
1. Susan Zachau – Savannah 4th Grade *
2. Nickie Kerns – James Henderson 4th Grade *
3. Laura Hayes – Kyle Hayes 7th Grade
4. Stacey James – Kelsta James 2nd Grade
5. Melissa Ruiz – Nicholas Russo 2nd Grade *
6. Amber MacDowell – Marris Hanson 7th Grade *
7. Stephanie Brunson (Good Sheppard Church)*
8. Ray Lorian (University Partnership Schools)*