

## **MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709**

**March 5, 2013**

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

### **REGULAR MEETING –**

President Tom Neeley called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

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

### **Reports –**

#### **Administrative –**

##### **HS Lady Potters Basketball Recognition –**

Dr. Hall congratulated the Lady Potters for their great season and their 4<sup>th</sup> place finish at the Class 3 state tournament. She was personally approached at Red Bird Arena by others complimenting the coaching staff and team. She thanked them for representing the community and MHS well. The also thanked their parents for the many years of sacrifice for their daughters. Dr. Hall commented on the huge fan base and their dedication to the team.

Mr. Prichard noted that this team has one of the finest coaching staffs in the state. The coaches care about the whole person, not just winning. He introduced the coaching staff including Mr. Becker, Mr. Davis and Mr. Knuppel. Coach Becker introduced the team. Mr. Neeley offered his congratulations and noted the board is proud of their accomplishments on and off the court. He thanked the team for representing Morton so well.

##### **Freedom of Information Requests –**

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

##### **Technology Update –**

Dr. Teater referred to the Technology Vision Statement that states that technology, in its various forms, shall be used as an instructional tool and resource to encourage engaged learning. He noted three areas District 709 will provide:

- Telecommunication equipment and support for all communication tools

- Instructional technology will be implemented throughout the district using research-based practices and the finest equipment.
- Information technology will be implemented to provide the most efficient and effective access to district data.

Dr. Teater noted that District 709 can achieve this vision by understanding best practices, using relevant data for assessment and purposefully striving to infuse the most effective technology integration into the educational program for the benefit of all students.

Mr. Neeley suggested the Board have a discussion on the trends in technology at the May meeting. He thanked Dr. Teater for the presentation.

### **ISAT Cut Scores –**

Dr. Teater referred to a comparison of the district's ISAT cut scores in reading and math from 2012 and what those scores would be applying the state's cut scores for 2013. The adjustment is needed to better inform administrators, teachers and students of students' progress toward college and career readiness, especially moving to implementation of the Common Core and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. When the new cut scores are applied, the Exceeds scores drop from the 90's to the 80's. He noted the district will need to be more deliberate to address the discrepancies.

### **RtI Committee Update –**

Mr. Hoffman reported that the RtI committee has been meeting monthly since November. The committee includes 6 general education teachers, 2 special education teachers, 2 psychologists and 3 administrators. The group has focused on simplifying RtI by asking "What do we want students to learn? How do we know if students are learning that? What do we do if they are not?" The committee has realized there are discrepancies between the buildings in approaching RtI, but have found what is being done well. In order to create consistency, the committee is recommending having two district RtI coordinators for K-6 and 7-12. The coordinators would develop a menu of interventions, provide and improve oversight of the RtI aides and provide professional development for the aides.

Mr. Hoffman added that the committee is also finalizing the RtI Mission Statement, cataloging an intervention menu, researching programs that could improve progress monitoring and diagnostic screening, developing a District policy for grade acceleration and developing a communication plan regarding changes and future goals for staff members and parents.

Mr. Neeley thanked him and his team for their work on this committee. He noted that RtI is a mandate that helps students. Dr. Hall reported that the Leadership team will be moving ahead with the coordinator positions. The elementary coordinator will be combined with a Reading Specialist to be hired. The secondary coordinator will be combined with a second full time psychologist to be hired.

**Graduation Survey/IL Youth Survey –**

Ms. Johnson reported on the Life-Track 5-year post-graduation survey results for the classes of 2005, 2006 and 2007. An average of 72% of MHS graduates responding to the survey had graduated from college within the five years after graduation. 28% had taken CTE (business/vocational) courses while at MHS, while 32% have changed majors or career directions. Over 90% felt MHS provided average to excellent counseling/guidance services. An average of 86% felt MHS provided a safe environment in the excellent/good categories. 11% felt the safety was average. Two areas of concern include providing a drug-free environment ratings of below average or needs improvement has increased from 10% to 16%; and utilization of technology ratings of below average or needs improvement increased from 2% to 7.7%.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Illinois Youth Survey is given to 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students as part of a state-wide survey. MHS results compare very positively to statewide results. Negative behaviors are lower than state averages while positive behaviors are higher. 89% of sophomores and 94% of seniors feel safe at MHS. 85% of sophomores and 88% of seniors report their family has clear rules about alcohol and drug use. 25% of sophomores and 34% of seniors reported substance use involves alcohol with 25% of sophomores and 34% of seniors reporting use within the past 30 days. In general, the incidences of positive behaviors remain relatively stable, while incidences of negative behaviors increase slightly from sophomore year to senior year.

Ms. Johnson noted that results of the surveys will be discussed by the focus groups at the high school.

**Athletic Budget Info/Update –**

Mr. Prichard reported on the athletic budget noting that the aim is for across the board equity. This year saw the first increase in the athletic budget since 1998. Mr. Prichard commended the coaches, as they do a good job with the amounts allowed them. Also noted was the Athletic Booster Club gives each sport \$750/year, but also take specific requests from individual sports.

**March 11 Inservice Update –**

Mr. Smock reported on the agenda for the inservice day planned for March 11. Certified staff will be trained on the Danielson model for teacher evaluation. Evaluation committee members and administrators will be conducting training in the morning on the four domains of the model. In the afternoon, teachers will watch two videos of teachers teaching a class, then evaluate and rate them under the components of Danielson's domains two and three. They will then compare their scores with the experts and discuss.

Dr. Hall commended the evaluation committee for their hard work throughout this school year. She noted the model has been tweaked for our district and reminded the Board that the evaluation changes are mandated by the state under PERA (Performance Evaluation Reform Act). Dr. Hall commended Mr. Smock for organizing the inservice day and for single handedly retooling the seniority list which was also required by law.

**President's Report –**

Mr. Neeley announced that he and Dr. Hall recognized Jessica Shopiro, science teacher at the Jr. High, for leading her exploratory class in a recycling project. The project resulted in a pilot program this semester at the Jr. High using bio-degradable plates instead of Styrofoam.

Mr. Neeley and Dr. Hall also recognized Mary Jo Proctor, FCS teacher at MHS, for her efforts in organizing post-game meals for the boys' basketball team and their families as well as her help with girls' basketball.

Mr. Neeley found it interesting to report that 6,000 bills have been introduced by the Illinois legislature this session. Few will be passed but some may include more mandates for schools.

Mr. Neeley reported that the Central IL Valley Division meeting of the IASB directors will meet tomorrow evening at Hickory Grove School in Dunlap. The school board candidates will be attending to take part in a candidates' workshop.

In light of the many uses of MPTV, the board asked Dr. Hall to research costs of video broadcasting board meetings and to report at a future meeting. Mr. Neeley noted that over 1,500 people watched basketball events streamed live on the internet via MPTV. He thanked the volunteers that made the broadcasts possible.

**Discussion Items –****709Connect Update -**

Dr. Hall reported on the area of communication:

- Carol Jankowski is working on an electronic newsletter.
- MPTV has been a great success.
- Board highlights are being sent to all staff; will soon be included in the Morton Times News and the Courier.
- The District is on Facebook and Twitter.
- A Town Hall meeting with the Superintendent is planned for Thursday, March 21, at 6:30 p.m. in the lower level of the MEAC.

Dr. Hall reported on other recommendations from 709Connect. Recommendations currently under study include:

- Long-term facilities plan
- All day kindergarten
- Summer school options at the high school for summer 2014
- AP Chemistry
- Alternate funding sources – County Schools Facilities Sales Tax – Dr. Hall has been speaking to many groups informing them of the County Schools Facilities Sales Tax that will be on the ballot for approval at the April 9 election.

**Kindergarten Update –**

Mr. Saunders reported on the Kindergarten pre-registration and screening process that is planned for Thursday, March 7, and Friday, March 8. This is a new process this year that will be centralized at the MEAC in the lower level. The kindergarten teachers have asked for a tool to screen students to gather baseline data. Teachers and principals will use the information to make more informed decisions when dividing classes for the fall. Mr. Saunders complimented the teachers for driving the process and designing the parent survey and screening tools. Helpful suggestions will be given to parents after the screening for ways they can help prepare their child for kindergarten.

Mr. Saunders reported that after seeking input from kindergarten teachers, the Leadership Team is recommending for the 13-14 school year one full-day kindergarten section for up to 16 students. The location and teacher for this section are yet to be determined. If approved, administrators would work with the kindergarten teachers to develop the entrance criteria and curriculum for the program. Students identified during the screening process as possible candidates for full-day kindergarten would be further assessed in May or June to confirm placement and participation by the students would be optional. Full-day kindergarten students would return to their home school for 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

Dr. Hall noted the need to begin next December or January to assess the program and direction to go after the first year. One section would be a good, first probe into full-day kindergarten. The Board agreed to support the recommendation. Dr. Hall thanked Mr. Saunders for his leadership in this process.

**Board Calendar of Tasks –**

Mr. Neeley noted the Board calendar includes a planning meeting for the month of April. It was agreed to wait on this meeting until after the new board is seated.

**Textbook Adoptions –**

Dr. Hall reported on the textbooks being considered for adoption, noting they will be on display for public comment at the Morton Public Library. The textbooks being considered are as follows:

- **Elementary Math - *My Math*** (K-5) and *Glencoe Math* (6<sup>th</sup>) by McGraw Hill
- **HS Statistics – *Modeling the World*** by Addison-Wesley-Pearson
- **HS Geometry – *Geometry Common Core*** by Holt McDougal

Mrs. Kaiser noted her appreciation for those that serve on textbook adoption committees. Her experience on the CAC committee has made her aware of the huge task involved in the adoption process.

**Proposed Tax Abatements –**

Ms. Kim Uhlig, Business Development Director for the Chamber and EDC, presented two proposed tax abatements, both in the Enterprise Zone in Morton, for the Board of Education to consider. The first project will include new construction on vacant land located within the municipal boundaries. The proposed Morton project will generate \$106,800 of new property tax per year. Elected bodies are being asked to consider 90% property tax abatement for 5 years to help offset the nearly \$350,000 additional cost due to soil issues at the Morton location. The total property tax abatement for the 5 years is \$480,615 for this project. The second project involves a current Morton business that is looking at an expansion that would create 15 new jobs. The proposed project will include \$1.5M in new construction on a separate parcel adjacent to their property. Elected bodies are being asked to consider a 50% abatement for 5 years on the new construction component only, which will generate \$26,800/year of new property tax. The Board of Education tentatively agreed to the abatements pending receipt of official documentation.

**Facilities Update –**

Dr. Hall reviewed the timeline for the heating project planned for the high school. The project is currently under study and plans are to go out for bids in September 2013, full start of project in May of 2014 after the last day of school and completion scheduled in the fall of 2014.

**Action Items -****Approve Reappointment of Administrators -**

Motion by Mrs. Kaiser, second by Mr. Appen, that the Board of Education appoint Faith Waterfield, Brown School Principal; Michael Saunders, Grundy School Principal; Susan Grzanich, Jefferson School Principal; Sheila Taylor, Lincoln School Principal; Lee Hoffman, Jr. High Principal; Chris Carter, Asst. Principal at Morton Junior High; Marjorie Johnson, Morton High School Principal; Adam Eucker, Administrative Assistant at Morton High School; Josh Gschwend, Administrative Assistant at Morton High School; Greg Prichard, Administrative Assistant/Athletic Director at Morton High School; Dana Ashby, Director of Special Education; Craig Smock, Assistant Superintendent; and Dr. Troy Teater, Director of Research and Information Services for the 2013-2014 school year.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea 6

Nay 1

Motion carried.

Mr. Neeley thanked the administrators for their hard work throughout the year.



Motion by Mr. Appen, second by Mrs. Kaiser, that the Board of Education return to regular session.

Roll Call Vote:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0

Motion carried. The board returned to regular session at 10:34 p.m.

**Adjournment -**

Motion by Mr. Appen, second by Mrs. Kaeb, that the meeting be adjourned.

Voice Vote:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Joyce Kaiser, Secretary

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Thomas Neeley, President