



Please find below a summary of the past month's professional development, curriculum updates, Portrait of a Morton Graduate recaps, and personnel updates for each of the departments.

CTE Department – Colleen Del Monaco, Director

July 2025

Career Ready:

- 2025 East graduate, Nadia Perez, competed at the FCCLA National Leadership Conference in the Culinary Arts competition this past weekend. Nadia placed in the top 10 as a National Finalist and was awarded 2nd place! Nadia took the stage to receive her plaque and was surprised with an award of a professional chef kit valued at over \$1000 and a golden ticket invitation to compete in the Junior World Food Championships this October, in Indianapolis.

Life Ready:

- Morton FC and West students explored all things CTE during Summer Bridge, completing various lessons in Engineering, Culinary Arts, Graphic Arts and the Education Pathway. Students were able to build relationships with their peers as they worked together through group projects.

Curriculum Updates:

- This summer, CTE curricular teams wrapped up their changes and edits for the 25-26 school year. Two new courses, Teaching Internship and Firefighting II, were developed to add to the Public Safety and Education and Training Pathways. Everyone has worked hard this summer to welcome our students back in August!

Student and Staff Accolades:





SPED Department – Carol Best, Executive Director

College

Our Resource setting will be improving this year. All students in Inclusion and LDI Resource classes will receive 0.25 pass/fail credit each semester. During this time students will be working on the implementation plan for STAR assessment.

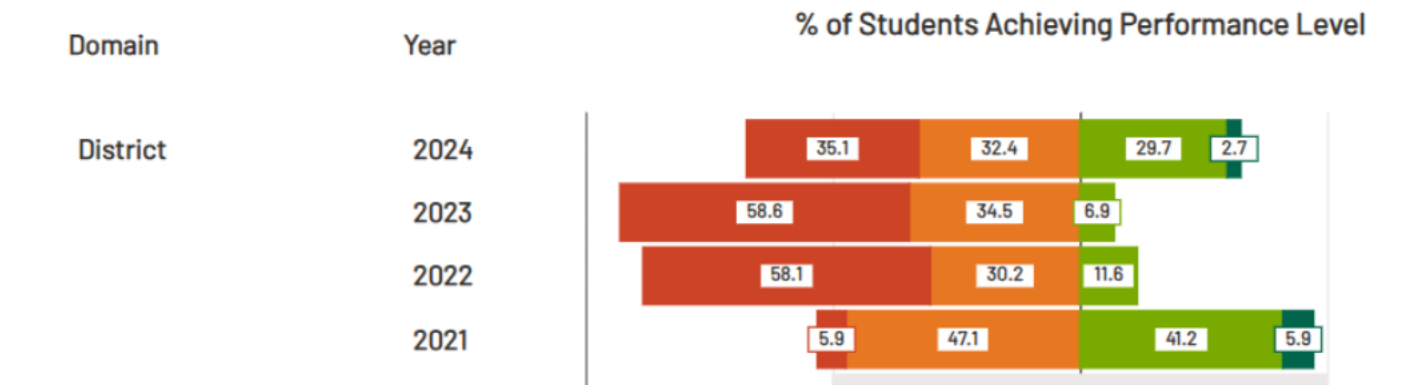
Career

We have been working to ensure that SPED grants for the upcoming school year are accurate and reflect the potential of our students with disabilities. Specifically, our DHS grant, Medicaid grant, and IDEA Part B.

Life

For the SY 25 26 JS Morton District 201 will increase the number of students approaching target or better on the DLM assessment. In 2024 64.8% of students tested approached target or better. For the SY 25 26 67% of students will be approaching the target.

■ Emerging ■ Approaching Target ■ At Target ■ Advanced





FROM THE OFFICE OF
Dr. Josh McMahon
Assistant Superintendent for Educational Programs



Beautiful People for ADHD Awareness





English Learners and Modern Languages- Melody Becker

Curriculum Updates-

College

- Each PLT worked together on curriculum refinement this summer. They uploaded their common materials to a shared curriculum Teams page to ease access and organization of the common syllabus, common assessments, and unit designs. The goal for this work is to maintain a common vision for the work in our department and also to help new teachers to learn about Morton's curriculum for our community.
- In July, the AP test scores were released. The AP Spanish/Chinese Language and Literature teachers and students continue to demonstrate their capacity! Their hard work and dedication throughout the school year clearly shines, even though the learning format and testing environment were different this year!

	Pass Rate	Mean Score	# of 3+	# of test takers
AP Spanish Language and Culture	99.3	4.43	149	150
AP Spanish Literature and Culture	83.3	3.58	10	12
AP Chinese Language and Culture	25	1.67	3	12

- Each year on October 1st, ISBE shares information about English Learners. [Here is an analysis](#) of the exit rate in 2024 from a variety of districts and compared with the adequacy rate for funding. This helps us to understand how our students are doing compared to students in nearby districts. It also helps us to analyze the exit rates for high school districts. A similar report will be shared when the 2025 data becomes available later this year.

Professional Development –

- 200 Special Education and EL Support teachers with their Content teachers will spend one hour on August 12th to learn different models of collaboration and plan for the new year.
- In the last few years, we have made an much more visible effort to hire and train teachers to add ESL and/or Bilingual Endorsements to their professional educator licenses. We were awarded the Elevating Educators grant and added language to the CBA to incentive teachers/administrators to add these endorsements.

We are also communicating our commitment to hiring these candidates across all departments. As a result, we have 57 more teachers/administrators with these desired endorsements in one year's time. If we look over the past 10 years, we have increased our number of endorsed teachers by 151 teachers. By increasing the capacity of our teachers to serve our students, it has made it more possible to meet the compliance requirements for EL services. We are still a work in progress and have more to do, but we can celebrate the steps that we have taken to show our commitment to our students and families.



Student and Staff Accolades –

- We are excited to welcome our new teachers in the English Learners and Modern Languages departments.
- Modern Language Teachers offered enrichment during Summer Bridge. This is a great opportunity to expose students to our department's offerings as incoming freshmen.
- This summer our Academia Bilingüe and English 1.5 students and teachers continued strengthening their academic Language skills in Spanish and English and building their leadership skills.
- Stefano Crancich served as an AP Reader for the AP Spanish Language and Culture exam. This professional development allows teachers to share that this experience informs their planning and instruction for the upcoming year.



Science Department— Eric Bjornstad, Director

Curriculum Updates –

- Revisions were made to Core/Honors Chemistry formative assessments for better alignment with skill-based common assessments. All summative assessments in both core and honors should be better mapped to formative assessments.

College Ready –

- Plans are being developed with ExploreLearning (Gizmos) staff to create and deliver Morton Specific PD. Planning is scheduled to take place on August 8th, and October 1st half-day institute day will be when the sessions are delivered. The goal of the PD is to help leverage Gizmos to help students excel on the ACT

Career Ready –

- We are continuing to work with Oakton College to complete the dual enrollment process for our 7 Pharmacy Tech Students that will be starting in the fall

Life Ready -

- Four current science staff and 3 new staff will all be attending Tony Riebel's presentation on August 5th. This should help our team better communicate current goals/practices to students and parents.



English Department – Megan Delaney, Director

Professional Development

- MTSS- Mustang Support planning- Teachers within the English Department teaching sections within Mustang Support attended a two-day training where they reviewed the scope and sequence for Mustang Literacy and Numeracy, focusing on instructional resources and strategies for intensive skill development, gained access to the Mustang Support Teams page for resources, as well as examined the shared student progress rubric for measuring growth.
- Dr. Tony Reibel- Assessment literacy training: First and second-year teachers in the English Department received training from Dr. Tony Reibel regarding skills-based instruction, constructing a proficiency scale with evaluative success criteria, and developing skill-aligned assessments.
- Disciplinary Literacy Training- On August 7th, second-year staff within the English Department will engage in professional development on high-frequency literacy skills tested within the ACT. During this session, teachers will develop a shared definition of each skill, learn new strategies for each skill, and determine a learning progression and success criteria for these high-leverage literacy skills.

Student and Staff Accolades

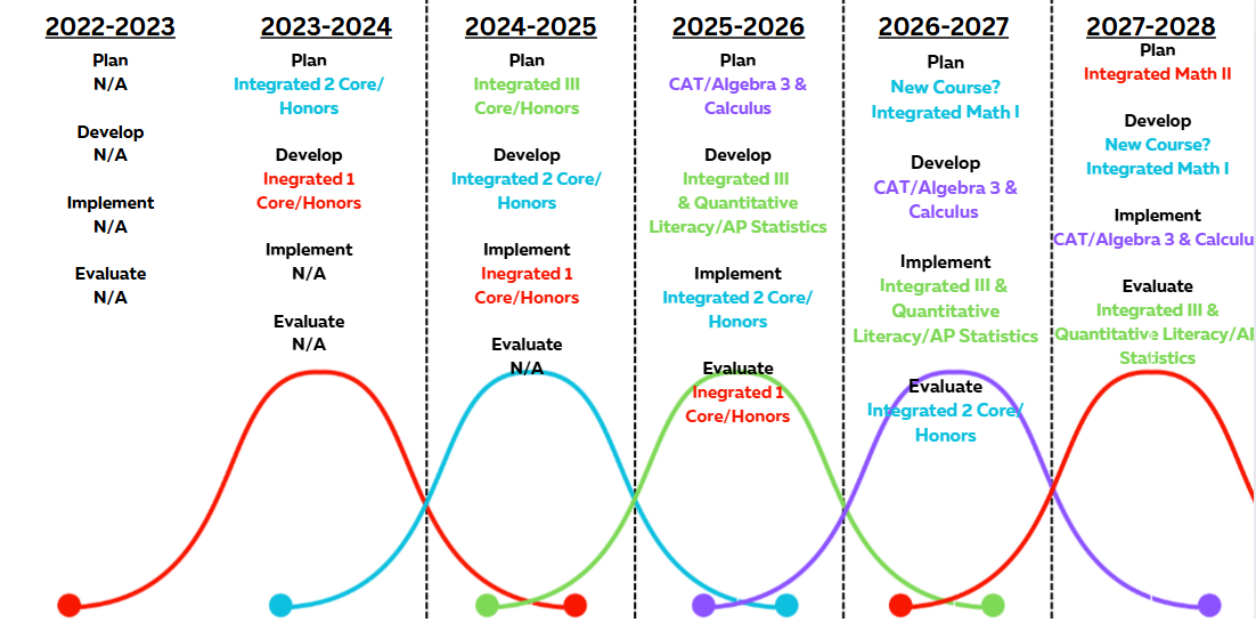
- Honors Summer Bridge Program- Congratulations to Mr. Brown who taught the first Honors section of the Summer Bridge Program! In this new section of the program, students worked on writing clear and focused body paragraphs while developing essential reading skills like annotation, re-reading and thinking critically about the author's purpose and character development. Students who spent time with us over the summer are better prepared for success in their honors English course.
- AP Research Certified Teacher- This Summer English teacher Antonella Palazzolo attended training and was certified in AP Research. This certification equips her to guide students through advanced research methods, critical inquiry, and independent scholarly projects, further enriching our academic offerings.



Math Department - Megan Holub, Director

Curriculum Updates

Below is the curriculum wave (our plan) for the Math Department for this upcoming school year:



We will be utilizing our in-school curriculum days to have teachers edit and update the curriculum for the courses:

- Integrated Math III Core and Honors
- Quantitative Literacy
- AP Statistics

***Career Readiness:** The department's focus on updating courses Quantitative Literacy and AP Statistics ensures students gain real-world math skills applicable in a wide range of careers—from business and healthcare to data analysis. The intentional revision of these courses through curriculum days reflects a commitment to aligning math education with 21st-century workforce needs.

Great things we've done:

Honors Bridge: This summer, we launched our new Summer Honors Bridge courses to support students transitioning into honors-level math. The program was well-attended, and our dedicated teachers did an exceptional job creating engaging and supportive learning environments. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both students and staff, with many noting how valuable the experience was in building confidence and readiness for the upcoming school year. We look forward to continuing this successful initiative in future summers.

See some photos below:



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Assistant Superintendent for Educational Programs



***College Readiness:** The launch of the Summer Honors Bridge courses directly supports college readiness by helping students build the skills and confidence needed for advanced math pathways, such as Honors and AP-level coursework. The strong participation and positive feedback indicate that students are better prepared to succeed in rigorous academic environments that mirror college-level expectations.

Professional Development:

The Math Department hosted several days for professional development in July and August. Here is a breakdown of the offerings:



FROM THE OFFICE OF
Dr. Josh McMahon
Assistant Superintendent for Educational Programs

Wednesday, July 30

SESSION 1:

9:00–10:00 AM

MTSS Mustang Support Session – NEW Teachers who have a Mustang Support Class

First year teachers who have a Mustang Support class: Jenna, Elizabeth, Steve, Martin, and Saeed- if you can- please attend this hour! You can check in with me first in M100 and I can make sure you find the location!

This is open to ALL teachers who have a Mustang Support class. If you have a Mustang Support class on your schedule, please plan to attend this MTSS-specific session. Highly recommended!

***Located in the Knowledge Center**

SESSION 2:

10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Carnegie Learning Session – First-Year Teachers Only

This session will focus on how to use Carnegie Learning tools and resources. All Integrated Math classes use this curriculum tool, so if you're new and teaching Integrated Math, your attendance is essential.

SESSION 3:

1:00–3:00 PM

Carnegie Platform Update – Open to All Math Teachers

We'll review updates to the Carnegie platform, now called the *Clear Learning Center*. Patti, our Carnegie rep, will walk us through how to use the new system.

If you teach Integrated Math, this session is especially important!

***Located in M100**

Thursday, July 31

SESSION 4:

9:00 AM–1:00 PM

Instructional Strategy Workshop – Open to All Math Teachers

This collaborative workshop will focus on creative, student-centered Tier 1 strategies you can implement in your classrooms. We'll also explore ideas such as Building Thinking Classrooms and identify ways to connect these strategies to our curriculum.

***Located in M100**

Friday, August 1

SESSION 5:

8:30-11:30 AM with our co-teaching consultant

***After 11:30, we can break for lunch (or work through until 1:30), and then continue to work together to plan for the year with your co-teachers.**

Co-Teaching PD: This session is ONLY for teachers who are co-teaching next school year: Dea, Katie, Jacob, Zach, and Jenna. During this time, we'll focus on effective co-teaching models, roles, and strategies to support shared instruction in the math classroom. This session will provide tools and collaboration time to help set you up for success this school year.

***Located in M100**



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 Assistant Superintendent for Educational Programs

The Math Department is proud of the teachers who attended the professional development days. See the list below of the wonderful turn out we had:

7/30/25 MTSS PD (Math)	
NAME	CAMPUS
Jessica Gonzalez	EAST
Sarah Schoel	EAST
Evan Gronlund	EAST
Jenna Valenti	EAST
Liza Garrido Schwartz	EAST
Ellen Casey	WEST
Justin Headley	WEST
Dea Qendro	WEST
Martin Orozco	FC
Steve Pardinias	FC
Elizabeth Brunet	FC
Max Burgess	FC

7/30/25 Intro to Carnegie-- New Teacher PD	
NAME	CAMPUS
Jessica Gonzalez	EAST
Sarah Schoel	EAST
Evan Gronlund	EAST
Jenna Valenti	EAST
Max Burgess	FC
Ellen Casey	WEST
Justin Headley	WEST
Liza Garrido Schwartz	EAST
Dea Qendro	WEST
Martin Orozco	FC
Steve Pardinias	FC
Jackson Schumacher	WEST
Matt Horvath	EAST
Jim Dobrzanski	EAST
Ally Hansen	EAST
Dayanna Sanchez	EAST

7/30/25 Carnegie PD	
NAME	CAMPUS
Jessica Gonzalez	EAST
Sarah Schoel	EAST
Evan Gronlund	EAST
Jenna Valenti	EAST
Max Burgess	FC
Ellen Casey	WEST
Justin Headley	WEST
Liza Garrido Schwartz	EAST
Dea Qendro	WEST
Martin Orozco	FC
Steve Pardinias	FC
Jackson Schumacher	WEST
Matt Horvath	EAST
Jim Dobrzanski	EAST
Steve Miller	WEST
Leticia Corral	FC
Jennifer McCaleb	FC

7/31/25 Engagement PD	
NAME	CAMPUS
Jessica Gonzalez	EAST
Sarah Schoel	EAST
Evan Gronlund	EAST
Jenna Valenti	EAST
Max Burgess	FC
Ellen Casey	WEST
Justin Headley	WEST
Liza Garrido Schwartz	EAST
Dea Qendro	WEST
Steve Pardinias	FC
Jackson Schumacher	WEST
Matt Horvath	EAST

Jim Dobrzanski	EAST
Steve Miller	WEST
Leticia Corral	FC
Jennifer McCaleb	FC
Jacob Paterkiewicz	East
Alyssa Morales	West
Jim Dobrzanski	East
Erica Coss	East
Letty Corral	FC

8/1/25 Co-teaching PD	
NAME	CAMPUS
Jenna Valenti	EAST
Jacob Paterkiewicz	EAST
Zach Kieffer	EAST
Katie Morris	WEST
Dea Qendro	WEST

Below are some photos from the Math professional development:





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Assistant Superintendent for Educational Programs



Co-teaching:

Teachers have been hand selected as co-teachers based off the master schedules that have been created already. The teachers that will be co-teaching Integrated Math II Core are:

West: Katie Morris and Dea Qendro

East: Zach Keiffer and Jenna Valenti

East: Jacob Paterkiewicz and Jenna Valenti



*All 5 teachers attended a professional development offered on August 1st. It was a nice way for teachers to get to know each other and begin creating collective commitments to each other, planning, and setting themselves up for success.



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Photos from the professional development:



***Life Readiness:** The co-teaching initiative in Integrated Math II Core enhances life readiness by supporting all learners through differentiated instruction and collaborative teaching. By fostering inclusive classrooms and stronger teacher partnerships, students develop essential life skills such as perseverance, collaboration, and problem-solving—skills they will carry far beyond the classroom.



Social Science and Fine Arts- Kevin Vesper, Director

Summer Curriculum Work – College Ready

Over the summer break, 16 teachers from the department worked for over 100 hours revising our curriculum to better align with the district's skill-based vision. The revisions also align with the "college ready" pillar of our Portrait of a Morton graduate, and the skills needed to reach it. The work completed was:

- World History has revised all first-semester assessments to better align with the reading comprehension skills essential for success on both the ACT and in the classroom. Historical comprehension will now be assessed through the analysis of historical documents, with students answering DOK Level 2 and 3 questions based on those sources. Additionally, course skill standards have been updated in the Formative platform and aligned with each assessment question to support PLTs in analyzing data and planning targeted classroom interventions.
- United States History has also revised their historical comprehension questions to help ensure success on both the ACT and in the classroom. In addition, they have updated the rubrics for *historical analysis* and *historical argumentation* by clarifying the success criteria. These updates aim to increase student ownership of learning and create more opportunities for meaningful feedback to enhance classroom achievement.
- AP Government & Politics fully redesigned the multiple-choice sections of their Unit 1–4 assessments to better align with the AP Exam format and expectations. They also conducted a thorough textbook review and recommended a College Board–approved text that best supports the needs of our students.
- AP Human Geography revised the language of their three essential course skills to better align with the College Board's expectations. Following this update, they completely overhauled the rubrics for these skills to ensure clarity and consistency. The team also developed new common FRQs for each unit to more effectively assess students' geographic analysis and explanation abilities. Finally, they created shared case studies to provide students with consistent opportunities to apply these key course skills.
- Social Science Biliteracy teachers met over the summer to conduct an in-depth review of the resources needed to better support their English Learner (EL) students. Based on their findings, key instructional materials were ordered to strengthen the Social Science Biliteracy program. In addition, teachers collaborated to share effective Tier 1 instructional strategies to enhance classroom teaching and learning.

New Teachers

The department is thrilled to welcome two new teachers to our team! Both bring a strong background in Social Science and English Learner (EL) education, and we're confident they will be outstanding additions to our department:

- Kevin Paulus will be moving from the EL & Modern Language Department to teach AP Human Geography and World History at the Morton West Freshman Academy.
- Nicole Jameson will also be moving from the EL & Modern Language Department to teach at the Morton West Freshman Academy. Nicole will teach AP World and Core World History.

Marching Band – Career Ready

Under the direction of Andy Boland, the Morton Marching Band held their annual summer camp at Morton West High School. The entire student marching band is committed to providing a more interactive experience during our football half-time shows. It takes a few years to develop the skills necessary to produce an exceptional performance, and the Morton Marching Band is committed to reaching that goal.



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Marching Band students practice outside of Morton West High School. The amount of students that have participated in this year's summer camp has nearly doubled.

Marching Band students practicing their marching techniques. A goal this year for the band is to march in formation while performing a score during half-time.

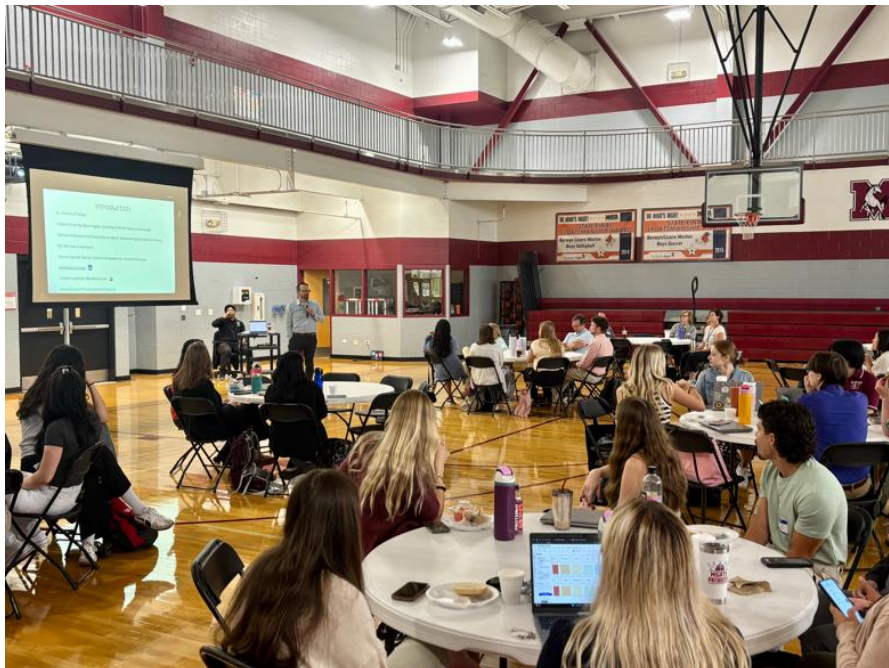




Professional Development



From July 16–18, Deanna Gordon and Jennifer Morrison attended the AP Conference in Boston, MA. They gained valuable instructional strategies specific to AP courses, which they will bring back to enhance both their classrooms and their team collaboration.



On August 5th, members of the department participated in a professional learning session led by Dr. Anthony Reibel focused on assessment literacy. The session explored strategies for fostering greater student agency and using consistent formative assessments to effectively monitor student progress.



Multi-Tiered System of Supports Department – Gloria Ramirez-Solis, Director

As we begin the 2025–2026 school year, we are proud to launch an updated and expanded set of academic interventions known as Mustang Supports, designed to help students build foundational skills necessary to become College, Career and Life Ready. This work reflects months of planning, summer curriculum development, and cross-department collaboration rooted in our district's Portrait of a Morton Graduate.

College Ready

To support postsecondary academic success, Mustang Supports focus on strengthening the literacy and numeracy skills needed for success in Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, and College Prep courses. These interventions ensure that more students can meet college readiness indicators, including GPA benchmarks and standardized assessment targets. By intervening early, specifically in 9th and 10th grade, we are creating a stronger academic foundation that enables students to engage with rigorous coursework later in high school.

Career Ready

Strong literacy and numeracy skills are essential not only for academic success, but also for thriving in our expanding career pathway programs, which include industry credentialing and workplace-based learning opportunities. Mustang Supports prepare students to engage in these pathways by reinforcing critical thinking, problem-solving, and comprehension skills. As a result, more students will be equipped to participate confidently in career exploration, internships, and technical training.

Life Ready

Each 7-week Mustang Support cycle incorporates goal setting, structured progress monitoring, and reflection activities that help students build essential life skills. These include self-awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and perseverance, key attributes that align with our district's vision for life readiness. This approach ensures that academic support is paired with personal development.

Curriculum Review and Updates

Over the summer, teachers worked on building Mustang Literacy and Numeracy interventions. Some of the updates include:

- Refined scope and sequence tailored to build literacy and numeracy skills
- New instructional resources designed to provide targeted support
- Universal design for learning (UDL) strategies integrated into daily instruction
- Rubrics and progress monitoring tools to assess growth every 7 weeks

Enhanced use of Star Assessments to inform placement and measure skill development

Summer Planning and Professional Development

To ensure a strong launch of Mustang Supports, the following summer activities were completed:

- Hosted a districtwide Mustang Support planning session to introduce intervention framework, routines, and materials
- Facilitated cross-campus collaboration
- Conducted curriculum writing days to revise lesson materials and align to essential 9th–10th grade standards
- Developed shared intervention rubrics
- Coordinated campus-specific implementation planning with building leaders ahead of Institute Days



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Thank you to all staff who participated in curriculum development and summer planning to make this launch possible. Your collaboration, time, and dedication are instrumental in preparing for a successful school year. These efforts reflect our district's continued investment in creating responsive and high-impact academic supports that benefit all learners.



Physical Education / Health / Driver Education – Matt Koucereck, Director
Curriculum Updates –

College Ready

The PE, Health, and Driver Education programs will continue to work on creating goals to help connect their content areas for cross-curricular work. These will be goals and outcomes that will be turned into products at PLC's throughout the 2025-2026 School Year. Through promoting our students and celebrating our students from the Leadership programs including the colleges/universities that they will be attending. These strategies have been in place and will continue to evolve for the next school year.

Career Ready

Goals and outcomes will be created through PLC's to present in Health Education and the Physical Education programs opportunities for students within these careers. Classes like Lifeguarding and Officiating are already being offered at Morton High School and how we connect these elective opportunities into careers will continue to evolve. Through our Leadership classes, they're embedding those skills necessary to communicate with other teachers and students, taking on roles of responsibility and cooperation.

Life Ready

In the Driver Education program, through mandates with the State of Illinois teachers had to promote more Highway and Construction safety through our Summer Course work. We had over 500+ students that received their permits from our Summer School programs running at West and East in June. Our fabulous team of Driver Education instructors: Mike McGlennon, Yvette Kirby, Matt Kocourek, Dave Waldron, Samanth Gutheim, and Yolanda James included topics like "Start Seeing Orange!" As Morton continues to follow these mandates and embeds these mandates into their curriculum, this will set up our students for success and become more safety conscience on the road. Physical Education will continue its work with Heart Rate monitors and tracking their steps and fitness through apps and other technology. This will promote lifelong fitness, health, and wellness, but can also promote more fitness and tech literacy.

Student and Staff Accolades –

New Teachers/New Hires

With retirement, comes a new teacher. The department is excited to welcome a new teacher to the family but has worked at Morton 201 in the past!

Morton East High School

Dan Vashinko has worked in our District in past as a Long-Term sub for an FMLA position at West campus and he's worked hourly in our Driver Education department. Dan has several years of teaching experience and comes from Grant High School in Fox Lake, Illinois. Dan will be teaching Personal Fitness, and Health Education at East campus.

Yolanda Pineda is the new clerical assistant at East Campus for Athletics and Driver Education. Yolanda is moving over from Operations at East Campus.