

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

February 5, 2013

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held February 5, 2013, at the Morton Education and Administration Center.

REGULAR MEETING –

President Tom Neeley called the regular meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Tom Neeley, Mr. John Applen, Mrs. Joyce Kaiser,
Mr. Clint Heinold, Mrs. Michelle Bernier, Mrs. Michelle Kaeb,
Mr. Tim Taylor

Audience Presentations –

Mr. John LaMere of 392 E. Forestwood, introduced himself as a parent of a student in the Life Skills program at Morton High School and as President of the Heart of Morton, a not-for-profit organization formed to help fill the gap for adults over the age of 22 with special needs. He noted the importance of the Life Skills program and complimented Ms. Ashby and Mrs. Mays. He thanked Ms. Ashby and the school district for the “Life in Stitches” embroidery program that has been set up as a business for the Life Skills students to run.

Reports –

Administrative –

Freedom of Information Requests –

Dr. Hall reported there were no Freedom of Information requests.

MPTV Update –

Dr. Hall reported that MPTV is now up and running on the Internet. The upcoming Regional Girls Basketball game at Bloomington is anticipated to be broadcast live. She acknowledged and thanked the volunteers that make live broadcasts possible including Carol Jankowski, Brian Gordon, Ron Martin, Craig Wright, Barry Rapp, Scott Brown, Janet and Jeff Stephens, Lynn Coverstone and Bill Schock.

Illinois 5Essentials Survey Update –

Dr. Hall reminded Board members of the State mandated 5Essentials survey that will be used to measure the instructional climate of our district. Teachers, students and parents are being asked to complete the survey online. The results will be on the newly designed school report card that comes out in October. The key to getting our data reported is to

have 50% of teachers, 50% of students and 30% of parents at each building complete the survey.

School Recognitions –

Dr. Hall noted several recent awards to our buildings: Morton High School for the Red Quill Legacy Award from ACT; the Academic Excellence Award from ISBE to Lettie Brown, Grundy, Lincoln and Morton Jr. High Schools; and the Blue Ribbon School nomination from the US Dept. of Education to Lincoln School.

Life Skills Program Update –

Ms. Ashby and Mrs. Mays reported to the Board of Education on the “Life in Stitches” school based business that they set up for the Life Skills class at Morton High School. Embroidery machines and supplies were purchased with a STEP (Secondary Transitional Experience Program) Grant. Each student in the program is involved with the business and it gives them the opportunity to develop job skills that are life long and transferable.

Mr. Applen noted his appreciation for the program and for “always pushing the envelope” with the special needs population in the District. Mr. Neeley shared his gratitude for their leadership.

MHS Update – Focus Group Work –

Ms. Johnson described focus group work that has been taking place this school year at MHS. Teachers meet once a month in their focus groups. One of the topics to emerge is allowing students to bring their own Wi-Fi-only devices to class. Current policy allows Wi-Fi devices (including iPods, iPads, Kindles, Nooks, netbooks and laptops) that can connect to outside resources through the district’s internet filter. They can be used for educational purposes during the school day. Focus groups worked through the advantages and concerns they would have with electronic device use by students and cell use by students. Once faculty had brainstormed a list of educational uses for the devices, a technology committee was formed. The committee drafted guidelines for Wi-Fi only electronic device usage. Cellular device use requires a change in policy and will be discussed once Wi-Fi device use can be assessed. Class meetings were held along with notifying parents via email and the website. On February 4, guest-net username and password was provided to students. Currently there is around 40% usage.

Board members asked for an update soon. Dr. Hall noted that the Leadership team and focus groups have been working on this concept during the first semester. Dr. Teater is a part of the technology committee that was formed out of the focus groups.

Kindergarten Screening Update –

Dr. Hall reported that a letter has just gone out to all parents in the District inviting all incoming Kindergartners to registration and screening on March 7 and 8. The goal of the screening is so the district can more readily adapt to the needs of students as they enter kindergarten and to help principals in forming class lists. Mr. Saunders will give a more detailed report at the March Board of Education meeting.

Crossing Guard Recognition –

Dr. Hall thanked the crossing guards for the incredible job they do each day in all types of weather. Mr. Neeley added that the safety of our students is in many hands throughout the day, and the crossing guards play a big part. Cake was served in their honor.

President's Report –

Mr. Neeley thanked the administrators and their staffs for all of the learning that is taking place throughout the district. It not only takes place in our classrooms, but within athletics, fine arts, special needs and all of the activities that take place throughout the year. He asked the administrators to take every opportunity to pass along to their teachers the Board's appreciation for their hard work.

Mr. Neeley announced that there will be a training session conducted by the IASB on Thursday at the MEAC for board members and superintendents in the Central IL Valley Division.

Discussion Items –**Board Student Policies Compliance Report -**

Mr. Neeley reported that as part of the policy compliance monitoring practice, a review of the Student policies was conducted. After review, it is the Superintendent's opinion that these policies are being followed and that the District is in compliance with those policies. He noted there may be some wording change as to how student discipline is reported to the Board of Education. Mr. Neeley will sign the policy compliance form and place it in the master compliance file in the district office.

Upon question by Mr. Heinold, Mr. Smock will review the policy on bullying training for students and teachers.

Facilities Update –

Dr. Hall reviewed the facilities work planned for summer 2013 and how each project will be funded. The plan was put together by Barb Getz, Jeff Keach, Pat Peterson (both of Keach Architects), district maintenance workers, Dr. Hall and Mr. Smock.

Dr. Hall presented a facilities planning timeline for the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) with the goal of utilizing a group representing a cross section of the Morton community. The group will:

- Establish a vision of 21st century learning in the Morton CUSD 709 Schools that is aligned with the district's strategic plan and how current and new facilities will meet and support that vision, meeting the academic and learning needs of our students

- Account and plan for a growing student population
- Honor the long term commitment to a world class education that has historically been established in the Morton CUSD 709 Schools
- Utilizing the information that we have, and honoring the work and time already committed to this process, develop a plan for the next 5-10 years
- Bring a maximum of 3 options to the BOE for consideration in moving forward with building/facilities plans

Dr. Hall noted the purpose of the FAC is to make recommendations to the Board of Education regarding a long term facilities/building plan, working in alignment and accordance with the District's strategic plan. The FAC serves in an advisory capacity only and will not make binding decisions. The makeup of the committee is proposed to be the Superintendent, architect, treasurer, director of maintenance, 2 board members, MEA representation, building administrators (elementary principal and high school athletic director), community members and parents.

Sales Tax Communication –

Dr. Hall reported that the District is moving ahead with an informational campaign for the county sales tax proposal. Information to be communicated includes:

- Relief – eliminate levy in the Bond and Interest fund, this will lower tax rate by .11 per \$100 of EAV. This lowers the property taxes on a \$200,000 property by approximately \$74.00, based upon the 2012 levy.
- Refresh – capital improvement projects that could be funded by the sales tax revenues.
 - There is now a comprehensive and prioritized 5 year list of projects in this category
 - Main items on the list: complete replacement of heating system at MHS
 - Architectural/engineering/planning fees
 - Possible need for facilities to address daily PE mandate for K-6 students
 - Safety and security issues in buildings (keyless entry systems, cameras)
- Renew – long term facilities planning –
 - How could the sales tax help with new facilities in the future?
 - The district will soon begin planning for long term facilities usage.

The proposed county sales tax proposal will be on the ballot in the consolidated election on April 9. Dr. Hall will visit with PTO groups and other organizations in Morton to communicate this information.

709Connect Follow Up –

Dr. Hall reviewed the top recommendations from the 709Connect meetings and updated the Board of Education on areas that are currently being acted on including:

- Form a Facility Advisory Committee
- Kindergarten screening and all-day Kindergarten presentation on March 5
- Adding AP Chemistry next year (this will be presented at CAC next week)
- Study of summer school options for summer of 2014 (this will be brought to the Board of Education in the fall of 2013)
- Grant funding (Community Foundation grant period is approaching this spring)
- Town Hall Q & A – Dr. Hall suggests having in late March.
- Board meeting highlights being emailed to staff
- Examination of length of school day
- Tour of buildings
- Increased communication

Action Items -**Approve Resolution Declaring MEAC a Temporary Facility -**

Dr. Hall explained that the MEAC currently houses the Life Skills Program from MHS as well as hosting various concerts and programs from our schools. Because students are regularly in this building, it will eventually be necessary to conduct a Life Safety Inspection of MEAC. In the meantime, it is necessary to declare MEAC a temporary facility for housing students. The determination of how to continue to use MEAC should and will be part of the district's long term facilities plan.

Motion by Mr. Applen, second by Mrs. Bernier, that the Board of Education approve the Resolution to declare the MEAC as a temporary facility for students.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea 7

Nay 0

Motion carried.

Consent Agenda –

Motion by Mr. Taylor, second by Mrs. Kaeb, that the Consent Agenda be approved as follows:

Approve Personnel Report

Approve December Treasurer's Report

Approving and Signing Minutes of the January 22, 2013, Regular Meeting, and the Closed Session Minutes of the January 22, 2013, Regular Meeting.

Adjournment -

Motion by Mrs. Kaiser, second by Mr. Applen, that the meeting be adjourned.

Voice Vote: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Kaiser, Secretary

Thomas Neeley, President