

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

January 25, 2022

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held January 25, 2022, at the Morton Education and Administration Center.

REGULAR MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call –

President Tim Braker called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Tim Braker, Dr. David Cross, Mr. Bart Rinkenberger
Dr. Diane Krall, Mrs. Amanda Leman, Mr. Tom Neeley, Mr. Jerry Rudd

Audience Presentations – Melinda Worsham, former district employee, spoke to the Board concerning the details of her resignation last fall.

Reports -

Administrative –

Superintendent's Report –

Dr. Hill reported that:

- the MHS Symphonic Strings Ensemble and the MJHS Jazz Band were invited to perform at the Illinois Music Education Association conference in Peoria this week. It is a great honor for these groups to be performing in that venue.
- the litigation that Morton School District was named in along with 145 other districts may be decided as early as Friday, January 28. The case has a few possible outcomes – 1) face masks and quarantines would be optional for students that were involved in the lawsuit; 2) face masks and quarantines would be optional for school districts that were involved in the lawsuit; 3) face masks and quarantines would be optional statewide regardless of who is involved in the lawsuit; and 4) the judge would allow school districts to decide locally face mask and quarantine requirements.
- Governor Pritzker has vetoed a bill regarding extra COVID days for teachers. The bill has been sent back to the legislature for negotiations with unions with the possibility of allowing COVID days only if the teacher is vaccinated.

President's Report –

Mr. Braker reported that the Board had met earlier in the evening at Morton Academy with special education staff. He expressed the Board's appreciation for the efforts of the staff at Morton Academy to showcase their building and programs that take place there.

Discussion Item -**Facilities Discussion –**

Dr. Hill asked that the Board start a discussion and brainstorm ideas for space needs for Student Support Services (SSS). Director Lindsay Franklin gave an overview of the SSS programmatic needs. Goals include:

- ECE – support increasing numbers of students requiring early intervention services.
- SEL – expand social/emotional supports and provide a continuum of services within and across the district.
- Life Academy – provide increased vocational training opportunities to connect students with employment.

Immediate Needs include:

- ECE – 3 classrooms to support current numbers of students.
- SEL – 4 classrooms to support Morton Academy students from Guardian Angel Home.
- Life Academy – 3 classrooms to support Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) lab; leisure recreations; life skills instruction.

There are currently 7 classrooms throughout the district for these programs. Ideally, 15 more rooms are needed.

- 5-6 ECE classrooms – includes OT therapy space/sensory room; speech therapy space; indoor playground.
- 10-12 Morton Academy classrooms – includes de-escalation space (sensory, calming, regrouping).
- 3-4 Life Academy classrooms –includes job coach space.

Board members discussed options for housing the SSS programs together in one location including:

- purchasing/leasing an existing structure
- add on to a current school(s)
- build a freestanding structure near a current school
- utilize current district office/move district office location
- co-op with a local church to utilize its space

Mr. Keach noted that any existing building would have to be brought up to state code for schools. A health/life safety study has been done at the District Office and at the time of the study, it was cost prohibitive to bring it to code.

The entire discussion can be viewed [here](#).

Consent Agenda –

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

Approve Personnel Report

Approve Minutes of the January 18, 2022, Regular Meeting and the January 18, 2022, Regular Meeting Closed Session.

Roll Call:

Yea 7

Nay 0

Motion carried.

Closed Session –

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

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The board entered closed session at 8:17 p.m.

Motion by Dr. Cross, 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 8:50 p.m.

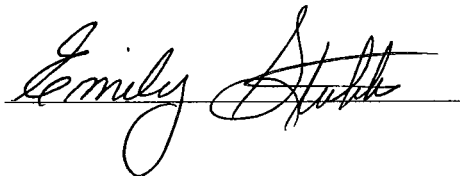
Adjournment –

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

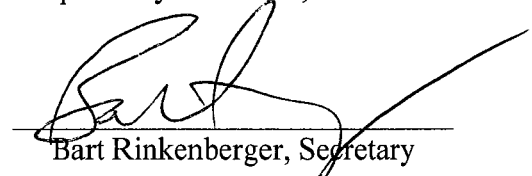
Voice Vote: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Recorded by,



Respectfully submitted,



Bart Rinkenberger, Secretary



Tim Braker, President