

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

August 17, 2021

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held August 17, 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 7:30 p.m.

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

Closed Session –

Motion by Mr. Rinkenberger, second by Mr. Neeley, that the Board of Education enter into closed session for discussion of Personnel. **(5ILCS 120/2 115 ILCS 5/18)**

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The board entered closed session at 5:36 p.m.

Motion by Dr. Cross, second by Mr. Rudd, that the Board of Education return to regular session.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The board returned to regular session at 6:00 p.m.

Audience Presentations -

Board members moved to the auditorium due to the number of audience members present. President Schmidgall opened the floor for public comments. Fifteen members of the audience spoke - Josie Kneller, Kelsey Murray, MD, Jason Bernard, Cody Rager, Tom (no last name submitted), and Kshe Bernard each asked the board to continue with the mask mandate. Ms. Kneller and Ms. Bernard also spoke on their concern for recent perceived bigoted comments made by a school board member on social media. Brent Dyche, Jerry Wenger, Lindsey (no last name submitted), Andrea Roth, Eric Larson, Eric Osterman, Chad Bell, Matt Meyers, and Anonymous (no name submitted) spoke in favor of local control and parental choice of wearing masks in school. The archived meeting may be viewed [here](#) at 2:30.

Reports -

Administrative –

Superintendent's Report -

Dr. Hill thanked everyone in the audience for attending and for the manner in which they handled their comments. He thanked administrators and staff for their cooperation at the

start of the school year. The staff was prepared for the challenging circumstances and rose to the occasion.

Dr. Hill reiterated the Back to School Plan that the Board approved at the August 3rd meeting. He explained that it is a multi-tier plan, not a mask or not-mask plan. Based on local positivity rated throughout the summer, it was determined the school year could begin at Level 1, which includes parental choice for masks. Based on transmission rates, the tiers could change throughout the school year. After the Governor enacted the mandate for masking in schools on August 4th, Morton School District started the school year requiring masking inside school buildings. The District's attorney advised to follow the mandate, as an Executive Order is the same as law in Illinois. The district could lose accreditation with the state and recognition with IHSA and IESA. There could also be liability to the district. Dr. Hill added it will be a goal of administration and the board to be looking for opportunities to implement local control. Dr. Hill will accompany several area Superintendents on August 18 to the meeting of the Illinois State Board of Education to speak in favor of local control.

President's Report –

Mr. Schmidgall commended the administrators for a smooth start to the school year. He noted that the back to school plan approved by the Board on August 3rd was well thought out and addressed dealing with Covid-19 at different levels of positivity rates.

Discussion Items –

2019-2020 MHS Tuition Student –

The Board considered a request from a non-resident tuition student during the 2019-2020 school year for a partial refund of the tuition paid. The request was made due to the district having to go to remote learning during the last quarter of the school year due to Covid-19. The Board asserted the student received the same educational opportunities as all other students, and the cost to educate the student did not change during remote learning. The Board denied the request.

Goals Discussion – Communication –

Communication Coordinator Mike Bailey gave a report to the Board of the efforts made to communicate during the past year including –

- 3 *Communicators*
- Emails every Friday
- Potter Points videos
- Website Social Media
- Media Relations – Press Releases
- Communication Strategies with Superintendent

Mr. Schmidgall thanked him for his efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic the past year and a half.

Action Item –

Approve FY22 Tentative Budget –

The Board of Education reviewed the FY22 Tentative Budget at its August 3, 2021, meeting. The Tentative Budget will be put on display for thirty days and a budget hearing will be set for September 21, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. at the Morton Education and Administration Center.

Motion by Dr. Krall, second by Mr. Rinkenberger, that the FY22 Tentative Budget be approved as presented.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Board members expressed their appreciation for the efforts made by CFO Lisa Kowalski and the administration in preparing the budget.

Consent Agenda –

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

- Approve Personnel Report
- Approve Overnight Trips – MHS Madrigal Retreat; MHS Wrestling
- Approve Transportation Claim
- Approve Minutes of the July 20, 2021, Regular Meeting; the July 20, 2021, Regular Meeting Closed Session; and the August 3, 2021, Regular Meeting.
- Approve Bills

	Bills 7-30-21	Bills 8-13-21
Ed. Fund	\$152,338.58	\$282,463.69
Bldg. Fund	373,924.56	602,273.71
Trans. Fund	19,485.34	20,286.33
TORT	148.00	--

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 Litigation and Personnel. **(5ILCS 120/2 115 ILCS 5/18)**

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The board entered closed session at 7:47 p.m.

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

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The board returned to regular session at 8:55 p.m.

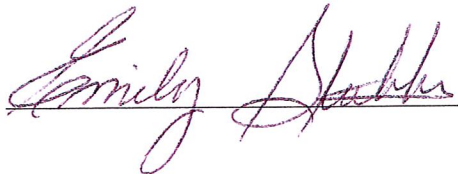
Adjournment –

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

Voice Vote: Yea 7 Nay 0


Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Recorded by,

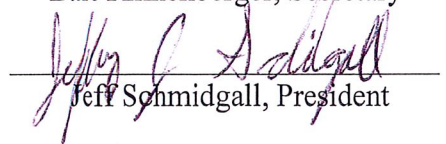


Emily Braker

Respectfully submitted,



Bart Rinkenberger, Secretary



Jeff Schmidgall, President