

**MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**February 3, 2026**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held February 3, 2026, at the Morton Education and Administration Center. The meeting included the District's goals in **Achievement, Communication, Climate, Facilities, and Finance.**

**REGULAR MEETING, February 3, 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**

Dr. Sander and the Board recognized “The Morton RISEing Company.” Mrs. Bethany Scroggs, Assistant Director of Special Education, introduced the teachers and explained the PECT (Pre-Employment Career Training) program. Mrs. Kosner and Mrs. Towner were present, sharing program details. Students shared their favorite parts of the business and shared some of their wares.

**Agenda-Related Audience Presentations** None.

**Administrative Reports**

**Superintendent’s Report – Dr. Joseph Sander**

- **Gratitude** – Dr. Sander expressed gratitude to the District Crossing Guards for their safety work during the extreme cold weather days.
- **Student Support Service (SSS)** – Ms. Lindsay Franklin, Director, gave a detailed report. She listed the many facets of SSS that support Morton 709 students.
- **Finance** – A Mid-Year Revenue and Expense Report was provided by Ms. Lisa Kowalski, CFO.
- **Facilities** – Dr. Sander listed planned summer projects for MJHS and Lettie Brown for summer 2026. He updated the Board on MHS Phase 2 construction progress.
- **Climate** – Dr. Sander discussed the 2026 5Essentials Survey, which is open from February 3 to March 13. The annual survey is conducted among students, parents, and teachers and is part of the ISBE School Report Card.
- **Academics: Annual Textbook List** – Mrs. Kate Wyman provided the Board with the 2025-26 annual textbook list.
- **Achievements** – MJHS: 7th Grade Boys Basketball Finals; MHS Boys Bowling: #2 Bowler in IHSA Finals; the team finished 5th; MHS Dance: 7th; MHS Cheer heading to State; and MHS Girls Basketball achieved 1000 team wins.
- **Gameball Run** – The events are on Thursday and Saturday. It is a true community effort.
- **FOIAs:** Dr. Sander reported the District received FOIA requests from Chris Miller (Purchase Authority), Matt Langer (FFRF), and Sheri Reid (SmartProcure)
- **Board & Community Engagement** – The next site visit for Student Support Services is scheduled for February 17, 2026, at 5:30 PM. No official Board business is conducted at site visits.

- **Monthly Board Policy Review:** The Board reviewed the February policies (Sections 5 and 5:80-5:170) on the biannual review schedule.

**President’s Report – President Cross**

**Board Committee Updates:**

**Teaching and Learning Council (TLC)** – The TCL met. There are 77 members, mostly educators. Student, parents, and the School Board are on the TLC. Dr. Diane Krall and Mrs. Krystiana Purdy represent the Board. The Board members noted that the council was an impressive collaborative think tank of leaders with a common purpose of providing feedback on district initiatives and goals, ensuring curricular alignment, and discussing key issues related to teaching and learning. A Technology Task Force was initiated following feedback from the first TLC meeting. Mrs. Wyman answered and clarified the Board's questions.

**Community Engagement** – The Board will make a site visit to Student Support Services on February 17, 2026. No Board business will be conducted. Also, Morton 709 will be represented at the IASB Advocacy Day in Springfield on March 24, 2026.

The Board Self-Evaluation is set for April 21, 2026, at 5:30 PM with Katie Bulava from the Illinois Association of School Boards.

**Agenda Building:**

Agenda Building items include: 1) Cell phone disruptions, distractions, and the impact on child/student development. 2) Explore the impact of educational technology on students, including Artificial Intelligence (AI). 3) Update on MHS parking concerns.

**Discussion Item(s)**

**Discussion on 2027-28 Calendar**

The Board discussed the proposed 2027-28 School Year Calendar. The calendar committee met on December 4, 2025, and January 22, 2026. The Board of Education reviewed the 2027-28 School Calendar and recommended it for approval at the March 3, 2026, Board of Education Meeting.

**Discussion on County School Facility Sales Tax**

Tazewell County area schools have discussed placing the "One Percent Sales Tax" on the November ballot. CFO Lisa Kowalski gave a presentation to the Board. Boards representing more than 50% of the students enrolled in the county must pass a resolution for it to be placed on the ballot. The Board's consensus is to list the resolution as an action item on the March 3, 2026, agenda.

**Action Items**

**Action on Termination of Education Framework Contract**

Mrs. Leman moved that the Board of Education act on the Termination of Education Framework Contract. Dr. Krall supported the motion.

Roll Call:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0                      Absent 0

Motion carried

**Action on MOU Payroll Installments**

Mr. Rudd made a motion for the Board of Education to act on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Payroll Installments with the Morton Education Association (MEA). Mr. Ohnesorge supported the motion.

Roll Call:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0                      Absent 0

Motion carried

**Action on Policy Updates from PRESS Issue #120 and 4:170**

Mrs. Purdy moved that the Board of Education take action on Policy Updates from PRESS Issue #120 and Policy 4:17 updates as presented. Mrs. Leman supported the motion.

Roll Call:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0                      Absent 0

Motion carried

**Action on 2026-27 Calendar**

Mr. Ohnesorge moved that the Board of Education approve the 2026-27 District Calendar. Mr. Roth supported the motion.

Roll Call:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0                      Absent 0

Motion carried

**Action on 2026-27 Board Calendar**

Mrs. Purdy moved that the Board of Education approve the 2026-27 Board Calendar. Mr. Roth supported the motion.

Roll Call:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0                      Absent 0

Motion carried

**Action on Board Goals**

Mr. Rudd moved that the Board of Education approve the Board Goals as presented. Mrs. Leman 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 thanked the River City Construction Foundation (MHS Trade Classes) and Mangold Ford (Morton Academy) for donations to District programs.

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

Roll Call:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0                      Absent 0

Motion carried.

**Consent Agenda**

- Approve Personnel Report
- Approve Semi-Annual Review of Unreleased Closed Session Minutes (July 2025 - December 2025)
- Approve Treasurers Reports - November 2025 & December 2025
- Approve Donation Report
- Approve Minutes: January 13, 2026, Regular Meeting; January 13, 2026, Regular Meeting Closed Session
- Approve Bills & Payroll

	<b>Bills 1-9-26</b>	<b>Bills 1-16-26 1-20-26</b>	<b>Bills 1-30-26 2-2-26</b>	<b>Payroll 1-9-26</b>	<b>Payroll 1-23-26</b>
<b>Ed. Fund (10)</b>	\$15,375.71	\$244,398.92	\$579,063.53	\$852,816.35	1,053,713.08
<b>Bldg. Fund (20)</b>	1,393.96	\$228,008.47	\$65,756.52	61,286.63	62,968.86
<b>Debt Serv (30)</b>		\$300.00			
<b>Trans. Fund (40)</b>	\$800.23	\$138,273.04	\$8,092.14	8,934.65	32,274.17
<b>IMRF (50)</b>				27,679.3	5,3453.73
<b>Capital Projects (60)</b>			\$488,861.44		
<b>TORT (80)</b>		\$7,936.00			

**Non-Agenda-Related Audience Presentations**

Mrs. Jordan Spicklemire addressed the Board regarding school technology and smartphones.

**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) and Student Discipline (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9) ) as stated in the Open Meetings Act.

Mr. Roth made a motion to move into Closed Session for the purpose of Personnel and Student Discipline. Mr. Ohnesorge supported the motion.

Roll Call:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0                      Absent 0

Motion carried. The Board entered closed session at 7:25 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 8:56 p.m.

**Adjournment –**

Mr. Roth made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote:            Yea 7        Absent 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Recorded by,

Respectfully submitted,

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Valerie Smith, Recording Secretary

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Amanda Leman, Secretary

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David Cross, President