

## MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

April 1, 2025

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held on April 1, 2025, at the Morton Education and Administration Center. The meeting included the District Goals of Achievement, Communication, Climate, Facilities, and Finance.

### **REGULAR MEETING –**

**Call to Order and Roll Call –** President Cross called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Tim Braker, Dr. David Cross, Mrs. Amanda Leman, Mr. Andrew Roth, Mr. Tom Neeley, Mr. Rudd, Dr. Smock, Dr. Joseph Sander, and Mrs. Valerie Smith. Absent: Dr. Diane Krall

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

**Recognition of Excellence—** Mr. Scott Hammond, MJHS Athletic Director and Assistant Principal, reported that the 7th and 8th Grade Girls Volleyball teams each placed 4th at the IESA State Finals. He introduced 7th Grade Head Coach Emma Owdom and 8th Grade Head Coach Jordan Williams, who provided reflections on their successful seasons. Assistant Coach Courtney Cox was also in attendance. Following the presentation, coaches and athletes were recognized and greeted by members of the Board and Administration.

### **Administrative Reports—**

#### **Superintendent’s Report— Dr. Craig Smock**

- Dr. Smock presented the results of the 5Essentials Survey regarding school climate. The results from Morton 709 indicate that students and staff generally feel safe and supported. Dr. Smock noted the volleyball team as an example of the positive student, staff, teacher, coach, and parent culture within the community. He addressed recent portrayals of Morton schools as having a bullying culture as inaccurate, citing that over 2,000 student survey responses reflected an overwhelmingly positive school climate. While acknowledging that no school is perfect, Dr. Smock emphasized that Morton schools and families teach and model respect, and that students, staff, and parents are to be commended. The students are outstanding. The staff is outstanding. The parents are outstanding.
- Dr. Smock reported that the new Morton High School main entrance will open on Monday morning, April 7, 2025. Additional construction updates were provided, including ongoing and upcoming projects. Design work for the lobby area of the Bertha Frank Performing Arts Center is currently in progress.
- Phase 2A of the East Gym construction at MHS will begin before the end of the school year. Principal Kirk Edwards has communicated with families regarding construction logistics and the district’s commitment to student and staff safety throughout the process.
- The Village of Morton Natural Gas Department will conduct a gas leak crisis drill on April 2, 2025, near Jefferson School. The drill will affect traffic patterns and include road closures around nearby schools.
- Thirty-four MHS students have qualified to compete in the Illinois SkillsUSA State Competition across eleven areas—nineteen boys and fifteen girls. The Board expressed pride in the students' achievements and encouraged attendance at the competition, describing it as an outstanding event.
- The district will honor Mr. Tom Neeley for his 36 years of dedicated service to the Morton CUSD 709 Board of Education. A public celebration will be held on April 22, 2025, from 5:00–7:00 p.m. in the Bertha Frank Lobby.

**President's Report and Agenda Building – Dr. David Cross**

- President Cross expressed appreciation to Dr. Smock for sharing information related to the district's culture and the results of the 5Essentials Survey.
- The Board conducted a tour of the Morton High School renovations. President Cross noted that the improvements look excellent and are an exciting step forward for MHS. He shared that the updates will provide meaningful benefits to students and staff. As the district moves into Phase 2 and considers potential changes at Grundy Elementary, the Board looks forward to reviewing various design concepts and funding options.
- The Board echoed appreciation for Dr. Smock sharing more on the culture survey.

**Discussion Item(s)–**

**First Reading and Discussion of New and Revised Policies – PRESS Issues 115 & 117**

The First Reading and Discussion of new and revised Board policies from PRESS (Policy Issues 115 and 117) were presented. Board members may review the policies under revision in the Board folder and to direct any questions to administration via email for clarification throughout the review process. Dr. Smock provided an overview of the policy revision process. A vote on the recommended changes is scheduled for May 6, 2025.

**Student Support Services Administrative Needs –**

Ms. Lindsay Franklin, Director of Student Support Services, presented a request to add a new administrative position to serve students at Morton Academy. She noted that current resources have been insufficient to fully meet student needs. A chart outlining current administrative responsibilities and the proposed role for the new position was shared. Dr. Joe Sander joined Ms. Franklin to explain the funding structure for the position. Board members expressed support for the addition of the new Student Support Services administrator.

**Intergovernmental Agreement - Central Illinois Valley School Safety Team (ROEs 48 & 53)**

Dr. Joe Sander introduced a proposed Intergovernmental Agreement with the Central Illinois Valley School Safety Team (ROEs 48 & 53). The agreement would provide mutual assistance and coordinated crisis response for school districts and special education cooperatives in Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, and Mason Counties. Dr. Sander provided examples and emphasized the importance of having structured support for unexpected emergency situations. Board approval and a signed agreement are required for participation in the CIV-SST Mutual Aid Agreement.

**Tentative Board Meeting Calendar for 2025-26 (Approval with New Board May 6, 2025)**

The Board reviewed the tentative Board Meeting Calendar for the 2025–2026 school year. New Board members will have the opportunity to provide feedback and suggest revisions. Final approval of the calendar will take place at the May 6, 2025, meeting. The proposed calendar continues regular Board of Education meetings on the first Tuesday of each month, with an additional reserved dates for special meetings as needed.

**Action Item(s)–**

**Action on Non-Resident Tuition Student–**

Mr. Braker moved to approve the enrollment of a non-resident tuition student for the 2025–2026 academic year in accordance with district policy. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rudd.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Krall) Motion carried.

**Action on Resolution Allowing for Intervention Regarding Assessment of Property: (TF & JH Braime Holdings PLC, Freeport Farm & Fleet Inc., and Crestwood Properties LLC)–**

Mr. Neeley moved to approve a Resolution authorizing the district to intervene in matters concerning the assessment of property for the following entities: TF & JH Braime Holdings PLC, Freeport Farm & Fleet Inc., and Crestwood Properties LLC. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rudd.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Krall) Motion carried.

**Consent Agenda –**

Mr. Rudd moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Mrs. Leman supported the motion.

- Approve Personnel Report
- Approve Auditor for 2024-25 School Year
- Approve and Authorize Renewal of IHSA Membership
- Approve Resolution for Reemployment of Professional Staff for 2025-26
- Approve Reappointment of Administrators & 2025-2026 Salary Increase
- Approve Resolution for Non-Reemployment of Educational Support Staff for 2025-26
- Approve Southern Illinois School District Cooperative - Food Purchasing Cooperative
- Approve High School Summer School
- Approve Overnight Trip per Board Policy 6:240- MHS Boys Tennis Tournament - May 2025
- Approve General Education Summer Reinforcement Program
- Approve Authorization to Prepare FY26 Budget & Spend between July 1, 2025, and Budget Adoption
- Approve Challenge Summer Program 2025
- Approve Reappointment of Chief Financial Officer for 2025-26
- Approve Minutes of March 18, 2025, Special Meeting of the Board of Education; No Closed
- Approve Bills

	<b>Bills 3-17-25</b>	<b>Bills 3-21-25 3-24-25</b>
<b>Ed. Fund (10)</b>		<b>\$582,638.12</b>
<b>Bldg. Fund (20)</b>		<b>\$108,535.05</b>
<b>Trans. Fund (40)</b>		<b>\$30,888.36</b>
<b>Capital Projects (60)</b>		<b>\$385,920.68</b>
<b>TORT (80)</b>	<b>\$3,592.08</b>	

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Krall) Motion carried.

**Closed Session-**

President Cross called for a Closed Session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters, as permitted under the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/2).

Mr. Roth moved that the Board enter into Closed Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rudd.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Krall) Motion carried.

The Board entered Closed Session at 6:55 p.m.

**Return to Open Session –**

Mr. Neeley made a motion for the Board to return to Open Session. Mr. Rudd supported the motion.

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

Motion carried.

The Board re-entered Open Session at 7:51 p.m.

**Action on Hiring of New Jefferson Principal –**

Mr. Neeley moved to approve the hiring of Mrs. Jamie Adolphson as Principal of Jefferson School for the 2025–2026 school year. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rudd.

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

Motion carried.

The Board congratulated Mrs. Adolphson on her appointment. Mrs. Adolphson thanked the Board and expressed excitement for her new role. She looks forward to becoming a Jefferson Patriot.

**Return to Closed Session-**

President Cross called for a return to Closed Session for the purpose of Personnel as stated in the Open Meetings Act (ILSC 120/2). Mr.Neeley motioned for the Board to enter into closed session. Mr. Rudd supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1 (Krall) Motion carried.

The Board re-entered Closed Session at 7:54 p.m.

**Return to Open Session –**

Mr. Neeley made a motion for the Board to return to Open Session. Mr. Rudd supported the motion.

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

Motion carried.

The Board re-entered Open Session at 8:26 p.m.

**Adjournment –**

Mr. Roth made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

The motion carried with a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Recorded by,

Respectfully submitted,

---

---

Valerie Smith, Recording Secretary

Amanda Leman, Secretary

---

David Cross, President