

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT April 14, 2026

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held April 14, 2026, at the Morton Education and Administration Center. The meeting included the District's goals in **Achievement, Communication, Climate, Facilities, and Finance.**

REGULAR MEETING, April 14, 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

MJHS Volleyball was recognized for a 2nd-place place finish at the IESA state finals. MHS Wrestling was recognized for a 2nd-place and 6th-place finisher. Both programs shared that their students were excellent on and off the playing field. They have been recognized for character and academics, too. Coaching staff thanked the Board, parents, and the community for supporting these athletes and scholars.

Agenda-Related Audience Presentations

Ms. Stacey Mooney, Instructional Assistant Professor at Illinois State University and a frequent substitute at Morton Academy, presented on agenda-related items and commended Morton Academy's program.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Joseph Sander

- **Gratitude** – Dr. Sander expressed gratitude to the Building Administrators, Human Resources Team, and Food Services Team for their outstanding work following recent audits. Dr. Sander also recognized Morton Academy staff, specifically Mr. Boyer and Mr. Hostetler, for their achievements and contributions to Morton Academy.
- **Intergovernmental Agreement with Morton Public Library** – Mrs. Alissa Williams, MPL Director, shared data and reflections on the agreement's high value, noting that it puts library cards in the hands of more students and teachers. She shared statistics showing how the relationship benefits both parties and the growth in the number of library users. She reminded everyone of the strong relationship between summer reading and students' retention of reading skills. They continue to expand youth services and personnel to support that growth. The agreement positively impacts the climate.
- **Finance** – Dr. Sander shared an update on School Fees, Meal Prices, and Building Rental Fees for the 2026-27 school year.
- **Facilities** – Dr. Sander provided facilities updates on summer work at MJHS and progress on MHS Phase 2. He also outlined a tentative two-phase Grundy expansion, pending approval, to improve and expand learning spaces, enhance security, and create space for the office and special services. The design is in the early stages.
- **Student Support Services – Morton Academy** – Mrs. Courtney Erickson, Assistant Director of Morton Academy, gave a detailed presentation on the many ways our District is meeting students' special needs. Students at Morton Academy have a variety of special

needs and learning challenges. Social Emotional Learning lessons are often taught to help students grow individually and together.

- **Morton Community Forecast Breakfast** – Dr. Sander noted that he and Mrs. Williams both spoke at the Forecast Breakfast earlier that day. It is an event that brings the community together to celebrate, reflect, report, and dream. Several members of the Board and many Administrators attended.
- **FOIA** – Administration received FOIA requests from Oshea Smith (4/10/26), Justin Wenig (4/7/26), CT Mills (3/26/26), Tamara Woodmancy (3/25/26), David Arvayo (3/18/26), and Abbas Khan (3/13/26)
- **Monthly Board Policy Review:** The Board reviewed the April policies (Section 5, 5:260-5:330) as part of the bi-annual review schedule.

President’s Report – President Cross

Board Committee Updates:

- Mrs. Purdy reported on the IASB Advocacy Day in Springfield, noting continued focus on unfunded mandates, student cell phone policies, and the impact of technology on learning; participants engaged in a productive discussion. She met with two Senators.
- The Superintendent’s Extracurricular Committee reviewed program feedback and discussed methods for parents and students to submit input.
- The Superintendent’s Facilities and Finance committees have upcoming meetings scheduled.
- The Superintendent’s Policy Committee will review a new PRESS (Policy Reference Education Subscription Service) Issue #121. They will meet soon.
- The Board will participate in a Board Self-Evaluation with the Illinois Association of School Boards on April 21, 2026.

Agenda Building:

No new agenda building items.

Action Items

Action on Admission of Non-Resident Students Per Board Policy 7:60 for 2026-27 - Tremont District 702

Mrs. Leman moved that the Board act on the admission of three tuition students from Tremont District 702 to the RISE & LIFE Academy programs at Lincoln Elementary and at MHS for the 2026-27 school year. Mr. Roth supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried

Note: Action Item B was pulled from the agenda.

Action on Admission of Non-Resident Student Per Board Policy 7:60 for 2026-27 MHS

Mr. Roth moved that the Board of Education Act on the admission of the Non-Resident Tuition Request for the 2026-27 School Year as presented. Mr. Rudd supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried

Action on Asbestos Removal Bid - Summer 2026

Mr. Rudd motioned for the Board of Education to accept the base bid from Colfax Corporation in the amount of \$127,000. Mr. Ohnesorge supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried

Action on Resolution to Prepare FY27 Budget

The resolution allows Ms. Kowalski to continue business as usual until the final FY27 budget is approved. Mr. Roth moved that the Board act on the Resolution to Prepare the FY27 Budget. 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, including approval of: the Auditor for FY27, FY27 Salary/Wage Increases, Reemployment of Staff, and the Certified and Non-Certified Seniority List. Mrs. Purdy moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Dr. Krall supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

Consent Agenda

- Approve Personnel Report
- Approve Destruction of Verbatim Records (9/17/24 & 10/1/24) 18 months
- Approve Overnight Trip Request per Board Policy 6:240 - MHS Dance Camp - July 2026
- Approve Overnight/Out of State Trip Request per Board Policy 6:240 - MHS Cheer Camp - June 2026
- Approve Overnight/Out of State Trip Request Approval per Board Policy 6:240 - MHS Volleyball Camp - July 2026
- Approve Overnight Trip Request per Board Policy 6:240 - MHS Girls Soccer - May 2026
- Approve Overnight/Out of State Trip Request Approval per Board Policy 6:240 - MHS Band BOA Regional, Nashville, TN - 10/30-11/1/2026
- Approve and Authorize Renewal of IHSA Membership
- Approve Auditor for 2025-26 School Year
- Approve Resolution for Reemployment of Professional Staff for 2026-27
- Approve Reappointment of Administrators & 2026-27 Salary Increase
- Approve FY27 Salary & Wage Increase for 12-Month Employees & Support Personnel
- Approve Resolution for Non-Reemployment of Educational Support Staff for 2026-27
- Approve Photography Contract Extension with HR Imaging
- Approve Certified and Non-Certified Staff Seniority List
- Approve Donation Report
- Approve Treasurers Reports - January 2026 & February 2026
- Approve Minutes: March 3, 2026, Regular Meeting; March 3, 2026, Regular Meeting Closed Session; March 17, 2026, Special Meeting of the Board, Regular Meeting

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Recorded by,

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Smith, Recording Secretary

Amanda Leman, Secretary

David Cross, President