



MORTON

UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

Board of Education Meeting Highlights

Administrative Reports—

April 18, 2023

Superintendent's Report— Dr. Craig Smock

- ♦ Dr. Smock welcomed the IESA 7th Grade Volleyball State champs. Mr. Scott Hammond introduced Coach Emma Owdom. She shared the specialness of the season. It wasn't always easy, but they kept calm and never gave up. They lifted each other up and encouraged their teammates through injuries and other struggles. They stayed focused and encouraging. It paid off.
- ♦ Mrs. Bethany Scroggs was introduced as the new Assistant Principal at Lincoln. She shared her background, her excitement and her gratitude for the opportunity.
- ♦ Ms. Lisa Kowalski, CFO, presented a snapshot of the Commercial Property Tax Revenue received by Morton 709, comparing 2021 and 2022. She reviewed current revenue and potential revenue to give the Board a clear picture of anticipated resources.
- ♦ Dr. Smock shared a little about the soft lockdown that occurred on Friday, April 14th. A person of interest for a crime in Dunlap had a cell phone that pinged in Morton. His remarks included gratitude for the outstanding response but our SRO, Aaron Rowe, and the entire Morton Police Department keeping us up to speed during the entire incident. He thanked the Administrative Teams in each building for their well executed responses and for creating a sense of calm in their buildings. We will review what we learned with our leadership team and Officer Rowe to improve our processes. We are not taking chances. We will always choose an abundance of caution.
- ♦ Dr. Smock shared that he will be presenting at the Morton Forecast Breakfast on Wednesday, April 19, 2023. It is an opportunity to share what we are doing in Morton 709 to help prepare students for their future.

School Board President —Mr. Tim Braker

- ♦ President Braker congratulated the 7th Grade MJHS Volleyball team and coaches on their first place finish.
- ♦ He noted that we need to hold a Committee of the Whole Meeting for facilities. We waited to schedule until after the election was over.
- ♦ Graduation is on Saturday, May 20, 2023 at 6 PM. Perfect 70 degree weather has been ordered.
- ♦ Mr. Braker expressed thanks to Cathryn Stump, Amanda Leman, and Andy Roth for being willing to put themselves out there before the community in an election. He noted sincere appreciation. Running unopposed, it was a little less stressful for him and Dr. Cross.

Discussion Items—

- ♦ Ms. Kowalski returned to the podium to present a School Lunch Program Overview and In-House Recommendation to the Board of education. Arbor is our current food management company (FSMC), and their prices have continued to rise (FY22 \$3.30 to a proposed FY \$4.48). Ms. Kowalski did months of research contacting other schools who have their cafeteria programs in-house. Out of 1,100 schools in Illinois, only 300 have a FSMC and several of those are considering bring it back in-house. The level of service, quality of food, low worker wages all make the idea of making the change desirable. We will still be able to utilize USDA commodities and DOD food, but with more control. FSMC's are for profit companies. We can do prepare better food with menus that meet Government established guidelines. The Food Service Director and kitchen staff would be district employees. Other districts reported that is always better in-house. She answered the Board's questions. Mr. Braker thanked Ms. Kowalski for her willingness to take on additional work to lower costs and improve student meals.
- ♦ Dr. Troy Teater presented the proposed [MHS Earth/Space Science Textbook](#) with a report from the Morton 709 Teaching and Learning Council (TLC). The current textbook is over 10 years old. They reviewed three different books. It can be pre-viewed online for 30 days by the Board of Education, parents, and caregivers. After 30 days, it will need Board approval.

Consent Agenda —

- ♦ The Board approved the purchase of a vehicle for Morton Academy.
- ♦ The Board approved a MHS Student Council Convention and a MHS Volleyball Camp.
- ♦ The Board approved an Auditor for the 2022-23 School year.
- ♦ The Board approved the re-employment of non-tenured certified staff and the release of support staff not returning to their positions.

An archived broadcast of
the meeting is available at

[MP-TV](#)

Next Meeting: April 25, 2023 Regular Meeting at 7:00 PM
Future Meetings: May 9, 2023, Regular Meeting— MEAC at 5:30 PM
May 23, 2023, Regular Meeting— MEAC at 5:30 PM

Valerie Smith
Administrative Assistant
Superintendent & Board of Education