

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

July 20, 2021

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held July 20, 2021, at the Morton Education and Administration Center.

REGULAR MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call –

President Jeff Schmidgall called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Jeff Schmidgall, Mr. Tim Braker, Mr. Bart Rinkenberger
Dr. David Cross, Dr. Diane Krall, Mr. Jerry Rudd, Mr. Tom Neeley

Audience Presentations – Dr. Shawn Durbin – asked what process the Board uses to respond to those making audience presentations. He also stated that since December 6, 2019, Morton High School basketball has had bad officiating and wants a different process used to assign officials. **Ms. Mailee Smith** – shared her appreciation to the Board for the pro-active approach for full day, in person school last year. **Mr. Brent Dyche** – advocated for parents to be able to make individual choices for their children as far as masking is concerned.

Discussion Item C – Goals Discussion – Climate Update

Mr. Schmidgall moved Discussion Item C on the agenda to accommodate those in the audience present for this discussion. Dr. Hill noted that the past few months were spent developing a Back to School Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. Many factors were taken into consideration along with collaboration with many central Illinois school districts, attorneys, and insurance companies. Hundreds of school districts throughout the state participated in the #MakeitLocal twitter campaign to emphasize that school districts needed the flexibility to make decisions that best served the communities that they represent.

Dr. Hill shared Level 1 mitigation strategies from the plan that include: **parent/guardian rights and responsibilities** - making sure their children are sent to school fever-free; not exhibiting symptoms of COVID; and are not waiting on the results from a COVID test. Vaccination status of students and staff is private; however, proof of vaccination for students may be required in order to allow them to avoid certain mitigation strategies, such as healthy quarantining. The district will not pressure parents to have their children vaccinated and respects the authority of parents to make those decisions for their children. **Disinfection** of common surfaces and desks will be sanitized on a daily basis and teachers will encourage hand washing. Wearing of **masks** will be left to parents as to whether or not their students wear them while inside the school buildings. Masks are required on buses; athletics will be determined by the IHSA/IESA. The CDC recommends that students remain **distanced** by three feet. There will be times, however, when students may be closer, such as during lunch, hallways, and during some instructional activities. Classrooms will have seating charts with seats as far apart as possible. Morton District 709 will contact trace and notify those in close

contact (within 3 feet for over 15 minutes) of a positive case. Parents will be notified of the close contact, but students will only be **quarantined** if they exhibit COVID symptoms.

Level 2 Mitigation Strategies – In the event of a significant increase in COVID, additional mitigation strategies beyond Level 1 may pertain to a single classroom, single grade level, a single school, or the entire school district and will be dependent upon local and county-wide metrics. Increased mitigation strategies may relate to masks, distancing, quarantining, and group quarantining. It will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Remote Learning will be limited in accordance with the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) definition.

"Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that, pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-30 and 105 ILCS 5/34-18.66, remote instruction be made available for students who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine or who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, only while they are under quarantine consistent with guidance or requirements from a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health."

Students that need to quarantine for more than three school days will be able to utilize remote learning with their teacher(s).

Board members discussion included why no remote learning this year? Dr. Hill noted that student achievement when remote learning is not ideal. There are provisions within the law for instruction if students are homebound. The Morton Educators Association will help decide what the instruction will be if a student is required to quarantine.

Dr. Hill thanked administrators for their assistance in developing the plan. A local, common sense approach was used.

Administrative –

Freedom of Information -

Dr. Hill reported there have been no Freedom of Information requests.

20-21 Physical Restraint Report -

Dr. Hill indicated the Physical Restraint report for the 20-21 school year is available in the Board folder. Director of Student Support Services, Lindsay Franklin, is required to submit the report to the Board of Education annually.

Morton CUSD 709 has 4 staff members who are certified instructors in the use of Nonverbal Crisis Intervention (also known as Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI)), which focuses on verbal de-escalation techniques to prevent and minimize instances of physical aggression in students. They have trained 51 staff members (certified and non-certified) during the 20-21 school year.

Staff is trained to use verbal de-escalation techniques and trauma informed practices when a student is in a crisis situation. A student will only be physically restrained as a last resort when that student is in danger of hurting themselves or others. When a student is physically restrained, the instance is documented and reported to the parents, the Morton 709 Office of

Student Support Services, and to ISBE. If a student is restrained 3 times within a 30 day period of time a parent meeting is held to review supports in place and what additional supports are needed.

Data Breakdown:

- 21 total physical restraints during the 20-21 school year
- 6 students were restrained this school year by Morton CUSD 709 staff
 - 2 students represented 11 of the 21 physical restraints.
 - 1 student had a one-time incident
- Three Kindergarten students, one 1st grade, one 3rd grade, and one 5th grade student
- Three students had IEP's, and three students were general education students. One of the general education students now has an IEP.

Superintendent's Report -

Dr. Hill noted the #MakeitLocal campaign throughout the state was an important part of the process in developing Morton's Return to School plan.

Dr. Hill reported on the progress of improvements to the softball field at Birchwood Park. Last fall, the facilities committee brought plans to the board for improvements to the softball field. With the uncertainty of athletics for the 2020-2021 school year, those plans were put on hold until 2021-2022 school year. This past spring, concerns were brought to the district's attention concerning equity between the softball and baseball facilities. In review, Dr. Hill noted the district spent over \$600,000 in 2016 for improvements at Birchwood Park for the purpose of creating a softball facility. In further study, it was determined that field dimensions did not allow for tournament play and spectator visibility was restricted due to the bleacher design. Three entities share the two facilities including MYBA, MGSA, and the Park District. Part of the work this past month has been developing a system to make sure that improvements, repairs, and maintenance happen on a regular basis in a systematic way. In addition, the development of a practice rotation that gives access on an equitable basis. Keach Architectural Design is developing plans to address the issues; two batting cages are up at Birchwood Park now.

President's Report –

Mr. Schmidgall thanked Communication Director Mike Bailey and those who assisted him in producing the current "Communicator" that has recently been sent to Morton School District homes. He thanked Mr. Neeley and Dr. Hill for their advocacy with state organizations. He reviewed two items from the workshop that was held on June 22 with IASB Representative Reatha Owen, including keeping an up-to-date Board calendar and implementing Board protocols.

Mr. Neeley asked for clarification on communication protocols when emails are received from the public. The Board member should acknowledge receiving the email and let the sender know the email is being forwarded to the Superintendent and Board President.

Discussion Item - A – Goals Discussion – Student Achievement –

Dr. Teater and Kristen D'Alfonso gave an update for the Goal of Student Achievement. The presentation can be viewed at this link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/12Wm5dVgwKRE9ENOF8jFwuT2WcxZ_1ZcP/view?usp=mail

Topics included - indicators of student achievement; District assessments given throughout the year; Reading, ELA, and Math attainment; Reading and Math growth. Ms. D’Alfonso reported on Response to Intervention (RtI) that included – August 2019-March 2020 interventions, then transitioning to remote RtI services; SOAR Summer School – 2020; Fall 2020 – benchmarking; Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions; total number served in 2020-2021; student progress in Math and Reading; and SOAR Summer School – 2021. Dr. Teater reported on Unfinished Learning or Learning Loss due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on student academic growth. <https://ecragroup.com/2021/06/14/unfinished-learning-student-growth/> Next Steps – Student Services – Special Education teachers are making a movement from supplanting instruction to supporting instruction through co-teaching and pull-out instruction. 7th-12th grades will continue to collaborate and co-teach with general education teachers. New tools to monitor progress for Special Education and MTSS are *Fastbridge* and *Panorama*. The entire presentation can be viewed [here](#) at 1:08.

Mr. Rinkenberger complimented the entire staff for the achievements made this past school year.

Discussion Item B – Goals Discussion – Communication –

This item was tabled until the August 3rd Board of Education meeting.

Consent Agenda –

Motion by Dr. Cross, second by Mr. Rinkenberger, that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented:

Approve Personnel Report

Approve Minutes of the June 22, 2021, Special Meeting; the June 22, 2021, Special Meeting Closed Session.

Approve Bills and Payroll

	Bills 6-25-21	Bills 6-30-21	Bills 7-2-21	Bills 7-16-21	Payroll 6-11-21	Payroll 6-25-21	Payroll 7-9-21
Ed. Fund	\$138,985.32	\$21,680.39	\$412,473.30	\$121,532.19	\$714,980.24	\$805,959.13	\$645,010.38
Bldg. Fund	20,728.37	10,249.36	167,527.69	219,181.31	51,922.80	56,890.97	57,816.28
Trans. Fund	4,061.89	618.56	106,124.61	6,116.88	8,396.65	10,546.09	11,311.72
TORT Fund	--	--	403,376.00	--	--	--	--
IMRF Fund	--	--	--	--	26,794.06	29,608.43	26,182.03

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Closed Session –

Motion by Mr. Rinkenberger, second by Dr. Cross, that the Board of Education enter into closed session for discussion of Personnel, Purchase/Sale of Property, Litigation, and Student Discipline. **(SILCS 120/2 115 ILCS 5/18)**

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The board entered closed session at 8:10 p.m.

Motion by Mr. Neeley, second by Mr. Rinkenberger, that the Board of Education return to regular session.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The board returned to regular session at 8:40 p.m.

Action Items –

Approve Non-Resident Student Per Board Policy 7:60 –

Motion by Mr. Rinkenberger, second by Dr. Cross, that the Board of Education approve the request for a non-resident student to attend Morton Schools.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Approve Non-Resident Tuition Student per Board Policy 7:60 –

Motion by Mr. Rinkenberger, second by Mr. Neeley, that the Board of Education approve the request for a student to attend Morton Schools for the 2021-2022 school year on a tuition basis for \$20,536.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 1 (Braker)

Motion carried.

Adjournment –

Motion by Dr. Cross, second by Mr. Rinkenberger, that the meeting be adjourned.


Voice Vote: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

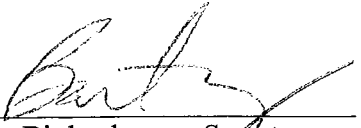
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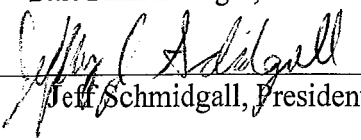
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Respectfully submitted,



Bart Rinkenberger, Secretary



Jeff Schmidgall, President