

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

October 6, 2015

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held October 6, 2015, at the Morton Education and Administration Center.

REGULAR MEETING –

President Michelle Bernier called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Mrs. Michelle Bernier, Mr. Clint Heinold, Mr. Shaun Bill,
Dr. Shad Beaty, Mr. Tom Neeley, Mrs. Kelly Scarfe, Mr. Jeff Schmidgall

Reports –

Administrative Reports –

Freedom of Information Requests –

Dr. Hall noted there are no Freedom of Information requests to report.

Recognition of Connor Vicary, 3rd Place Medalist, IESA State Golf Tournament –

Mr. Chris Carter introduced 8th Grade student, Connor Vicary, who placed 3rd in the IESA State Golf Tournament. Connor thanked the administration and golf coach, Jason Tierney for giving him the opportunity to participate.

Recognition of National Merit Scholar Student –

Ms. Marjorie Johnson introduced MHS student Tanner Corum, National Merit Scholar Semi-Finalist. Tanner is one of the top 15,000 students in the nation and 739th in the state after taking the PSAT test last spring.

Student Ambassador Update –

MHS Student Council Executive Vice President Kyli Selburg reported on the Homecoming activities recently held at the high school. She also noted MHS hosted the Mid Illini Student Council meeting. Jill McClain from the VING Project spoke to the group.

ELL Update –

ELL Coordinator, Sarah Strickley, reported that of the 72 students identified as English language learners in Morton School District, 44 are receiving services. 13 students are

new to the program this year and 10 students exited the program at the end of 2014-15 school year and are now monitored. Students must meet a set of state criteria in order to exit the program. This year is Ms. Strickley's second year as ELL Coordinator.

Crisis Management Plan Review –

Dr. Teater reported that the annual Crisis Management Plan meeting was held on May 4 with committee members and local first responders. The group reviewed evacuation drills completed by Jefferson, Lincoln and MHS, reviewed shooting simulations completed at Brown, Grundy and MJHS, and reviewed fire and hard lockdown procedures when simultaneous. Plans for this school year include:

- Evacuation drills by Brown, Grundy and MJHS
- Consider shooting simulations by Jefferson, Lincoln and MHS
- MJHS and MHS to discuss extracurricular considerations (evening events)
- Update consumables in crisis kits (batteries and food items)
- Make sure safety plans are still in each room
- Districtwide fire drill October 8th
- Revised plan sent out to buildings October 1st

Dr. Teater reported that the newly installed controlled access system at each building can be disabled in the event of an emergency.

Challenge Program Update –

Mr. Saunders reported that the Summer Challenge Science Program took place this past summer with 63 students participating. The program is open to 3rd – 6th graders who participated in the Challenge Program throughout the preceding school year. This year's Challenge Reading Program has 66 3rd and 4th grade participants along with 41 5th and 6th grade participants in the Challenge Math Program. To be considered for admission into the Challenge program, students must score at or above the 90th percentile on at least 2 out of 3 MAP tests the previous school year.

SIP's – MHS and Jefferson Elementary –

Dr. Hall reported that though the state has retired the Rising Star program, the District has developed its own template for School Improvement Plans. Principal Marjorie Johnson reported on the two goals the high school has set:

- Classroom Walkthroughs – by the end of the 2015-16 school year, all MHS teachers will have participated in 6 teacher classroom walkthroughs and the discussions associated with them in order to gather information from their teaching peers that they can then use in their own classroom to improve teaching and learning. This goal addresses two board goals: achievement and climate

- Writing Improvement – in the next three years, this will be a focus at MHS. The year one plan will involve each department agreeing to the attributes of good writing for the students in their classes. The year two plan will include a focus on intentional commonalities between teachers within a department. In year three, the number of students who are not meeting writing standards by 10th grade will decrease by 5%, to a maximum of 34%. Aspire data from the 2014-15 school year indicates that 70% of students in 8th grade, 59.4% of students in 9th grade and 39% of students in 10th grade do not meet the standards in writing. When over one third of students are not meeting standards in this area, it indicates a need to improve, which only happens with intentionality and focus. This goal links to the district goal of achievement.

Dr. Hall commented that the high school teachers have embraced the classroom walkthroughs. She expressed kudos to the teachers for their enthusiasm for this goal.

Principal Kate Wyman reported on the final year of a three-year plan at Jefferson School. The general areas of focus are comprehension, problem solving and character development. The goal is to increase the number of students meeting growth targets by 10% on the spring reading and math MAP tests in all grades. Data has indicated the students have difficulty with comprehension strategies, specifically summarization, textual evidence and making inferences.

Jefferson's theme this year is "Jefferson Patriots – Each One a Star." There are three expectations of students this year – the 3 R's – be Respectful, be Responsible and be Ready. Students are also being taught good manners and learning to serve others.

Mrs. Wyman thanked the Jefferson Leadership Team that has worked over the past three years on this plan. The team will develop a new plan for next year over the course of this year.

Update on Lincoln Elementary 50th Anniversary Celebration –

Lincoln Principal Julie Albers reported on plans for the Lincoln School 50th Anniversary celebration scheduled for Thursday, November 5, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. There will be a public open house format with a welcome and presentation at 6:00 p.m. Former administrators and teachers will be invited to attend.

President's Report –

President Michelle Bernier reported that the Board of Education met prior to the regular meeting for a Committee of the Whole finance meeting. Dr. Hall presented a first look at the 2016 Levy. She also noted the following:

- The MHS football team received a SAWA (Sport A Winning Attitude) Award. This award is used by officials, coaches and administrators to recognize acts of

sportsmanship. The team received a letter from the IHSA complementing them for their sportsmanship.

- Representatives from the Petersen Hotels were recently at the Jr. High. They complimented the custodial staff for the cleanliness of the building.
- The Joal Stanfield Tennis Complex was dedicated on Sunday, October 4, with many community members in attendance.

Mr. Neeley reported that he accompanied a group of Jr. High students to the Midwest Food Bank in Morton as part of the annual Help-A-Thon. He also noted that he and Mrs. Scarfe recently attended a meeting at the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) and he attended a meeting of the IASB Board of Directors, as well.

Discussion Items –

Auditor's Report –

Ms. Hope Wheeler of CliftonLarsonAllen reported the findings of the recent audit conducted on the district's finances. She noted a clean unmodified opinion on the modified cash basis. The district is in a good financial position, comparing assets to liabilities. The district's financial profile per the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is shown as "Recognition," which is the highest designation a district can receive from ISBE. The Board of Education will be asked to approve the Auditor's Report at the October 20 Board meeting.

Dr. Hall acknowledged Business Manager and Treasurer, Barb Getz, and her accounting team for their thorough preparation and success of the audit.

First Reading of Revised Board Policy 7:50, 6:310 and 5:70 –

Dr. Hall reported that the Policy Committee met on September 24 to review changes to three policies. The proposed revision for Policy 7:50 will limit the district's acceptance of foreign exchange students to non-private placements only, through pre-approved groups that sponsor foreign exchange students. The change will put into writing what the current practice has been.

The proposed revision for Policy 6:310 will change the dual credit policy for MHS students allowing for more flexibility and supporting the district's participation in the Strong Start Program with Illinois Central College (ICC). Dr. Hall noted there will be a presentation in November on the Strong Start Program. In order to participate in the Strong Start Program the District will have to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with ICC.

The proposed revision for Policy 5:70 provides clarity in the district's policy regarding employees' requests for time off for religious holidays. This policy has been in place, but the revision clarifies the language.

Board Compliance – Operational Services –

Dr. Hall reported that she has reviewed the Operational Policies and has determined that the district is in compliance. She and President Bernier will sign the compliance form and place it in the Master Compliance binder in the District Office.

Board Goals Discussion – Finance –

As part of the on-going monthly discussion of the Board of Education's five goals, Dr. Hall reported on the goal of "Finance."

The Goal states – Finance: Support student learning (which includes achievement, climate, facilities, communication) in an efficient and cost effective manner.

- The district will assume conservative financial projections in revenues and expenses in order to maintain current fund balances and provide contingencies for the future, as evidenced by the following actions:
 - *The district will maintain a balanced operating budget on a yearly basis.*
 - *The district will maintain and review financial projections for the next 3-5 and 5-10 years.*
 - *The district will maintain the highest financial rating as determined by ISBE*
- The district will seek out opportunities for financial partnerships with local businesses/corporations, examining alternative revenue sources, as well as explore the beginnings of a long term capital campaign.
- The district will continue forward progress with fiscal responsibility, taking into consideration that implementing new programs must be balanced with the ability to sustain those programs financially.

Intergovernmental Agreement with Village of Morton – Property at 225 E. Jefferson –

Dr. Hall reported that this is the first public reading of the intergovernmental agreement between Morton School District and the Village of Morton that covers the purchase agreement of the Apostolic Christian Church located at 225 E. Jefferson. She noted that the Village Board approved the agreement on October 5. The church will be moving to a new location and will demolish the current building on the property prior to the sale. The Village of Morton will purchase the property for the sum of \$625,000 and Morton School District will pay the Village of Morton the sum of \$200,000 for use of the parking lot. Dr. Hall noted the District's appreciation to the church for the use of the parking lot for staff and events at Jefferson School over the years. The agreement will enable the District to use the parking lot for many years to come.

Code of Conduct –

President Bernier noted the 9th point on the Illinois Association of School Boards' Code of Conduct: *"I will respectfully listen to those who communicate with the board, seeking to understand their views, while recognizing my responsibility to represent the interests of the entire community."*

Action Item –Approve IASB Delegate and Alternate –

Each year the Board of Education approves the delegate and alternate for the IASB Annual Conference per Board Policy 2:120.

Motion by Mr. Heinold, second by Dr. Beaty, that the Board of Education appoint Kelly Scarfe as Delegate and Shaun Bill as Alternate for the IASB Annual Conference for 2015.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea 7

Nay 0

Motion carried.

Consideration of Resolution Declaring the Intention of Morton Community Unit School District Number 709, Tazewell County, Illinois to utilize the provisions of Article 20 of the Illinois School Code, as amended, to issue Working Cash Fund Bonds in an amount not exceeding \$2,350,000 and directing that notice of such intention be published in the manner provided by law -

Dr. Hall reported that as discussed at the September 22, 2015, Board of Education meeting, the issuance of working cash bonds is needed to complete Phase 1 of the Facilities Plan. The approval of this resolution is the first step in the process. The bonds will be repaid with the 2016 – 2020 Bond and Interest Levy. The intent is to transfer the bond proceeds into the O&M Fund and utilize for Phase 1 of the Facilities Plan. A separate bond hearing will be held on October 20, 2015. Dr. Hall noted that historically the district has issued working cash bonds every two years and with a term of two years. These bonds will be issued for a five year term. Dr. Hall emphasized that issuing working cash bonds does not increase the tax rate.

Motion by Mrs. Scarfe, second by Mr. Bill, that the Board of Education approve the Resolution to declare Intention of District to Issue Working Cash Fund Bonds in an Amount Not to Exceed \$2,350,000.

Discussion ensued with concern from Mr. Neeley, Mr. Schmidgall and Dr. Beaty for the phased plan given the recent announcement by Caterpillar of substantial company-wide layoffs. Dr. Beaty suggested that Phase 1 be revised to add a gymnasium and classrooms to Grundy School instead of Lincoln School as originally planned. His concern is that

Phase 1 will be completed as currently planned, Phase 2 referendum will not pass and Grundy will not get the gymnasium and classrooms severely needed. Mr. Schmidgall suggested not issuing the bonds and using the \$3,000,000 in reserves to only add classrooms at either Lincoln or Grundy. Dr. Hall reviewed the reasons for her recommendation that Phase 1 start with additions at Lincoln School - there are over 500 students at Lincoln School with three sections of each grade (except 5th) cycling through P.E.; Lincoln has most all of the special programs within the District housed at their building with additional classroom space needed; Grundy has less than 400 students with 2 sections of each grade cycling through P.E.

Roll Call Vote: Yea 4 Nay 3 (Beaty, Neeley, Schmidgall)

Motion carried.

The entire discussion may be viewed on MPTV at the 1:20 point of the recording.

Consent Agenda –

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

- Approve Personnel Report
- Approve August Treasurer’s Report
- Approve Minutes of the September 22, 2015, Regular Meeting, the Closed Session
- Minutes of the September 22, 2015, Regular Meeting.
- Approve Bills and Payrolls

	Bills 9-25-15	Bills 10-2-15	Payroll 10-2-15
Ed. Fund	\$98,910.90	\$28,796.14	\$462,996.36
Bldg. Fund	80,660.85	--	34,802.85
Trans. Fund	13,973.36	219.72	14,933.00
Payroll Accts. Pay.	--	--	431,346.67
Tort	1,284.00	--	--

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Adjournment -

Motion by Mr. Neeley, second by Mr. Schmidgall, that the meeting be adjourned.


Voice Vote:

Yea 7


Nay 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shaun Bill, Secretary



Michelle Bernier, President