

## **MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709**

**November 5, 2013**

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

### **REGULAR MEETING –**

President Clint Heinold called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Clint Heinold, Mr. Tim Taylor, Mrs. Michelle Bernier,  
Mr. Shaun Bill, Mr. Tom Neeley, Mrs. Kelly Scarfe

Member arriving late: Mr. John Appen – 6:55 p.m.

### **Reports –**

#### **Administrative –**

Dr. Hall reported that Morton High School has been named one of the top 50 high schools in the state by the Chicago Sun times. She commended the students, staff and parents.

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

Dr. Hall reported there was one Freedom of Information request from the National Bureau of Economic Research for copies of previous collective bargaining agreements with the MEA dating back to 2001. The information was provided via the district website.

#### **School Board Member Recognition –**

Dr. Hall reported that November 15 is School Board Member Recognition Day and she wanted to acknowledge the current school board members. They are hardworking and dedicated volunteers who spend much of their own time preparing for meetings. She thanked them for their service.

#### **National Merit Recognition –**

High School principal, Marjorie Johnson, reported that there are two National Merit Commended students this year. Alyse Berry and Isabella Jackson are in the top 32,000 students in the nation that took the PSAT during their sophomore year. Ms. Berry was in attendance and was congratulated by the Board of Education.

**MHS Band Recognition –**

Senior class members of the MHS Marching Band were present. Director, Jeff Neavor, thanked the parents and the marching band staff. He reported the marching band won its 9<sup>th</sup> state championship and numerous other awards throughout the season.

**Rising Star Building Updates – Jefferson –**

Principal of Jefferson School, Ms. Susan Grzanich, gave an update on the Rising Star Continuous Improvement Process for Jefferson School. She reported that the leadership team has been selected and has been meeting. They have chosen the following indicators:

- Organize Team Structure to ensure continuity among staff
- Leadership Team to meet regularly
- Leadership Team to study data regularly
- Parent Pact – specific to Title I schools – agreement of support between home and school
- Dissemination of the Parent Compact – goal is to have it completed by beginning of April

Board members commended Ms. Grzanich and her staff for the extra work being done in the Rising Star process. Dr. Hall noted that the other three elementary schools will give their reports at the November 19 meeting, and the Jr. High and High School will report on December 3.

**RtI Update –**

RtI Coordinators Jill Lyons (elementary) and Alyson Baker (secondary) gave an update on the process being used to assess students this year and the new interventions that have been introduced. Both are new to the district this year and are facilitating teachers and RtI aides to bring continuity across the district. The focus of RtI is to identify problems early to prevent achievement gaps. MAP assessments, ISAT test scores, student reading levels and classroom performance are used at the elementary level. A diagnostic reading assessment was also implemented this year. MAP assessments and EXPLORE tests are used at the secondary level. Many RtI students at the secondary level are dealing with social and behavior issues. Both commented that the RtI aides are doing a phenomenally with the changes.

Dr. Hall thanked the Board of Education for allowing the administrators to hire these professionals to bring consistency, guidance and leadership to the RtI program. Mr. Heinold noted that the RtI program speaks to the Board goal of teaching to each student.

**School Report Card Update –**

Dr. Teater reported that the Illinois School Report Card is now available for each school. He demonstrated how to find the report cards on the district website under the “About”

tab. He encouraged everyone to take some time to explore the report cards for the valuable data available.

### **Facilities Update –**

Dr. Hall reported that the new bus facility currently under construction is on time and making daily progress. The concrete is poured and the building is enclosed. The project is on target for move in over Christmas break.

Dr. Hall reported that the next Facility Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for November 11. The committee has recently toured three schools in Dunlap, Washington High School and will soon tour Washington Intermediate School in Pekin.

### **President's Report –**

Mr. Heinold asked board members to come to the November 19 meeting prepared to discuss the sessions they will be attending at the annual IASB conference. Mr. Neeley asked that they also review the resolutions packet and be prepared to discuss.

### **Discussion Items –**

#### **Board Compliance – Board/Superintendent Relations -**

Dr. Hall and Mr. Heinold reported they have reviewed the Board/Superintendent Policies and have determined that the district is in compliance. They will sign the form and place it in the Master Compliance binder in the District Office.

#### **Board Goal – Communication –**

Dr. Hall noted that as part of the ongoing monthly discussion of the Board of Education's five goals, this discussion would focus on the goal of communication. She reviewed the recent goal setting and planning activities regarding communication. The goal states – "Provide open and meaningful two-way communication with all members of our community."

- The district will commit to a focused effort to educate the community about board work and issues facing public education.
- The district will continue to enhance and utilize communication through a variety of tools to promote transparency and understanding.

Dr. Hall reported that over the past year the district has implemented:

- District Facebook page and a Twitter account
- MP-TV – Programs are available locally on cable stations Comcast Channel 20 and iTV3 Channel 21. Programs are also available live and on demand through the online streaming feature on the Internet.
- Electronic Newsletter – "Constant Contact" – sent out once a month to anyone

- providing an email address to the district.
- Superintendent's weekly column in the *Morton Times News*.
- Key Communicators meeting – first meeting was held recently. Dr. Hall emphasized this meeting is open to anyone. The next meeting will be held on January 23, 2014.

Board members offered suggestions for continuing to increase two-way communication with those not connected with the district. Suggestions included – continue to meet with different groups that meet throughout the community; linking the *Morton Times* article to Facebook; video streaming the Key Communicators meeting; board members should engage those they come in contact with concerning district issues – keep lines of communication open.

### **Action Items –**

#### **Approve Acquisition of Land–**

Dr. Hall noted this is a historic vote by the Board of Education. She thanked Jim Benckendorf for his guidance throughout the entire process. Mr. Neeley gave the history of the Board of Education's long journey to purchase property. Several different sites were considered since 2008, but the Board stepped up its pace in the past year after realizing prices for land was on the rise and availability was shrinking. It was the desire of the Board to find approximately 100 acres of land that would not become landlocked. Considerations included terrain, drainage, availability of infrastructure and access to the interstate. The terms and conditions of the purchase are outlined in the contract to buy the parcel of land on South Fourth Avenue, which will be executed upon the action taken by the Board of Education.

Motion by Mr. Neeley, second by Mr. Bill that the Board of Education approve the contract to purchase land, which outlines the specific terms and conditions of this purchase.

Board members expressed their appreciation for the vision of past boards in pursuing land for the school district. They stressed that the purpose of buying the land is to give the district options in the future.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea 7

Nay 0

Motion carried.

The Board expressed their appreciation to the Yordy family for their patience with the process. The purchase of this land represents an investment in the future of the children attending school in the Morton 709 School District.

**Approve 2014-2015 Tentative Budget and 2013 Tentative Levy –**

Dr. Hall reminded the Board that she had introduced the 2014-2015 tentative budget and 2013 tentative levy at the October 1 meeting. She reviewed the assumptions and the timeline for approving the budget and levy. The county clerk has informed us that all of the old property will be taxed at a maximum extension increase of the CPI rate of 1.7%. Recall that the maximum rate allowable under tax caps is 5% or the CPI, whichever is lower. Last year the CPI was 3.0%. We have received a preliminary indication from the county assessor's office that the change in the assessed value for the District as a result of new construction for the year will be approximately \$9.2 million or approximately 1.8%. However, this amount does not reflect decisions on tax objections or additional property added since the date of the estimate. In order to protect the District without this data, levy calculations are made on the high side to allow the District to access all potential new construction. The law requires that if the proposed levy represents a 5% or more increase over the prior year's extended taxes, the District must publish notice and establish a hearing. This year the proposed levy is under that threshold and the notice and hearing are not required, however, a hearing will be held on December 3 for the purposes of inviting public comment on the levy.

The Education Fund expenses for this levy were calculated based on projected salaries and benefits, the two largest components of expenditures in the Education Fund. The details of the documents have been reviewed with the Finance Committee. The proposed levy will be brought back to the Board of Education again on December 3, 2013 for final approval.

Motion by Mr. Appen, second by Mrs. Scarfe that the Board of Education approve the 2014-2015 proposed budget and the 2013 tentative levy.

Mr. Taylor noted that being in a tax capped community, Boards are forced to levy to the maximum in order to not be penalized the following year. He struggles with collecting more revenue than is being spent and having significant reserves.

Other Board members commented that with tax caps, Boards have no choice but to levy to the maximum; having certainty from the state would be beneficial – not knowing what will happen with pension reform in the future; need to utilize the reserves to the full potential – take on meaningful projects throughout the district.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea 6

Nay 1 (Taylor)

Motion carried.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading and Approval of Policy 7:190 –**

Mr. Smock reminded Board members that at the September 3, 2013, Board of Education meeting, an overview on the minor changes in Board Policy 7:190 in regard to the restraint of students was introduced. At the October 1, 2013, meeting, the second reading and approval was tabled in order to further update and revise language in the policy. There are times when physical restraint of a student is necessary in order to prevent injury to



**Closed Session –**

Motion by Mrs. Bernier, second by Mr. Taylor, that the Board of Education enter into closed session for consideration of appointment, employment, compensation, performance, or dismissal of employees, student discipline, purchase of property, litigation and/or negotiations. (5 ILSC 120/2 115 ILCS 5/18)

Roll Call Vote:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0

Motion carried. The board entered closed session at 9:10 p.m.

Motion by Mr. Applen, second by Mr. Taylor, 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 9:48 p.m.

**Adjournment -**

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

Voice Vote:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Michelle Bernier, Secretary

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Clint Heinold, President