

# Brady's bunch sets priorities

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The voices of 2,000 students echo throughout the building as students make their way to class, some with greater ease than others.

For seniors, the halls are as familiar as their own homes, as they chat with old friends and realize – somewhere in the back of their minds – that this is their last first week. For many freshmen, the old building is a daunting brick and stone labyrinth, high school unfamiliar in more ways than one. Some things never change.

But some things do. This year, Hillsborough has three new administrators: Principal Gary Brady, Assistant Principal for Student Affairs Jackie Eisenhauer and Assistant Principal for Administration Mick Boddie. With three new administrators comes with three new goals for the school year:

- Clear communication
- Closer relationships between students, parents and faculty
- Culture that promotes school pride

### It takes a team

Brady explained that, while improving academic performance is part of his “vision,” that cannot happen

without achieving these more immediate goals first. “Maybe if you were at a school where everyone felt safe and clean, you could focus on reading scores,” Brady said. “Performance is the most important part, but without the culture and the communication I don’t think that will come.”

At a faculty meeting during pre-planning, Brady pointed out a few “key indicators” from the School Climate and Perception Survey, which students filled out last year. Only half of the surveyed students agreed with the statement, “Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.” Even fewer felt that “the faculty and leadership have a shared vision” or that they “take steps to solve problems.”

Brady’s first step to remedy that division was to ask every faculty member, along with members of SGA, to work with a group and share their visions for Hillsborough in three years in the form of posters, which were later hung in the halls.

Many faculty members envisioned higher graduation rates (See page 5 for more about graduation rates). Others simply wanted a more collaborative environment.

“[My group] had a picture of a student, a teacher and an administrator,” Eisenhauer said. “Above them was a speech bubble that said, ‘I’m happy to be here. I’m glad to be part of the team.’”

According to Boddie, this desire for a more collaborative environment is shared by all of administration. “We’re really going to focus on the team. We’ll see changes in the structure. We’re looking to enhance communication up and down the chain of command,” he said.

Faculty members will meet monthly to discuss concerns regarding discipline and academics and share ideas for making the school run more smoothly. In addition, Brady hopes to

keep teachers, students and parents informed through frequent newsletters and messages via Remind, a group texting service. There are specific accounts for faculty/staff and each grade level.

### Building relationships

Though frequent messages allow for efficient communication, the administration also believes that face-

to-face contact is crucial, especially with students.

“I don’t remember ever talking to my principal when I was a kid – I really don’t – I get it; that doesn’t really matter,” Brady said. “If I just stay in my office, I don’t get to see you, and the most important thing here is the kids.”

The emphasis on interaction with students is shared by other administrators. “We’re so hopeful that we make some kind of connection, that every kid has one connection to an adult that they can trust, so that they feel like they can bring their concerns,” Eisenhauer said.

Boddie, whose son Marquis graduated from Hillsborough in 2006, stressed the importance of empathizing with students and parents.

“We gotta realize that what makes this school tick,” he said, “is our connection” to the [parents and students.

Many teachers, including Christel Lynn Lora, who has taught at Hillsborough for 11 years, have expressed enthusiasm about the new administration.

“I love [their focus on building connections with students]. That’s how we get students to succeed, how we get teachers to succeed, how we get the school to succeed,” Lora said. “I’m excited about ... being part of the Brady bunch. They seem really geared toward student success, and I appreciate that.”

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—Gary Brady, Principal

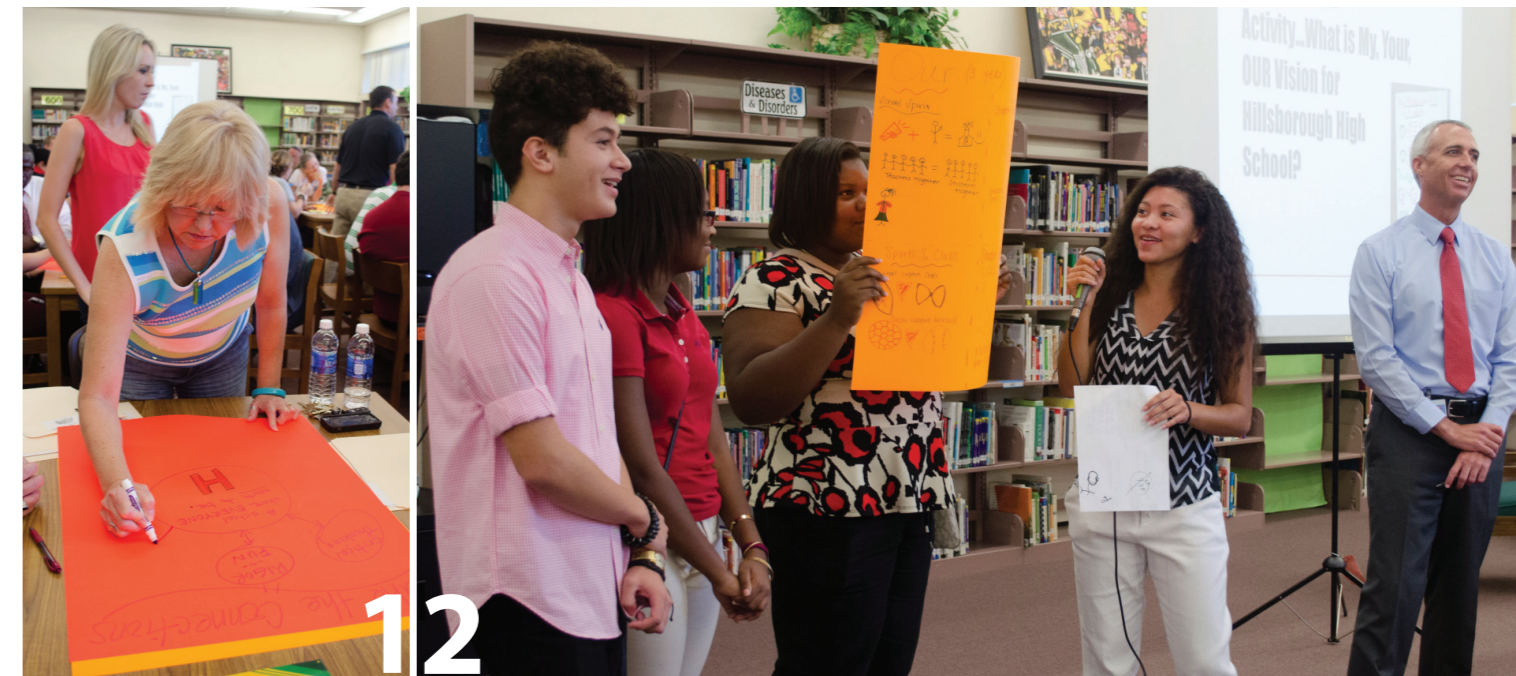
38% of students and faculty think that at Hillsborough, we take steps to solve problems

3 of 5 teachers don’t think faculty and leadership have a shared vision

41% of students agree that administrators are visible to students and faculty throughout the day

Principal Brady’s plan to FIX IT:

- 1 Create a strong **culture** based on support and safety between administrators, faculty, students and families.
- 2 Establish a **communication** plan aimed at reaching all of our students, parents and staff.
- 3 Continue to increase student **performance** in key areas.



1 At a back-to-school faculty meeting, reading teacher Donna Tapia draws a diagram to illustrate her group’s vision for Hillsborough in three years.

2 At Principal Gary Brady’s request, SGA members John Lawrence, Amari Pyatt, Asia Mosley and Amber Pirson present their own vision for the school. Their list included more interaction between IB and traditional students and support for every single sports team.

3 Assistant Principal for Student Affairs Jackie Eisenhauer works with her group on their vision poster. One of the administration’s goals for the year is greater collaboration between administration and teachers. | Photos by Dana Dinh

you said it

Students share changes they want to see this year



“More school spirit in traditional because it’s dead in here.”

—Caled Youngelood, 11



“In the school, I want them to have better air conditioning. That’s major!”

—Rafa Carrion, 10



“I’d definitely like to see less segregation between traditional and IB. I feel like we get these ideas about each other without really knowing each other.”

—Odessa Churchill, 11