

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT
May 6, 2025

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held May 6, 2025, at the Morton Education and Administration Center seating the newly elected Board Members.

REGULAR MEETING & SEATING OF THE BOARD

Call to Order and Roll Call–

President David Cross called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Tim Braker, Dr. David Cross, Dr. Diane Krall, Mrs. Amanda Leman, Mr. Andrew Roth, Mr. Jerry Rudd, and Mr. Tom Neeley

Recognition of Excellence –

The Board of Education recognized student-athletes who placed at the IESA and IHSA State Finals.

- Mr. Scott Hammond, MJHS Assistant Principal and Athletic Director, introduced the MJHS Boys Bowling Team, which earned 2nd Place at the IESA State Finals for the second consecutive year. He commended their teamwork, sportsmanship, and the continued strength of the bowling program.
- Mr. Scott Jones, MHS Athletic Director, introduced Head Wrestling Coach Ed Henderson and coaching staff.
- Coach Henderson highlighted the growth of the wrestling program, with participation increasing from 17 to 57 athletes. Harrison Dea placed 5th at the IHSA State Finals. The team finished second the last two years in our conference and second the last three years at regionals. Noah Harris was one match away from placing at state. Other strong wrestlers are returning. He shared Harrison's story about success in the face of some difficult injuries. The future looks bright for Harrison and the Boys team.
- Coach Henderson recognized Karen Canchola for earning 3rd Place at the IHSA Girls Wrestling State Finals. She made Morton history as the first female wrestler to place at State. 2022 was the first year the IHSA sanctioned a Girls State series with 180 girls teams. This year there were 346. Karen had 32 girls in her Regional. In the past three years, she did not wrestle another boy. Her record of 76 and 13. The 13 were to State placers. Coach Henderson praised her perseverance, noting her journey from early losses against boys to an IESA State Medal. He also highlighted the program's growth, expanding from one girl to a team of seven.

All recognized athletes were congratulated by the Board.

Action Item –

Approve Regular Meeting Minutes, April 1, 2025, Open and Closed Session–

The Board of Education approved the minutes from the April 1, 2025, Regular Meeting and the April 1, 2025, Regular Meeting, Closed Session.

A motion was made by Mr. Neeley, and supported by Mr. Braker, that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the April 1, 2025, Regular Meeting and April 1, 2025, Regular Meeting, Closed Session.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Approve the Canvass of the April 1, 2025, Election–

The Board of Education approved the canvass of the April 1, 2025, election, accepting the official results from the Tazewell County Clerk as a true and accurate count of all votes cast for the Morton C.U.S.D 709. Board of Education election.

As certified by the County Clerk:

- Jerry Rudd was re-elected to a four-year term
- Diane Krall was re-elected to a four-year term representing the unincorporated area.
- Wes Ohnesorge and Krystiana Purdy were elected to four-year terms
- Ashley Fischer received the fewest votes and was not elected

Mr. Braker moved to accept the canvassed election results as a true and accurate accounting of all votes cast in the April 1, 2025, election and to officially seat Dr. Diane Krall, Mr. Jerry Rudd, Mr. Wes Ohnesorge, and Mrs. Krystiana Purdy to their newly elected terms of service. Mr. Neeley seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Recognition of Service – Outgoing Board of Education Members –

President Cross, joined by Dr. Sander, Dr. Smock, and the Board of Education, recognized Mr. Tim Braker for six years of service and Mr. Tom Neeley for 36 years of service on the Morton C.U.S.D. 709 Board of Education. Both previously served as Board President.

Mr. Braker reflected on the importance of Morton Schools to the community and wished the Board continued success. Mr. Neeley credited strong leadership and dedicated teachers for the District's ongoing achievements.

The Board expressed appreciation and gratitude to both members for their years of dedicated service.

Oath and Seating of New Board Members–

Re-elected Board members Dr. Diane Krall and Mr. Jerry Rudd re-affirmed their Oath of Office to President Cross, committing to continued service on the Morton C.U.S.D. 709 Board of Education.

President Cross confirmed that newly elected Board members Mrs. Krystiana Purdy and Mr. Wes Ohnesorge understood the Oath of Office. Dr. Cross administered the oath to the new members of the Board of Education.

The Board, Administration, and audience congratulated the new and returning members. Retiring members joined the audience.

Adjournment –

President Cross called for called for a voice vote adjournment. Mr. Rudd made the motion to adjourn, and the Board responded.

Voice Vote: 7 Yea 0 Nay 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Recorded by,

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Smith, Recording Secretary

Amanda Leman, Secretary

David Cross, President

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

May 6, 2025

Minutes of the Reorganizational Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held May 6, 2025, at the Morton Education and Administration Center. The meeting focus included **District Goals of Achievement, Communication, Climate, Facilities, and Finance.**

REGULAR MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call –

President David Cross called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

Members present: Dr. David Cross, Dr. Diane Krall, Mrs. Amanda Lemman, Mr. Andrew Roth, Mr. Jerry Rudd, Mr. Wes Ohnesorge, and Mrs. Krystiana Purdy.

Organization of the Board--

President Pro Tem –

President Cross called for a motion to elect a President Pro Tem for the purpose of nominations and voting for President of the Board of Education. Mr. Jerry Rudd moved to nominate Dr. Craig Smock to the office of President Pro Tem. There were no other nominations, so the nomination did not require a second. President Cross asked for Roll Call

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Dr. Craig Smock was declared President Pro Tem until the new president was elected.

Elect President –

President Pro Tem Smock called for additional nominations. Without additional nominations, President Pro Tem Smock declared the nominations closed. There being no other nominations, a motion is not required, and President Pro Tem Smock declared Dr. David Cross President by acclamation. President Pro Tem Smock instructed Mrs. Smith to record the acclamation in the minutes.

Dr. Cross re-assumed his seat as President.

Elect Vice President –

President Cross called for nominations for the office of Vice President of the Board of Education. Mrs. Lemman nominated Mr. Jerry Rudd to serve as Vice President of the Board of Education. There being no other nominations, no second is required. Mr. Rudd was declared Vice-President by acclamation. President Cross instructed Mrs. Smith to record the acclamation in the minutes.

Elect Secretary –

President Cross called for nominations for the office of Secretary of the Board of Education. Mr. Andrew Roth nominated Mrs. Amanda Leman to serve as Secretary of the Board of Education. There being no other nominations, no second is required. Mrs. Leman was declared Secretary by acclamation. President Cross instructed Mrs. Smith to record the acclamation in the minutes.

Set Time and Place of Regular Meetings–

- President Cross Board noted that members agree to hold regular Board of Education Meetings for the 2025-26 school year on the FIRST Tuesday of the month.
- The Board will reserve the THIRD Tuesday of the month for special meetings as needed.
- All meetings will begin at 5:30 PM at the Morton Education and Administration Center unless otherwise announced.

Agenda Related Audience Presentations–

Agenda Related Audience Presentations were offered by Mr. Charles Brown and Ms. Jean Hampton. Each was given five minutes to present.

Administrative Reports--**Superintendent's Report– Dr. Craig Smock—**

- **Extra-Curricular Report:** Mrs. Jamie Adolphson, Assoc. Principal (MHS) and Mr. Scott Jones, A.D. (MHS), and Mr. Scott Hammond, (MJHS) Asst. Principal/A.D.

The Board received the annual report on student involvement in extracurricular activities and athletics at MHS and MJHS.

- MHS currently offers 75 athletic and activity opportunities, with 84% student participation (1,057 students). There are 30 sports and 62 teams, totaling 2,392 rostered participants. The most involved student participated in nine different activities. Challenges include limited facilities, equipment costs, entry fees, and staffing.
- MJHS and MHS students are also active outside of school in various community organizations such as churches, Scouts, volunteer groups, employment, and travel sports.
- MJHS reported 11 sports, 23 teams, and 31 coaches, with 83% student participation. Additionally, there are 22 clubs and activities with 28 sponsors. Two club sponsor positions remain open. Step-Up Days serve as an introduction to student opportunities. MJHS is exploring the addition of soccer in 2026–2027 and Bass Fishing.
- Both schools use student surveys to collect feedback, with 120 responses at MHS and 112 at MJHS, to help improve programming.

The Board expressed appreciation for the comprehensive report and extended gratitude to the staff who coach and lead student programs. They also commended the continued effort to allow free student admission to athletic events.

- **Morton Academy- Lindsay Franklin, Director of Student Support Services:** Ms. Lindsay Franklin, Director of Student Support Services, presented an overview of Morton Academy, highlighting its growth and development since its inception. The program began in a single classroom at Grundy School and now operates with three half-sized classrooms and a half-sized gym. Space limitations remain a challenge.

Ms. Franklin reported that Morton Academy has been reclassified as a reimbursable Day Program. The current capacity is 18 students. The goal for 709 students placed at the Academy is reintegration to their home schools within 12–18 months. Families have expressed appreciation for the opportunity to keep their students within Morton CUSD 709. She also noted that the Guardian Angel Home now only serves a younger population of children. 709 Students currently enrolled are making progress and successfully transitioning back to their home schools.

Ms. Franklin responded to questions from the Board and expressed her appreciation for their ongoing support.

- **New Jefferson Principal: Mrs. Jamie Adolphson:** Dr. Smock congratulated Mrs. Jamie Adolphson on her appointment as Jefferson School Principal for 2025–26. He praised her work as Associate Principal at MHS and expressed confidence in her continued success at Jefferson.
- The Joal Stanfield Tennis Complex at MHS is being resurfaced and the water problems fixed.
- 13 days of school remain.

President’s Report – Dr. David Cross

Superintendent’s Committees:

- President Cross asked the Board to look at where they would like to participate in the Superintendent’s Committees. By law, only two at a time can be on a committee.
- The Superintendent’s Committees include: Finance, Facilities, Teaching & Learning, Policy, and Extra-curricular. The Board would like to continue the Extra-Curricular committee.
- Let Dr. Cross know what committees you are interested in changing from or joining.

IASB Joint Annual Conference – November 21-23, 2025

- Please let Mrs. Smith know your plans for the IASB Conference the fall. Registration opens in June.
- Mr. Neeley’s retirement leaves an opening on an IASB Advisory group for the ISBE and the IASB. You must be a current school board member. The next meeting is May 20, 2025. Let President Cross know if you are interested. You can attend in-person or virtually.
- We are canceling the May 20, 2025, Regular Board Meeting.

Discussion Items –

Capital Project Updates: MHS Weight Training Facility and BF PAC Lobby Expansion

Dr. Smock updated the Board on capital projects, including timelines, budgets, and parking considerations. He requested permission to go to bid to get a better estimate of the cost of the projects proposed. The Board discussed cost-benefit concerns, particularly regarding the Bertha Frank project's \$500,000 savings versus budget impact. Further review of priorities will continue.

Capital Project Updates: Grundy Addition for Morton Academy and PK

Dr. Smock provided an update on a proposed building addition at Grundy Elementary School to address space needs for Morton Academy and the District's Pre-K program. He explained that while the addition is intended to serve Morton Academy and Pre-K students, the project would also bring improvements that benefit the entire Grundy facility.

Dr. Smock presented several preliminary design options, which included:

- Right-sized classrooms for Morton Academy,
- Expanded Pre-K classroom space,
- Additional shared space for Grundy Elementary,
- A dedicated entrance for Morton Academy
- Outdoor classroom space through the creation of a courtyard.

The Board reviewed the design concepts and engaged in discussion, asking clarifying questions regarding the scope, vision, and future use of the space. The estimated cost of the project is approximately \$7 million.

Facility Committee members expressed support for Grundy as the most suitable site for the proposed addition. Dr. Smock shared that multiple alternative locations had been evaluated, but none met the District's needs without requiring investments comparable to new construction.

The Board acknowledged the ongoing space needs at both Grundy and Morton Academy and agreed the proposed addition would offer long-term benefits.

5Essentials Survey: A Comparative Analysis- Dr. Smock

Dr. Smock did more research into the 5 Essentials Survey data. He shared that Mr. Kirk Edwards, MHS Principal, led survey participation efforts, with an 86% student response rate—approximately 900 students completed the anonymous survey this year.

Dr. Smock analyzed results from 25 schools across Tazewell, Mason, Woodford, and Peoria Counties (excluding District 150). He noted that while the overall data reflect positively on the District, it is concerning that any students would report strongly disagreeing with feeling safe at school.

In comparative Mid-Illini results, Morton ranked:

- **2nd** in overall school climate,
- **1st** in student perception of safety when traveling between home and school,
- **1st** in peer collaboration (helping each other learn), and
- **3rd** in perceptions of safety in school bathrooms.

The area of lowest student-reported safety was in school bathrooms. Dr. Smock emphasized the importance of addressing this concern and the challenges in investigating unreported or anonymously referenced incidents. He explained that resolving safety concerns depends on accurate and timely reporting, and that reports lacking identifiable information are difficult, if not impossible, to investigate fully.

A Board member noted it is important to communicate to parents that all reported incidents are taken seriously and investigated, but reports must include identifying information in order to allow for proper follow-up and resolution.

The Naming of Facilities: Policy 4:15

The Board reviewed the naming of facilities. Board Policy 4:15 is the related policy. Dr. Smock noted that the Board should be involved in naming any facility. When a facility is to be named or renamed, the Board makes the final selection. The Board has interest. A committee will be put together that involves faculty and community members.

School Resource Office (SRO) Agreement with Village of Morton

Dr. Sander noted that the District has received SRO services at no cost for many years. The Mayor is requesting a new agreement requiring payment of approximately \$116,000, an unbudgeted amount. The amount is the true cost of the time they are with the District. Dr. Sander and Ms. Kowalski are reviewing funding options. The Mayor agreed to structure billing to avoid impacting the current fiscal year, with payment proposed for both current year and upcoming years.

Dr. Sander noted that what we doing is consistent with what other districts are doing. He clarified and responded questions asked of the Board.

The Board discussed the SRO's expanding role, acknowledged the long-standing partnership, and expressed appreciation for the service. The agreement will be reviewed further. It will be on the June 10, 2025, agenda for Board approval.

Action Items –

Approve New and Revised Policy Updates– PRESS Issues 115 & 117

The Board has reviewed the New and Revised Policy Updates from PRESS Issues 115 & 117 and the Administration. The Board Policy Committee and Dr. Smock noted that most of the updates are legal updates, language changes, legal updates, or reference changes.

Mr. Roth made a motion for the Board of Education to approve the New and Revised Policy Updates as presented. Mrs. Leman supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

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

Mr. Rudd that the Board of Education approve the Intergovernmental Agreement from the Central Illinois Valley School Safety Team (ROEs 48 & 53) as presented. Mr. Roth seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Approval to Move Forward with Design and Bid Documents: MHS Phase 2: Weight Training Facility & BFPAC Lobby Expansion–

Mr. Rudd made a motion for the Board of Education to approve moving forward with Design and Bid Documents for MHS Phase 2: Weight Training Facility and BFPAC Lobby Expansion as presented. Mr. Roth supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Approve 2025-26 Board Meeting Calendar–

Before approving the calendar, the Board discussed the need to revisit opportunities to meet with the teachers. The morning meetings conflict with most of the Board’s work schedules. The Board noted that fourteen extra meetings versus one for each building each year was difficult. The Administration will discuss it with the MEA and revisit it at the next Board meeting.

Mrs. Leman made a motion for the Board of Education approve the 2025-26 Board of Education Meeting Calendar. Mr. Roth moved to support the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Consent Agenda –

The following items were presented for approval. Dr. Sander noted that with the approval of the Personnel Report in the Consent agenda, Ms. Shannon McClure and Mr. Mason Tennell are confirmed as Assistant Principals at MHS. He congratulated them. Dr. Sander gave credit to her team for all of their hard work. The Personnel Report is huge.

- A. Approve Personnel Report
- B. Approve 2025–2026 Building Rental Fees
- C. Approve Reappointment of Full-Time Support Staff & 2025–2026 Salary Increase
- D. Approve Overnight/Out-of-State Trip per Board Policy 6:240 – MHS SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference, Atlanta, GA – June 2025
- E. Approve Policy Updates for Language, Legal Updates, and Legal References
- F. Approve Overnight/Out-of-State Trip per Board Policy 6:240 – MHS Volleyball Camp, Wisconsin – July 2025
- G. Approve 2025–2026 Student Fees
- H. Approve Final Amended 2024–2025 School Calendar
- I. Approve Overnight Trip per Board Policy 6:240 – MHS FFA Convention, Springfield, IL – June 2025
- J. Approve Overnight Trip per Board Policy 6:240 – MHS Dance Camp, Illinois State University – July 2025
- K. Approve Overnight/Out-of-State Trip per Board Policy 6:240 – MHS Cheer Camp, Wisconsin – June 2025
- L. Approve Overnight Trip per Board Policy 6:240 – MHS Boys Basketball, June 2025
- M. Approve Donation Report

- N. Approve Peoria County Cooperative Purchasing Program Agreement (Renewal)
- O. Approve Bills & Payroll

| | Payroll 3-14-25 | Payroll 3-28-25 | Payroll 4-11-25 | Payroll 4-25-25 |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Ed. Fund (10) | \$1,069,373.02 | \$1,086,547.71 | \$926,519.67 | \$1,058,191.25 |
| Bldg. Fund (20) | 57,924.01 | 55,941.38 | 57,212.11 | 55,582.64 |
| Trans. Fund (40) | 34,961.69 | 35,121.63 | 22,341.26 | 35,563.93 |
| IMRF (50) | 57,557.45 | 58,107.32 | 41,154.08 | 57,527.11 |

| | Bills 4-4-25 4-7-25 | Bills 4-11-25 | Bills 4-18-25 4-21-25 | Bills 4-22-25 | Bills 5-1-25 5-2-25 5-5-25 |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Ed. Fund (10) | \$561,229.31 | \$19,423.92 | \$286,475.21 20 | \$309,926.27 | \$265,947.62 |
| Bldg. Fund (20) | \$30,932.15 | \$2,353.81 | \$149,948.62 40 | | \$73,840.01 |
| Trans. Fund (40) | \$22,200.22 | \$758.67 | \$17,004.27 | | \$7,669.54 |
| Capital Projects(60) | \$328,913.27 | \$60,356.34 | | | \$60,356.34 |

Mr. Roth made a motion for the Board to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Dr. Krall moved to support the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Non-Agenda Related Audience Presentations--

A Non-Agenda Related Audience Presentations were offered by Dr. Ashley Fischer. She was given five minutes to present.

Closed Session –

Mr. Rudd made a motion to move into Closed Session for the purpose of **Personnel (5ILCS 120/2 115 ILCS 5/18)**. Mr. Roth supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The board entered closed session at 9:11 p.m.

A motion by Dr. Krall, second by Mr. Rudd, that the Board of Education return to regular session.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The board returned to regular session at 9:56 p.m.

Adjournment –

Mr. Rudd made a motion that the meeting be adjourned.

Voice Vote: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

Recorded by,

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Smith, Recording Secretary

Amanda Leman, Secretary

David Cross, President