

**MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT
December 2, 2025**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held December 2, 2025, at the Morton Education and Administration Center. The meeting included the District's goals in **Achievement, Communication, Climate, Facilities, and Finance.**

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2025 LEVY – 5:30 P.M.

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

Call to Order and Roll Call

President David Cross called the Public Hearing on the 2025 Levy to order at 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of answering questions and hearing public comment.

Presentation of the 2025 Levy

Dr. Joe Sander, Superintendent, provided Fund Balances for FY26 Truth in Taxation. All balances are from the end of FY25 on June 30, 2025. Dr. Cross instructed Mrs. Valerie Smith, recording secretary, to record the numbers in the meeting minutes.

FY25 Truth in Taxation School Board Meeting – December 2, 2025 All Balances as of 6-30-25	
Education Fund	\$24,785,365
Operation, Building and Maintenance Fund	\$16,883,140
Bond & Interest Fund	\$17,770
Transportation Fund	\$724,039
Municipal Retirement Fund	\$899,267
Working Cash Fund	\$4,134,399
Tort Cash Fund	\$611,539

The expenses for this levy were calculated based on FY27 projections of both revenues and expenditures and are subject to change. The Tentative Levy utilizing the 2.9 CPI was approved at the previous meeting. It should allow the District to access all of the revenue available through the tax levy.

Audience Questions and Discussion

One audience member requested clarification on how the levy works. Dr. Sander provided information on how the levy process works. He shared that there are variables that are known and some that are unknown.

Declare 2025 Levy Hearing Closed

Dr. Cross declared the 2025 Levy Hearing closed at 5:40 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING, December 2, 2025

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge

President David Cross called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. Members recited the Pledge of Allegiance. **Members present:** Dr. David Cross, Dr. Diane Krall, Mrs. Amanda Leman, Mr. Wes Ohnesorge, Mrs. Krystiana Purdy, Mr. Andrew Roth, and Mr. Jerry Rudd.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Joseph Sander

- **Student Support Services - MTSS & Wellness:** Mrs. Stephanie Brown, Asst. The Director of Student Support Services & District Wellness Coordinator presented on the areas under her leadership, including Wellness, MTSS, Homeless, and NME. Mrs. Brown presented the challenge of learning to “Be where your feet are.”
- **Gratitude:** Dr. Sander acknowledged Mr. Rodney Schuck and the Maintenance/Custodial team for their work to remove the Thanksgiving weekend snowfall. He thanked Mrs. Higus and her staff, the Morton Fire Department, SRO Officer Dryden, and the Morton Police Department for their quick response to a vehicle fire at Grundy School.
- **Facilities** – Dr. Sander shared pictures and gave updates on facilities at MHS.
- **School Safety Updates:** Mrs. Kate Wyman reported successful safety drills, noting a November 5th evacuation of 950 people at Morton High School in 35 minutes. The District Reunification Team practiced with MHS and again today with the car fire incident. Staff Raptor Emergency Management Training for staff is scheduled for January 5, 2025.
- **FOIAs:** Dr. Sander reported a FOIA request from Mrs. Tammy Woodmancy.
- **Site Visits:** The next site visit is scheduled for Student Support Services on February 17, 2026, at 5:30 PM. No official Board business is conducted at site visits. The Board added that they are enjoying the site visits. It seems to be good for both the staff and the Board.
- **Monthly Board Policy Review:** Dr. Sander noted board policies under review, with updates to be made in PRESS by December 2, 2025. PRESS (Policy Reference Education Subscription Service) Issue #120 is ready for review.
- **Recognition of Excellence:** In January, the MHS Marching Band, MHS Cross Country, and a MHS Diver in the Washington H.S. Swim Team Co-op will be recognized.

President's Report – President Cross

Board Committee Updates:

- The Board reiterated that the site visits are working well.
- Extra-Curricular Committee – will be reviewing surveys from recent seasons and meeting soon.
- The Policy Committee will be meeting soon to review PRESS Issue #120.

Agenda Building:

Cell phones and tablet use will continue to be debated. Their use during the school day may be affecting our students. The data is there. AI guidance is expected by June 2026. The Board would like to be proactive on these issues by setting guidelines and best practices that reflect our community values.

Discussion Item(s)
IASB 2025 Joint Annual Conference Selections

- **IASB Conference:** The Board shared their experiences from the IASB Joint Annual Conference, noting that the sessions were valuable.
- **Legislative Updates:** Concerns were raised about cell phone laws affecting learning. Unfunded mandates remain a frustration. AI is a key topic. Safe2Help is recognized as a mental health resource on student IDs. A reduction in federal funding for Illinois schools is expected.
- **Communication:** One session noted the benefit of knowing and using communication preferences. Some districts have dedicated communication personnel. Social media is viewed as the new "town square," but it is not recommended by attorneys for Board communication. The District utilizes MP-TV, morton709.org, and The Potter Post, while continually seeking improvement.
- **Student Advisory Panels:** This topic was popular. MHS is already implementing student panels.
- **Delegate Assembly Outcomes:** Mr. Roth reported all constitutional amendments passed. Concerns were raised about unfunded mandates related to the one resolution on three-point harnesses on school buses.

Board Goals

The Board reviewed its work on SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) Goals for the Board. Achievement, Climate, Communication, Facilities, and Finance. The Board will continue to review and make changes or approve them at the January 13, 2025, meeting.

Action Items

Action on 2025 Levy Resolution— Mrs. Leman moved that the Board of Education approve the 2025 Levy Resolution. Dr. Krall supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

Approve Consent Agenda:

Dr. Sander noted some highlights on the Consent Agenda. He recognized donors on the donation report.

Mr. Ohnesorge moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Rudd seconded.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

Consent Agenda

- Approve Personnel Report
- Approve Destruction of Verbatim Records (May 7, 2024, and May 21, 2024)
- Approve Donation Report
- Approve Overnight MHS Cheer Competition per Board Policy 6:240 - January 2025
- Approve Minutes: November 4, 2025, Regular Meeting; November 4, 2025, Regular Meeting Closed Session

- Approve Bills & Payroll

	Bills 11-7-25 11-10-25	Bills 11-21-25 11-24-25	Payroll 11-14-25	Payroll 11-28-25
Ed. Fund (10)	\$321,100.38	\$244,129.40	\$1,108,607.71	\$1,082,570.49
Bldg. Fund (20)	\$58,929.5	\$314,173.99	\$60,183.69	\$57,305.78
Trans. Fund (40)	\$36,696.96	\$26,978.42	\$36,699.67	\$32,888.94
IMRF (50)			\$60,234.5	\$56,866.44
TORT (80)	\$350.40	\$1,845.16		

Non-Agenda-Related Audience Presentations Ms. Angie Brown, parent, requested more walkie-talkies for Jefferson School staff.

Closed Session as stated in the Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/2)

President Cross called for a closed session for the purpose of Student Discipline (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9)) as stated in the Open Meetings Act.

Mr. Rudd made a motion to move into Closed Session for the purpose of Student Discipline. Mrs. Purdy supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried. The Board entered closed session at 7:20 p.m.

Open Session

Mr. Roth motioned for the Board to return to Open Session. Seconded by Mr. Ohnesorge.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried. The board returned to regular session at 8:51 p.m.

Action Item(s)

Action on Expulsion of Student Having ID Number #26-002

Mrs. Leman motioned: "I move that the Board of Education expel student #26-002 for the duration of the 2025-26 school year, with eligibility to enroll in the Regional Safe School or other appropriate placement for which the student qualifies." Dr. Krall seconded.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

Adjournment –

Mr. Rudd made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote: Yea 7 Absent 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Recorded by,

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Smith, Recording Secretary

Amanda Leman, Secretary

David Cross, President