

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

December 3, 2013

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held December 3, 2013, at the Morton Education and Administration Center.

LEVY HEARING

Call to Order and Roll Call –

Vice President Tim Taylor called the Levy Hearing to order at 6:32 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Tim Taylor, Mrs. Michelle Bernier, Mr. John Applen,
Mr. Tom Neeley, Mrs. Kelly Scarfe

Member present via telephone: Mr. Clint Heinold

Mr. Taylor declared the Public Hearing open for the purpose of public comment and/or questions concerning the 2013-2014 Levy.

There were no audience questions or discussion.

Mr. Taylor declared the public hearing closed at 6:33 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING –

Vice President Tim Taylor called the regular meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

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

Member present via telephone: Mr. Clint Heinold

Reports –

Administrative –

Freedom of Information Requests –

Dr. Hall reported there have been several recent FOIA requests:

- Mr. Chris Farris – 4 requests regarding the sale/closure of Jefferson School and the use of his name in various correspondence
- Mr. David King – Life Track Survey results
- Kevin Wilson – regarding historical budget information

The responses to these requests can be found on the District webpage at:
<http://www.morton709.org/about-us/freedom-of-information>

Board members discussed the number of FOIA requests the district receives and the number of administrative hours spent fulfilling the requests. They asked that the amount of time spent be calculated and posted on the website along with the list of requests.

Tornado Aftermath –

Dr. Hall acknowledged those involved in the collection of food and clothing at the district warehouse for the tornado victims – Barb Getz, Rodney Schuck, John Brown and many others that volunteered at the warehouse to collect items. There was an amazing outpouring of generosity throughout the district and community. Several staff members and students were directly impacted by the tornado and several thousand dollars have been raised for them by our students and staff.

Dr. Hall reported that she attended a meeting of local superintendents to discuss the homeless and displaced students from Washington, Pekin and East Peoria. Mr. Smock is the point person from Morton School District to work with the Tazewell County homeless liaison for transportation of students.

Rising Star Building Updates –

Principal of Morton Jr. High School, Mr. Lee Hoffman, gave an update on the Rising Star Continuous Improvement Process for Morton Jr. High School. He reported that the leadership team has been selected and has been meeting. They have chosen the following indicators:

- All teachers will engage all students – more students will be more highly engaged more often in each class period.
- Students are engaged and on task – outcomes that represent rigorous learning for all students will be present in all classes.

Principal of Morton High School, Ms. Marjorie Johnson, reported that the leadership team is meeting again this year. Morton High School started the Rising Star process during the 2012-2013 school year. The two indicators chosen for last year are now fully implemented. Their team has chosen the following indicators for 2013-2014:

- All teachers differentiate assignments in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment.
- School Leadership monitors and evaluates the implementation of Learning Supports' programming through an on-going data collection system.

Dr. Hall noted that all six buildings have presented their plans along with the District plan. The process was started on September 3 of this year and all have worked very hard to get to this point. She thanked the leadership in all buildings and those that are serving on the teams.

Dress Code Update –

Dr. Hall noted that reports from each building principal concerning dress code compliance were included in the meeting packets. Students are complying with the dress code with few infractions. Board members appreciate the consistency throughout the district.

Drug Testing Update –

Dr. Hall reported that 108 students have been randomly drug tested since the start of the school year with none testing positive for illegal substances. It was stressed that the program is meant to prevent drug use, not to catch and punish students. The district would work with families of those that test positive by referring to counseling programs. Mr. Prichard agreed the program is important and recommends its continuance in the future.

Vision 20/20 Initiative –

Dr. Hall explained the Vision 20/20 Initiative. She is one of two representatives from the Central Illinois Division along with representatives from the other 20 divisions around the state. The Vision 20/20 Initiative is a forward-thinking process designed to unite the Illinois education community around a vision to improve education in Illinois and provide a common voice to guide state policy. The process is being facilitated and managed by the ECRA Group (Educational Consultants and Research Associates). ECRA provides facilitators at the Vision 20/20 meetings to guide discussion around designated topics, as well as having a long history of involvement with and support of public education.

There are three subcommittees discussing:

- Governance and Finance
- Leadership and Organizational Transformation
- Digital Learning and Assessment and Accountability

Dr. Hall is serving on the Digital Learning and Assessment and Accountability subcommittee.

Vision 20/20 can be followed on Twitter: @ILVision2020 or the website: www.illinoisvision2020.org.

Pension Reform Act –

Dr. Hall reported that the Pension Reform bill was passed today in the Illinois legislature. Parts of it may be deemed unconstitutional. Dr. Hall will pass along information on the bill as it becomes available.

President's Report –

Mr. Taylor congratulated Morton High School for being named one of the top 25 schools in the state by the Chicago Sun Times.

Mr. Taylor noted he had met recently with three people from the Key Communicators committee. They had a good conversation concerning district issues. The next Key Communicators meeting is scheduled for January 23. Anyone is welcome to attend. The next Facilities Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for December 12 with the last meeting scheduled for January 30.

Discussion Items –

Board Compliance – Personnel Policies -

Dr. Hall reported she has reviewed the Personnel Policies and determined the district is in compliance. She and Mr. Heinold will sign the form and place it in the Master Compliance binder in the District Office.

High School Swimming Co-op –

Athletic Director Greg Prichard noted he made the first presentation to the Board concerning a swim team co-op with Washington High School in September. He noted that 14 high school students have expressed interest in being involved on the team. He explained that Morton's financial obligation would be a per capita cost according to how many students are on the team. The cost per season would consist of a coach's salary of \$6,200 and a swim budget of \$2,500. The total would be approximately \$8,700 per season. Morton would be responsible to get its students to Washington and Washington would transport all team members to and from away meets. East Peoria High School may have students participating as well.

Approval for a swim team co-op will be brought to the Board in January.

Athletic Facilities –

Dr. Hall and Mr. Prichard gave a PowerPoint presentation concerning the current condition of Morton High School's outdoor athletic facilities. The bleachers and press box are a safety issue. Temporary measures have been taken to make them as safe as possible, but are in need of replacement. The board agreed that Dr. Hall should prepare a "menu" of options for design and pricing to bring to the Board in January. She explained that gathering information and pricing will not obligate the Board in any way.

MHS Career Class –

Mrs. Johnson reported on a course proposal at the high school for Career Exploration. Students have noted on ACT and PSAE surveys that the high school is lacking in the area of career planning. The proposed course would:

- be an elective with .25 credit.
- be 9-weeks in length – opposite Driver’s Education instead of study hall.
- be required to be taken by every student who signs up for Driver’s Education during the Fall or Spring semester.
- be optional for students who take summer school or private Driver’s Education- would be taken opposite a 9-week study hall.
- not be required for graduation but would count in GPA.
- be taught by the Business teachers at MHS.

Approval of the course will be brought to the Board in January.

Board Goal Discussion – Climate –

Dr. Hall reviewed the Board Goal of Climate:

- The district will recruit, hire, train, and retain high quality staff.
- The district will continue to foster a climate of collaboration, teamwork, and trust with the MEA and educational support personnel.
- Schools will maintain and expand opportunities for parental involvement and support.
- The Board will cultivate an environment of trust and respect with the community.

In keeping with the goals, Dr. Hall noted the district:

- has hired a spectacular freshman class of teachers.
- provides a mentoring program for new teachers.
- provides a professional development program for all teachers – i.e., technology (iPad training) and Common Core.
- meets monthly with the Labor Management Committee.
- monitors the Evaluation process.
- held a benefits fair in August for all employees.
- continues to inform staff on updates and changes with the Affordable Care Act
- communicates with the community through Facebook, Twitter, electronic newsletter, 709Connect, live streaming Board meetings and an occasional town hall meeting.

In addition, starting this month, Dr. Hall will be visiting two buildings per month to meet with staff. She added that each building is doing a great job connecting with parents on new initiatives.

Motion carried.

Closed Session –

Motion by Mr. Neeley, second by Mr. Bill, 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. Bill, second by Mrs. Bernier, 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 9:45 p.m.

Dr. Hall reported that the 2014 graduation ceremony will be held outside, weather permitting. The Board agreed to have a discussion during the summer for future graduation ceremonies.

Adjournment -

Motion by Mrs. Bernier, second by Mrs. Scarfe, that the meeting be adjourned.

Voice Vote: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Bernier, Secretary

Tim Taylor, Vice President