

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

March 20, 2018

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held March 20, 2018, at the Morton Education and Administration Center.

REGULAR MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call –

President Neeley called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:16 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Tom Neeley, Dr. Shad Beaty, Mr. Kevin Austin,
Mrs. Michelle Bernier, Dr. David Cross, Mr. Bart Rinkenberger

Member absent: Mr. Jeff Schmidgall

Reports –

Administrative –

709 Above the Line Award -

The Board of Education recognized Brooke Behm, Speech Pathologist, for 709 Above the Line – Student Engagement. A video was shown of her work with non-verbal students using different methods for them to learn to communicate. The video may be viewed on MPTV at the 3:50 point.

President's Report –

President Neeley reported he will be attending the National School Board Conference in April representing the state of Illinois.

Larry Dirks of IASB has been contacted to find a date to meet with the board to work on goal setting and self-evaluation.

Discussion Item –

Early Dismissal for Professional Development 2018-2019 –

Dr. Hill reported that the Leadership Team is recommending that professional development opportunities be increased and improved for teachers by providing a time that does not interrupt instruction and is continuous throughout the year. This can be achieved by having an early dismissal of students of 30-60 minutes once each month.

Topics for professional development will include current school initiatives such as Readers Workshop as well as Morton Moving Forward recommendations. This item will be discussed with the MEA before asking for approval of the Board of Education. Parents will be contacted through the building level PTO's for their input.

Audience Presentations –

President Neeley moved the audience presentations to precede action items. Fourteen audience members addressed the Board concerning the implementation of all-day kindergarten. All but one urged board members to consider the implementation of all-day kindergarten at Lettie Brown, Grundy, Jefferson, and Lincoln Schools beginning with next school year – 2018-2019. One resident was not in favor of full-day and urged board members to offer a half-day option if full-day is approved.

Action Items -

Approve K-3 ELA Curricular Resource –

Dr. Teater reported the K-6th grade teachers have been reviewing ELA curriculum resources to replace our current reading series, *Storytown*. The current reading series has a copyright date of 2008 and has been used for about 10 years. *Storytown* was designed more for whole group instruction and does not easily lend itself to the *Reading Workshop* model.

The K-6th grade teachers reviewed six different series. Presentations from the publishers were made to a core group of teachers and then the materials were presented to all teachers through articulation meetings. At this time, the recommendation would be to adopt the Fountas and Pinnell series "*Classroom*" for our Kindergarten through 3rd grades. We will wait a year before making a final decision in order to review the 4th – 6th grade Fountas and Pinnell materials.

Dr. Teater noted the recommendation and report has been approved by the Curriculum Advisory Committee and Leadership team. It was presented to the Board of Education at the February 20, 2018, meeting and has been on display at the Morton Public Library for 30 days.

Recommendation – Fountas and Pinnell – "*Classroom*" for Kindergarten – 3rd grades

Resources - \$306,133

Motion by Dr. Beaty, second by Mrs. Bernier that the Board of Education approve the purchase of the K-3 Fountas and Pinnell Resource "*Classroom*" at the cost of \$306,133 for the 2018-2019 school year.

President Neeley asked if the books in the libraries that come with this resource will be socially engineered. Dr. Teater indicated the company representative knows Morton and

its values well and is sensitive to that. He noted if a parent ever objects to an assigned book, they are welcome to discuss it with the teacher and get another assignment.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Schmidgall)

Motion carried.

Approve Full Day Kindergarten –

Dr. Hill reviewed the background of how the district got to the point of recommending full day kindergarten. He noted the survey given to cohort unit school districts similar to District 709. A series of strategies were introduced as part of “Morton Moving Forward” and Kindergarten is a piece of that strategy to improve reading.

Dr. Smock addressed how buildings would be used pertaining to space, options for parents for a full day program, half-day program and half-day pull out option. Parents will be required to complete a form at the upcoming kindergarten screening for their preference. He explained if there are 20 or more parents opting for a half-day program, there would be a self-contained class at a yet-to-be-determined school within the district. If there are not at least 20 opting for that program, by law, parents of children enrolled in the full-day program can choose to have their child attend half of the day, in the morning. Although some afternoon academic programming would be missed, teachers can provide some of the missed instructional materials to the parents that request it. Parents would be responsible for mid-day transportation from school to home. Also noted was a transportation savings due to the elimination of bussing midday.

Motion by Dr. Beaty, second by Mrs. Bernier that the Board of Education approve the full day kindergarten option at Lettie Brown, Grundy, Jefferson, and Lincoln Schools for the 2018-2019 school year.

Board Discussion –

- President Neeley thanked administration, teachers, and board members for cooperation in gathering information and meeting together as this was thoroughly researched;
- Dr. Hill noted his conversations with all of the kindergarten teachers was enlightening;
- Mrs. Bernier thanked Dr. Hill and the Leadership team for bringing the information from an academic point of view. She noted her appreciation for the interest shown by the community by their attendance at this meeting and for calling and emailing board members to share their point of view;
- Mr. Austin noted this discussion is bigger than data. He has tried to gain a bigger picture from the teachers point of view and the soft skills kindergarten students can gain socially and emotionally;
- Dr. Beaty also appreciates attendance by the community at this meeting, emails and phone calls. He noted the board has wrestled with this topic for four months;

- Dr. Cross noted the teachers point of view helped influenced his decision;
- President Neeley expressed his frustration that the State of Illinois has once again told us what is best for our students with the new learning standards. He hopes everyone will be sensitive to the parents who feel half day kindergarten is best for their child and will assist them to have a successful experience.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Schmidgall)

Motion carried.

Mr. Neeley reported that Mr. Schmidgall is on vacation, but asked him to convey publically that had he been available to vote, he would have voted in favor of the full day kindergarten option.

Mr. Rinkenberger asked that everyone be respectful of those with an opposing view.

The entire presentation can be viewed on MPTV at the 17:15 point.

Morton Moving Forward Recommendations –

Dr. Hill reviewed the strategies of Morton Moving Forward that have been presented over the last four months. He pointed out that the position of Director of Student Activities and Engagement was recently added to the recommendations. This position is to provide direction and oversight to engaging every student in an extra-curricular club, organization or activity. This position would provide administrative support in the fine arts as well. The following positions were recommended for the 2018-2019 school year:

Strategy #1 – Systemic Focus on Reading:

- **3.5 Kindergarten teachers** to staff the full day program option.
- **4.0 Literacy teachers**, one for each elementary school to support our students and teachers toward improving reading. The Literacy coaches will provide feedback to teachers, interventions to students and professional development regarding Readers Workshop implementation.
- **1.0 Special Education teacher** to provide better teacher to student ratios in our special education classrooms as we move toward a model that has our certified staff delivering an increased amount of direct instruction.

Strategy #2 – Intentional Transition to Secondary:

- **1.0 Jr. High Instructional Coach** – As we continue to focus on instructional improvement, an instructional coach at the Jr. High can be a resource for the teaching staff, providing feedback and insight regarding effective instruction. This position, coupled with changes in expectations in team leader and department chair positions will help provide more timely and high quality feedback to teachers regarding their instruction.

- **1.0 Jr. High School Counselor** – We have moved the hiring of school counselors to the first year of Morton Moving Forward to reduce the student to counselor ratio, meaning the counseling staff can meet more frequently with students to better provide college/career readiness assistance, social/emotional assistance and academic interventions. Counselor/Student ratio goes to 1-250.

Strategy #3 – Increased Focus on College and Career Readiness:

- **2.0 High School Counselors** – Initially we had requested one counselor in year 1 and one in year 2; however, our continued desire to provide both college and career guidance and increased desire to provide social/emotional support has led to modifying this part of the recommendation.
- **1.0 Director of Student Activities and Engagement** – This position is to provide direction and oversight to engaging every student in an extra-curricular club, organization or activity. This position would provide administrative support in the fine arts as well.

Board members decided to table for further discussion in April the following recommendations:

- 1 additional FTE Counselor – JH and 2 additional FTE Counselors – HS
- 1 Director of Student Activities and Engagement – Administrative

Motion by Mrs. Bernier, second by Dr. Cross, that the Board of Education approve moving forward on Strategy 1, Systemic Focus on Reading, by approving 3.5 FTE full day kindergarten teachers, 4.0 literacy teachers, 1 JH instructional coach, and 1.0 Special Education teacher.

Dr. Beaty asked for clarification on how the success of literacy coaches will be measured and where the additional special education teacher will be housed. Ms. Owens noted the special education teacher will be at Lincoln School and will provide better teacher to student ratios.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Schmidgall)

Motion carried.

Other –

President Neeley asked the principals to have a “shell” dashboard completed for the May 1, 2018, Board meeting.

Consent Agenda –

Motion by Dr. Beaty, second by Mr. Rinkenberger, that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented:

- Approve Personnel Report
- Approve Out of State Trips – MHS Marching Band
- Approve MHS Summer School – APEX
- Approve Summer Challenge Program
- Approve Resolution for Non-Re-Employment of Professional Staff
- Approve Resolution for Non-Re-Employment of Educational Support Staff
- Approve Minutes of the March 6, 2018, Regular Meeting and the March 6, 2018, Regular Meeting Closed Session.
- Approve Bills and Payroll

	Bills 3-9-18	Bills 3-12-18	Bills 3-16-18	Payroll 3-16-18
Ed. Fund	\$103,047.41	\$10.00	\$6,702.13	\$531,508.89
Bldg. Fund	36,621.49	--	--	34,400.71
Trans. Fund	7,396.56	--	4,000.99	17,331.94
Capital Projects	332.36	--	--	--
TORT	10,830.00	--	--	--
Payroll Accts. Pay.	--	--	--	482,945.80

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Schmidgall)

Motion carried.

Closed Session -

Motion by Dr. Beaty, second by Mr. Austin, that the Board of Education enter into closed session for discussion of Personnel, Sale/Purchase of Property, Student Discipline and Negotiations. **(5ILCS 120/2 115 ILCS 5/18)**

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Schmidgall)

Motion carried. The board entered closed session at 9:20 p.m.

Motion by Mrs. Bernier, second by Dr. Cross, that the Board of Education return to regular session.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Schmidgall)

Motion carried. The board returned to regular session at 9:55 p.m.

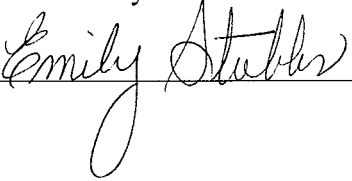
Adjournment –

Motion by Mrs. Bernier, second by Dr. Beaty, that the meeting be adjourned.

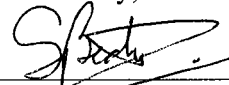
Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Schmidgall)

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

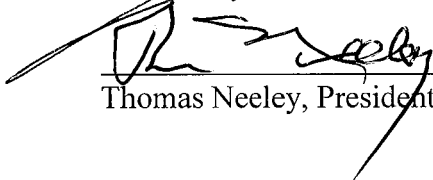
Recorded by:



Submitted by,



Shad Beaty, V. President



Thomas Neeley, President