

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT
January 13, 2026

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held January 13, 2026, at the Morton Education and Administration Center. The meeting included the District's goals in **Achievement, Communication, Climate, Facilities, and Finance.**

REGULAR MEETING, January 13, 2026

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge

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

Recognition of Excellence

Mr. Todd Herrmann, Associate Principal of Morton High School (MHS), presented the achievements of the State Placing MHS Boys Cross Country Team, the State Placing Washington Co-Op Swim Team diver, and the Award-Winning Morton High School Marching Band to the Board. Coaches and Directors shared highlights from the season. The Board congratulated and greeted the students, coach, and directors.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Joseph Sander

- **Gratitude** - Dr. Sander opened with gratitude for the students, coaches, teachers, families, and the community that supports the students and activities like Cross Country, Co-op Swim/Dive, and the Marching Band program.
- **Facilities** - Dr. Sander gave a facilities update on MHS Phase II and MJHS summer work, including STEM Labs, the Library, Room 111, and Asbestos Abatement.
- **Finance** – Dr. Sander noted the agenda action item that will allow funds to be moved for Capital Projects.
- **School Safety Updates:** Mrs. Kate Wyman was thanked for facilitating the Raptor Emergency Management Training on Monday, January 5, 2026, for staff. Raptor helps accelerate response times in a crisis. Team Assists allow staff to communicate a need for assistance. Drills are available for practice.
- **FOIAs:** Dr. Sander reported the District received FOIA requests from Christopher Miller (CT Mills), Mr. Shawn Durbin, Ms. Sheri Reid, and Mr. David Avrayo.
- **Board & Community Engagement** – A Board site visit on February 17, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the MEAC with Student Support Services.
- **Monthly Board Policy Review** - The Board reviewed the January policies on the bi-annual review schedule.

President's Report – President Cross

Board Superintendent's Committee Updates:

- **Policy Committee** – The committee met on January 5, 2026, and January 6, 2026. The committee thanked Dr. Sander for his work and preparation. There were around fifty policies to review. Dr. Sander thanked Dr. Krall and Mrs. Purdy for their hard work and attention to each policy under review.

- Extra-Curricular Committee – The committee convened to review approximately 150 responses. Mrs. Leman and Mr. Ohnesorge reported that feedback from MJHS primarily originated from parents, while MHS received input from both parents and students. The committee recognized that most responses were positive. Areas identified for improvement included transportation to practice facilities, midseason feedback, and the need for program consistency. Discussion on player and coach development was valuable. The Board expressed satisfaction with the increase in survey returns.
- Board members serving on Superintendent Committees will be posted on the website for easy access by community members.

The mid-year review of the Superintendent in SuperEval will be ready for the board meeting on February 3, 2026.

The Board SMART Goals have been reviewed by the Board and will be an action item on February 3, 2026.

Discussion Item(s)

MOU Payroll Installments

Dr. Sander shared with the Board the recommendation to reduce the number of payroll periods from 26 to 24 per year. This change was recommended due to the 3-week pay gap periods that occur in some years. It requires a Memorandum of Understanding with the Morton Education Association (MEA), which expressed support for the change. All employees will be paid on the 15th and 30th of every month, with adjustments for periods when those dates fall on weekends, holidays, or the second pay period in February.

Policy Updates from PRESS Issue #120, 2:160, 4:170, 5:35, and 5:330

Dr. Krall and Mrs. Purdy are on the Superintendent's Policy Committee. The Board discussed PRESS Issue #120 and policies #120, 2:160, and 4:170. Most changes include updates to language, legal references (with additions and updates), legal updates, cross-references, and footnotes. The Board requested a review of policy 4:170 for continuous improvement in communication regarding safety.

PRESS #120 included policy 7:180 Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment. The Board discussed the need for an effective communication plan for the new AI-related updates.

The Board discussed the reviewed and recommended policy changes. Two Board resolutions were updated for language and 5-year review compliance.

2026-27 Calendar

Dr. Troy Teater, Assistant Superintendent, presented the proposed 2026-27 District calendar to the Board. It is modeled on last year's calendar and includes three full weekends during the holiday break. Efforts were made to balance the first and second semesters, ensuring necessary days for driver's education and semester classes. The second semester accommodates additional testing days. The Board will approve the 2026-27 District calendar at the next Board meeting.

Action Items

Resolution for Partial Abatement of Working Cash Fund and Transferring Monies to Capital Project Fund— Mr. Rudd moved that the Board of Education act on the Resolution for Partial Abatement of Working Cash Fund and Transferring Monies to Capital Project Fund. Mrs. Lemman supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

Approve Consent Agenda:

Dr. Sander shared highlights on the Consent Agenda. He thanked the donors to the FFA program on the Donation Report. He noted that the policies that are being updated for language, legal references (with additions and updates), legal updates, cross-reference updates, and footnote updates.

Mr. Roth moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Ohnesorge supported.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

Consent Agenda

- Approve Personnel Report
- Approve Destruction of Verbatim Records (June 4, 2024, and June 25, 2024)
- Overnight MHS Baseball per Board Policy 6:240 - March 2026
- Approve Overnight MHS Key Club Conference per Board Policy 6:240 - February 2026
- Approve Overnight MHS ILMEA All-State Music Students per Board Policy 6:240 - January 2026
- Approve Treasurers Reports - September 2025 & October 2025
- Approve PRESS Issue #120 Updates; Process/ Personnel Policy Updates: 2:160, 5:35, 5:170, & 5:330
- Approve Donation Report
- Approve Minutes: December 2, 2025, Levy Hearing & Regular Meeting; December 2, Regular Meeting Closed Session
- Approve Receipt of Final Audit for 2024-25 School Year from Auditor CliftonLarsonAllen
- Approve Bills & Payroll

	Bills 12-5-25 12-8-28	Bills 12-12-25	Bills 12-19-25 12-22-25	Bills 1-6-26	Payroll 12-12-25	Payroll 12-19-25	Payroll 12-26-25	Payroll 1-9-26
Ed. Fund (10)	\$571,109.20	\$27,337.00	\$269,380.13		\$1,015,521.34	\$17,656.64	\$1,149,927.5	\$852,816.35
Bldg. Fund (20)	\$40,017.93	\$469.49	\$719,948.26		\$60,849.61		62,627.09	61,286.63
Trans. Fund (40)	\$16,654.55	\$1,205.22	\$44,625.86	\$18,649.35	\$26,134.63		40,639.89	8,934.65
IMRF (50)					\$49,269.76	1,294.05	63,665.58	27,679.3
TORT (80)	\$554.00		\$18,463.42					

Non-Agenda-Related Audience Presentations None.

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

President Cross called for a closed session for the purpose of **Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)** as stated in the Open Meetings Act.

Mrs. Purdy made a motion to move into Closed Session for the purpose of Personnel. Dr. Krall supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried. The Board entered closed session at 6:38 p.m.

Open Session

Mr. Rudd motioned for the Board to return to Open Session. Seconded by Mrs. Purdy

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried. The board returned to regular session at 7:29 p.m.

In closing, the Board reviewed the proposed Board meeting calendar that will be approved at the next Board meeting. The next Board Self-Evaluation with the Illinois Association of School Boards was scheduled for April 21, 2026. Dr. Sander reminded the Board that they will soon receive the required Statement of Economic Interest.

Adjournment –

Mr. Rudd made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote: Yea 7 Absent 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Recorded by,

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Smith, Recording Secretary

Amanda Leman, Secretary

David Cross, President