

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT
March 3, 2026

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held March 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, March 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 of Excellence

Kirk Edwards, Principal, MHS introduced Pete Burdette, MHS Head Bowling Coach. Coach Burdette shared detail on sophomore, Weston Sadler's 2nd place finish at the IHSA finals. He was the second best bowler in all of IHSA. The team finished 5th in the State.

Agenda-Related Audience Presentations None.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Joseph Sander

- **Gratitude** – Dr. Sander share that former teacher and girls' basketball coach, Mr. Bob Becker was the inaugural entry into the MHS Hall of Fame on Friday, February 27, 2026. The qualities Coach Becker showed throughout his career are foundational in the criteria for future admissions.
- **Climate** – Dr. Sander discussed and presented the data from the 2025 5Essentials Survey with self-comparisons to 2024 and to the seven other Mid-Illini schools. Were the same or better than last year on most questions with increased survey participation.
- **Finance** – Dr. Sander shared an update on legislative budget impact from both the State of IL Governor's Budget and Federal funding.
- **Facilities** – The bids for summer work 2026 are on the agenda for approval tonight. Summer 2026 work will include MJHS (STEM Labs, Library, and Rm 111) and Lettie Brown window replacements. MHS Phase 2 work continues.
- **Achievement** – MHS Boys Basketball team is Regional Champion and at Sectional tonight; MHS Wrestling earned a 2nd and 6th place medal at State. MHS Competitive made the IHSA finals and finished 10th at State.
- **Other Items** – Dr. Sander gave updates on the Technology and Cell Phone timeline, MHS Parking, and a Compeer Financial Grant awarding \$60,000 over the next two years.
- **Forecast Breakfast** – Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at Grace Church – let Mrs. Valerie Smith know if you plan to attend. It is a great event.
- **FOIA** – Administration received FOIA requests from Michael Henry (2/5/26), Oshea Smith, Sunlight Access (2/9/26), and Michael Henry (2/10/26)
- **Board & Community Engagement** – The next site visit is scheduled for Morton High School on March 17, 2026, at 5:30 PM. No official Board business is conducted at site visits.

- **Monthly Board Policy Review:** The Board reviewed the March policies (Section 5, 5:180-5:270) on the bi-annual review schedule.

President's Report – President Cross

Board Committee Updates:

Facilities – Mr. Rudd and Mrs. Leman, members of the Superintendent's Facilities Committee, participated in a meeting to review both short-term and long-term facilities plans alongside Director of Operations Rodney Schuck and CFO Lisa Kowalski. The Board acknowledged Mr. Schuck's detailed presentation on current operations and future maintenance needs, commending his exceptional performance.

The committee engaged in discussions concerning ongoing projects and future updates and renovations. Dr. Sander highlighted the previously noted Summer Facilities work. The Board expressed satisfaction with planned projects for Summer 2026 and additional upcoming goals, which encompass numerous district buildings. For Summer 2027, the District aims to repair or replace the turf, track, and tennis courts.

MHS Phase 3 and Phase 4 are set to create new learning spaces following the relocation of the weight room and completion of the Administrative space at MHS. The repurposing of old office spaces presents excellent classroom potential.

The Board remains committed to identifying optimal solutions for all students. Grundy is slated for renovations to expand and enhance facilities for the Pre-K program. Morton Academy's needs continue to be prioritized. Addressing space requirements for MA and potential SSS programming hinges on availability, opportunity, and resources. Dr. Sander indicated potential partnerships with groups sharing the goal of expanding opportunities for students with special needs, extending beyond high school.

Community Engagement – The Board will make a site visit to Morton High School on March 17, 2026. No Board business will be conducted.

Board Self-Evaluation-- The Board Self-Evaluation is set for April 21, 2026, at 5:30 PM with Katie Bulava from the Illinois Association of School Boards. The agenda looks good. The Board would be interested in any SuperEval tips during that meeting.

Agenda Building:

No new agenda building items.

Discussion Item(s)

Discussion on Park District Agreement

The Board discussed the agreement between the District and the Morton Park District. It has been in the works for some time, but next meeting it will be ready for approval. The working relationship between the District and the Park District is excellent. The agreement puts in writing and adds clarity. The Board and Administration are thankful for the working relationship between the schools and the park district.

Discussion on Delegate Assembly—Mrs. Purdy will represent Morton 709 at the IASB Advocacy Day in Springfield on March 24, 2026.

The Board and Administration identified several areas of concern. Dr. Sander had talking points that include MCATs and the loss of reciprocal teacher licenses in neighboring states. The Board concerns regarding electronics, cell phones, AI, and screen time were highlighted, with the Board seeking a balance to ensure optimal education and preparation in a tech-driven world. Additionally, unfunded mandates and transportation costs were discussed.

She asked the Board to share any questions they may want her to ask when she meets with legislators.

Action Items

Action on 2027-28 School Calendar

Mrs. Leman moved that the Board of Education approve the 2027-28 School Calendar. Dr. Krall supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried

Action on Board Resolution for County School Facility Sales Tax

Summary: The Board of Education considered adopting a resolution directing the Regional Superintendent of Schools for Tazewell County, Illinois, to certify to the County Clerk the question of imposing a 1% retailers' occupation tax and service occupation tax. This tax aims to provide revenue exclusively for school facility purposes, school resource officers, and mental health professionals for submission to the electors at the general election on November 3, 2026.

Resolution Presentation: President Cross introduced the resolution, and Secretary Leman read it by title. Copies were provided to Board members and attendees upon request.

Resolution Content: The resolution directs the Regional Superintendent to certify the tax question for the November 2026 ballot.

Motion: Member Mr. Rudd moved, and Member Mr. Ohnesorge seconded the motion to adopt the resolution as presented.

Discussion: A full discussion was held, after which the President called for a roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote:

Member	AYE	NAY	ABSENT
Dr. David Cross	X		
Dr. Diane Krall	X		
Mrs. Amanda Leman	X		
Mr. Wes Ohnesorge	X		
Mrs. Krystiana Purdy	X		
Mr. Andrew Roth	X		
Mr. Jerry Rudd	X		

Outcome: The motion was carried unanimously, and the resolution was adopted. The President signed the resolution in the open meeting, and the Secretary recorded it in the Board of Education records.

Ballot Proposition: The resolution includes the following question for the November 2026 ballot: **"Shall a retailer's occupation tax and a service occupation tax (commonly referred to as a sales tax) be imposed in The County of Tazewell, Illinois, at a rate of 1% to be used exclusively for school facility purposes, school resource officers, and mental health professionals?"**

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried

Action on the Transfer of Interest Income between Funds

Mrs. Purdy motioned for the Board of Education to approve the permanent transfer of accrued interest income of \$110,000 from the Working Cash Fund to the Education Fund. Mr. Rudd supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried

Action on Bids Summer 2026 Maintenance & MJHS STEM Labs

Mrs. Purdy moved that the Board of Education accept the base bid plus Alternate Bid 1 from Peoria Metro Construction in the amount of \$1,347,000. Mr. Rudd 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, including a donation to MHS Baseball from David and Carolyn Lindley.

Mr. Roth moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Onesorge supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

Consent Agenda

- Approve Personnel Report
- Approve Destruction of Verbatim Records (8/20/24 & 9/3/24)
- Approve Overnight Trip Request Approval per Board Policy 6:240 MHS SkillsUSA Conference - Peoria, IL- April 2026
- Approve Overnight Trip Request per Board Policy 6:240- MHS Boys Tennis - Troy, IL- March 2026
- Approve Donation Report
- Approve Out-of-State Trip Request per Board Policy 6:240- Lincoln 6th Grade, St. Louis, MO- May 2026
- Approve Minutes: February 3, 2026, Regular Meeting; February 3, 2026, Regular Meeting Closed Session
- Approve Bills & Payroll

	Bills 2-4-26	Bills 2-13-26 2-17-26	Bills 2-27-26 3-2-26	Payroll 2-6-26	Payroll 2-20-26
Ed. Fund (10)	\$9,740.51	237,431.36	\$352,376.59	1,084,464.8	1,123,924.53
Bldg. Fund (20)	\$471.12	131,697.11	\$89,890.58	61,380.3	59,511.83
Trans. Fund (40)	\$515.72	\$27,743.89	\$11,582.31	31,268.51	35817
IMRF (50)				54,291.97	60808.14
Capital Projects (60)		\$441,744.5			
TORT (80)		235,832.61			

Non-Agenda-Related Audience Presentations

Three 5-minute non-agenda related presentations were presented to the Board. Mr. Bob Edward by proxy and Mrs. Tammy Woodmancy spoke on Morton Academy and Civil Rights. Ms. Gretchen Hohulin gave parent input.

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 Purchase or Lease of Property 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) as stated in the Open Meetings Act.

Dr. Krall made a motion to move into Closed Session for the purpose of Personnel and Purchase or Lease of Property. Mr. Rudd supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried. The Board entered closed session at 7:00 p.m.

Open Session

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

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried. The board returned to regular session at 9:41 p.m.

Adjournment –

Mr. Roth made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote: Yea 7 Absent 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

Recorded by,

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Smith, Recording Secretary

Amanda Leman, Secretary

David Cross, President