



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

College Ready:

Students in the Culinary Arts program demonstrated strong achievement through their participation in FCCLA competitive events. Students from both East and West Culinary and Early Childhood Education programs are advancing to the state competition, showcasing their technical skills and knowledge of industry standards. Additionally, students competed in proficiency events, with many students earning Gold status. These opportunities allow students to apply classroom learning in competitive settings while strengthening skills that support postsecondary culinary and hospitality pathways.

Morton West hosted the West Suburban Conference (WSC) Robotics Competition on February 20, 2026. Students from the Morton West Robotics Club participated in the competition and earned medals, demonstrating their skills in robotics design, programming, and teamwork while representing the district in a collaborative regional event.

Career Ready:

Students in the Welding program are currently registering for upcoming welding competitions that connect students directly to industry opportunities. Competitions include those sponsored by ETI and Local 597 Pipefitters. The first-place award through ETI includes a 50% tuition scholarship valued at approximately \$13,000, while the first-place winner of the Local 597 Pipefitters competition is offered a direct pathway into the union upon graduation. These competitions provide students with valuable exposure to industry standards and potential career pathways.

Engineering student Francisco Padilla recently had the opportunity to attend New York Fashion Week, where he connected with streetwear designers, musicians, and fashion creators. Francisco's work is influenced by the design practices, techniques, and technology he learned in *Introduction to Engineering Design*, along with concepts he is currently developing in *Principles of Engineering*. His self-funded trip highlights the creativity, entrepreneurial mindset, and real-world application of design skills that CTE programs aim to foster.

Life Ready:

Construction Trades 1 students have been actively engaged in their Rough Framing unit, focusing on proper layout techniques, stud spacing, and blueprint reading. Students recently applied these skills in a real-world project by constructing the theater set for the school's upcoming play. This project required students to collaborate as a team while demonstrating accuracy, safe tool usage, and effective problem-solving. Students are also continuing work on their model house project, which simulates the rough framing of an entire home and reinforces residential construction practices.

Additionally, Construction students recently completed a unit on residential wiring, where they learned foundational electrical concepts, safe wiring practices, and how electrical systems function within



residential construction. This unit provided students with practical knowledge and hands-on experience related to home construction and maintenance.

Career & Work Based Learning:

Professional Development

During the February 10 Curriculum Day, TSI teachers from across the district collaborated to revise and strengthen curriculum for the TSI program. The work centered on identifying core skills within the program and developing common assessments to better measure student learning and program outcomes.

On February 26, 2026, CTE administrators attended the Strong Together Conference hosted by the Illinois Education and Career Success Network. Sessions focused on the development of College and Career Pathway Endorsements, the critical role of school counselors in pathway systems, and strategies for engaging families in career-connected learning.

Dual Credit teachers attended the Dual Credit Summit at Morton College on February 27, 2026, where they worked alongside Morton College faculty to review and complete articulation agreements for future dual credit course offerings.

Programmatic Updates

College & Career Center highlights:

Work continues to expand community and industry partnerships that support career-connected learning opportunities for students. Five potential automotive partners were visited to explore placements for students enrolled in the Work-Based Learning Internship course.

In addition, bi-weekly partnership meetings with MacNeal Hospital continue as part of the planning and coordination for the student job shadow experience, providing students with meaningful exposure to healthcare careers.

East College & Career Center Highlights:

February Recap:

- Since the beginning of the school year through 2/27/26, the CC Center has had 3,574 student contacts
- Attended the Morton College Midyear Summit on 2/6 to discuss MC programs and work together on how to better transition our students to Morton College
- Hosted financial aid workshops for seniors and parents on 2-9 and 2-28
- Hosted three Morton College application workshops (2/10, 2/17, 2/24)
- Field trip to Benedictine with 40 students on 2-25 for admissions presentation and campus tour
- Continued to host financial aid assistance office hours every Tuesday and Thursday

Upcoming March Highlights:

- MEHS College Week



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Assistant Superintendent for Educational Programs

- 3-9: Field trip to Morton College for seniors
- 3-10: Using SchooLinks for College Presentations
- 3-11: Financial Aid 101 and Posse Scholarship Presentations
- 3-12: How to Get Ahead Presentations
 - Early college credit
 - Enrichment opportunities
 - One Click College Admit
- 3-13: MEHS College Fair (all grade levels)



SPED Department – Carol Best, Executive Director

College

Inclusion classrooms continued to celebrate student achievement by recognizing those who earned A's and B's in all classes, maintained 90% or higher attendance, and consistently demonstrated positive behavior. Student of the Month and Student of the Week recognitions reinforced college-ready habits such as consistency, responsibility, and sustained academic effort.

ASI teams continued implementing structured benchmarks and data-tracking systems to monitor student progress toward individualized postsecondary goals. This ongoing process ensures students are receiving appropriate academic rigor and targeted support aligned to their future plans.

ASI and FSI students partnered with Freshman Edge students in Green 3 for a collaborative community-building project. This inclusive experience brought together general education students, inclusion students, and ASI/FSI students and staff. Green 3 welcomed participants with games, pizza, and dancing, fostering connection, belonging, and peer relationships across programs.

Career

Vocational students in the FSI junior and senior work program prepared for Portfolio Evaluation Day, where they received constructive feedback from peers and professionals on their Career Portfolios. This preparation supported their transition into mock interviews and upcoming real-world interview opportunities. Work program students gained hands-on career experience by packaging food at the YMCA Community Market. This opportunity strengthened essential employability skills, including teamwork, task completion, time management, and following structured routines.

Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) collaborated to increase student independence and adapt assessments to better align with student ability levels. These efforts directly support long-term career readiness and skill development. Students in ED Resource classes are completing career research projects, exploring areas such as job responsibilities, salary expectations, and required educational pathways for their identified careers of interest. Additionally, several special education students participated in the school's underwater robotics competition at West. This experience promoted teamwork, problem-solving, and peer interaction in a highly engaging, STEM-focused environment.

Life

The ASI Severe/Moderate Older and Younger PLTs continued progressing through the PLT cycle with strong collaboration, consistent data collection, and reflective discussions focused on best practices to promote student growth.

Effective instructional strategies identified across teams included intentional vocabulary development, repetition for skill reinforcement, reducing the number of questions per page, and consistent 1:1 staff support to increase comprehension and independence.

Within the ED program, students received increased academic and behavioral support, resulting in notable personal growth. Aidan Ross was recognized for significant behavioral improvement, completing the first semester with zero discipline referrals—an unprecedented milestone for him. His achievement was celebrated with his family during the Student of the Month recognition.

Related Studies classes provided over 20 students the opportunity to attend the Chicago Auto Show. Students engaged in interactive experiences while learning practical life skills such as budgeting, money management, and understanding the car-buying process.

FSI English classes began February with instructional units focused on Black History, promoting cultural awareness and historical understanding.

Mustang Moola



Students continue to participate in Mustang Moola, MTC's positive behavior support system. Students earn Mustang Moola by demonstrating exemplary behavior, assisting staff or peers, volunteering for responsibilities, and consistently modeling school-wide expectations. Each week, three students are selected through a drawing and recognized. At the end of the school year, students will have the opportunity to redeem their earned Mustang Moola at the Mustang Moola Shop.

Cooking Instruction

Cooking instruction continues during second semester, with each class participating twice per month. Students engage in the full process, including recipe selection, menu planning, grocery shopping, and meal preparation, strengthening independence and daily living skills.

Community-Based Learning

Students participated in multiple community outings, including visits to the Shedd Aquarium and a local restaurant. These experiences provide authentic opportunities to practice community navigation, social interaction, safety awareness, budgeting, ordering, and payment skills.

Student Employment

Two additional students have begun the onboarding process with Human Resources to join the Food Service team as Substitute Food Service Workers. This partnership continues to provide meaningful employment opportunities that promote independence and workforce readiness.



English Learners and Modern Languages- Melody Becker

College

- All EL students took the ACCESS test between the end of January and most of February. They showcased their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in the hopes of transitioning out of the EL program with a composite score of 4.8 or better.
- EL students are finishing ACCESS testing. Each building has met its completion goal of 95%.
- This is a major undertaking during the months of January and February with more than 150 staff members supporting the testing environment. Special recognition to our teacher aides and content support teachers for supporting every EL student throughout ACCESS testing. Their knowledge of testing and logistics helped keep things running smoothly.
- **EL 1** students completed their study of *Seedfolks* by creating an original chapter and recording their audio response on Formative, strengthening their academic vocabulary and written communication skills.
- **EL 2** students are working on language and analysis. Students began a song-analysis poster project. They selected a song (student or teacher chosen), extracted five examples of figurative language, and explained each one using three sentences: (1) identify the device, (2) state it is not literal, and (3) explain the real meaning. Students also wrote the overall meaning of the song and organized all components into an artistic poster including the song title, artist, five analyzed quotes, overall meaning, and visuals connected to the song or music.
- **SLA IV** students created cards on false cognates where they had to say what the right word in English and Spanish was as well as draw an image of the meaning. They presented their word to the class.
- **Spanish II:** Students researched an Afro-Latino/a of their choice and presented various points of information about them such as their impact in society and important events. Students were asked to present their information in the preterit tense to make a connection with the unit's grammar component.
- **French II** are working on Nommez le citoyen/la citoyenne de mois (Citizen of the month), Speaking
- **French III** are preparing a slideshow presentation on a francophone country of their choice. Represented are: Le Quebec, La Principauté de Monaco, Senegal, La Suisse et - ha ha Paris.
- **AP Lang and Lit students** took a field trip to the Shedd Aquarium in order to provide authentic content while reinforcing some of our AP lang themes such as Global Challenges, Science and Technology, and Contemporary Life. Students were able to examine environmental issues relevant to Spanish-speaking communities, preparing them for AP exam tasks like the Cultural Comparison. Curricular connections: Theme 4, context 1 – Education and professional careers, theme 4, context 2 – Leisure and sports, theme 4, context 3 – Travel and social relationships, Theme 6, context 2 – Environmental issues, Theme 3, context 5 – Architecture. For AP lit, students were able to see real images that helped them think more on how they can use their knowledge to compare what they see with the literature they are reading in class, as part of an FRQ that they do in class.



Career

- **EL 2** students completed a career graphic organizer and essay, building research, organization and career readiness skills.
- **EL 3** is currently researching and creating cultural masks in connection to the novel, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer. Each chapter students will complete a chapter challenge. Students will complete reflections on perseverance and their process during the challenge.
- **EL 4** students are currently reading *Bodega Dreams*, by Ernesto Quinonez. Students are working on characterizations and preparing for a class trial. Students across the department have been provided with a variety of speaking opportunities, including preparation for mock trials connected to the novel, *Bodega Dreams*. Students are analyzing evidence that connects to characters within the novel, have created talking points to validate their ideas and will be actively debating which character in the novel was responsible for a murder in the storyline.
- During **Multilingual Resource** students began to start thinking seriously about their futures while building essential academic and real-world skills. By researching a college major, career, or trade program, students learn how to find reliable information, compare different pathways, and understand what it takes to pursue them, whether that's education, certification, or on the job training. They also explored salary expectations and key skills, helping them make informed decisions and connect classroom learning to real life goals – [Bilingual Future Pathway Research Worksheet](#)
- **SLA IV** students created videos explaining the reason why a word would be accentuated or not to demonstrate their knowledge on the rules of accentuation. Some students had difficulty with Formative since it wasn't uploading their videos after they were recorded on there, so the students had to "teach" the teacher instead of creating a video. Students also created signs explaining why their names were accentuated or not and presented it to the class.

Life

- Students are engaging in various forms of art to represent elements from the novels we are currently reading, including *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, by William Kamkwamba and *Bodega Dreams*, by Ernesto Quinones. These projects include but are not limited to: creating masks from cultures around the world, designing travel brochures to the country of Malawi, to mirror the setting in the novel *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, creating self-portraits and connecting to the characters' lives, through street art visuals, via the novel *Bodega Dreams*.
- **EL 1** students have been given presentations by an SRO and dean, regarding appropriate behaviors, school rules and consequences for their actions.
- **EL 1** students developed and presented their "How-to" projects, focusing on building practical life skills, communication, and step-by-step instructional strategies.
- **EL 3** students are working on their [passion project](#) and students "teach" their topic to the class. Some of them are even bringing equipment and doing a little demonstration
- **French I** students have been learning about Mardi Gras in Louisiana and the Cajun culture.
- **Chinese II** working on their school day vlog
- **AP Chinese** are learning traditional Chinese art
- **Chinese 1 and 3** spent one week on the Lunar New Year celebration with stories telling, calligraphy writing, paper cutting and poetry and songs. The project ended with a dumpling party and students receiving typical Lunar New Year gift red envelope. Festive and exciting!
- **SLA IV** started the third unit titled "Latinos in the United States of America" and began with immigration and watching the documentary "Which Way Home". After seeing the



documentary, they picked two migrant children and had to write who they were, the push and lure factors, and a reflection on their lives and situations. |

- **Spanish II** Students are practicing the preterit, and they created a presentation to talk about vacations they've taken in the past. |

- **Spanish I** students are working on family trees. |

- **Spanish III** students had an option between two readings on technology and had to create a drawing afterward. |

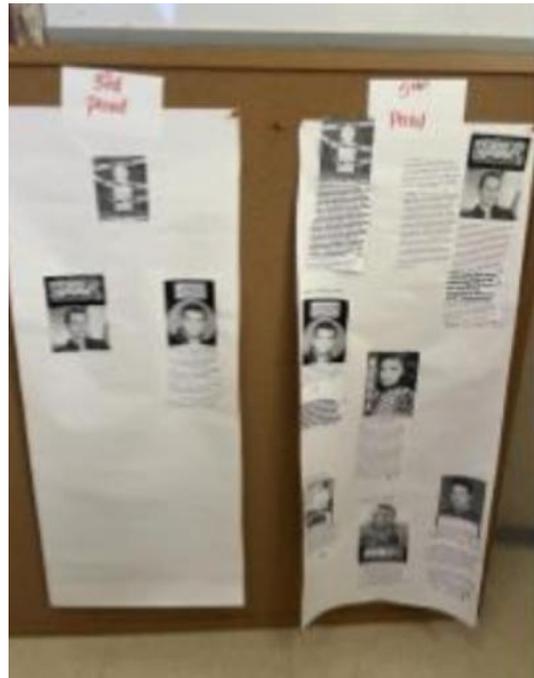
- **SLA V:** Students read "*Las medias rojas*" by Emilia Pardo

Bazán and "*La gallina degollada*" by Horacio Quiroga in class where they further deepened their understanding of social realism in literature. Through a series of activities, the students have been able to connect the series of events of the story to real life. As a post-reading activity for "*Las medias rojas*", students changed the ending of the story and presented their new ending through visuals and a new title to the ending. Right now, students are analyzing social realism through movies by watching "*Voces inocentes*". SLA V are working on projects about Social Realism. Students have to present a song that depicts Social Realism. [CITLAYCHRIS.pptx](#) |

Student and Staff Accolades



EL 3-Students engaged in creating cultural masks. Students researched and designed and planned their mask using art materials or recyclables. Tapestry advocates also stopped in to see the activities their students were completing.



EL 4 Students Preparing for Class Trial- Evidence Boards



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Assistant Superintendent for Educational Programs



Dean Xio Bustamante and SRO Karen Santos present to EL 1 students

Chinese: 新年快樂 Happy Lunar New Year
· <https://youtu.be/rBlx6-SpM0M?si=KqkIf6bebS95tsXY>



EL 3 students create travel brochures for the country of Malawi, in Africa



Various anchor charts from EL-supported math classes



EL 2 students working on language and analysis



EL 3 presenting on their passion project



Multilingual Resource Lab students worked on a reflection piece encouraged them to think about who they are, what they want, and why a certain path might be a good fit. Overall, this activity helped them develop self awareness and motivation, key skills they will use long after they graduate from high school.



Morton East Chinese students celebrate the New Year



Morton West inducted 110 new members into the Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica



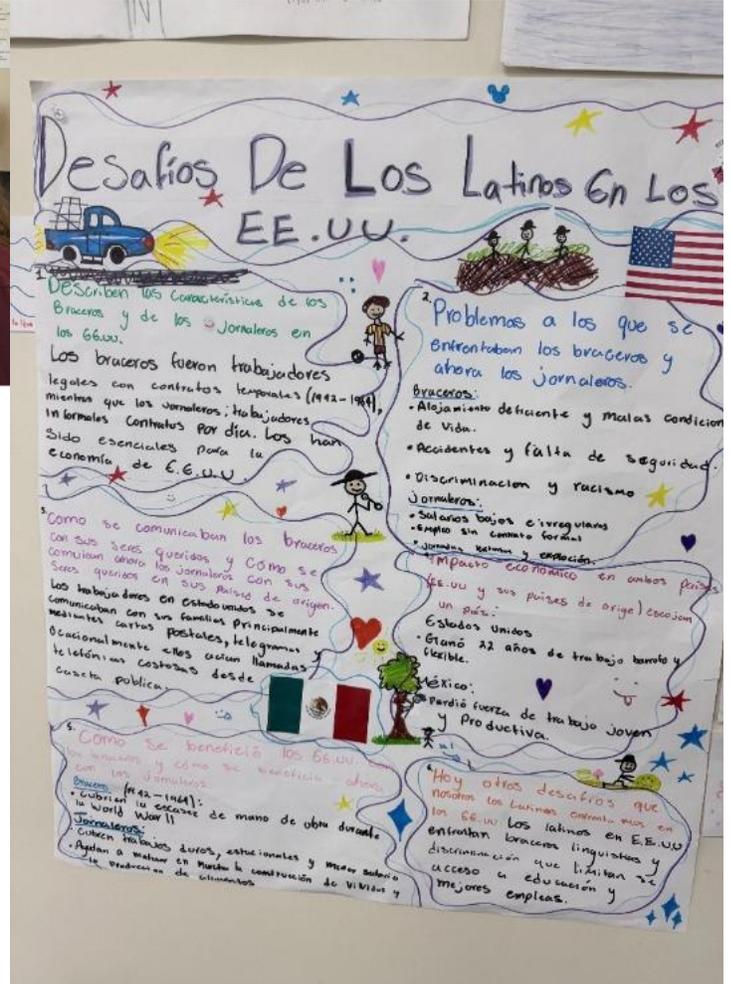
AP Spanish Language and Culture students went on a field trip to the Shedd Aquarium to prepare for the themes on the AP test.



Morton West students celebrate Chinese New Year



Spanish II prepare city projects



Spanish Language Arts IV students prepare presentations



Science Department— Eric Bjornstad, Director

Curriculum Updates –

- Curriculum & Instruction Steering Committee met on Feb. 24th. From this meeting, we were able to synthesize characteristics related to potential “Portrait of Morton Excellence,” as well as collect concerns regarding the gradebook transition to a 4.0 scale.
- The A.I. Advisory committee met on Feb. 12th. We were able to complete our overall needs assessment and have created the first draft of district AI guidelines for students and staff.
- Medical Interventions and AP Physics C curriculum teams met on Feb 24th and worked on converting assessments to skill-based format.

College Ready –

- Science staff at both East and West campus have been working on processes for our Practice ACT and Intervention Day on March 5th.

Career Ready –

- Medical Health Sciences students at Morton West continued their job shadowing of MacNeil Hospital employees, sponsored by Loyola Health. East Medical Intervention students are scheduled to start on Wednesday, March 11th.
- Pharmacy Tech Certification students are all working in their placements completing their clinical hours at various Walgreens locations.

Life Ready –

Biology students extract DNA from strawberries and bananas.





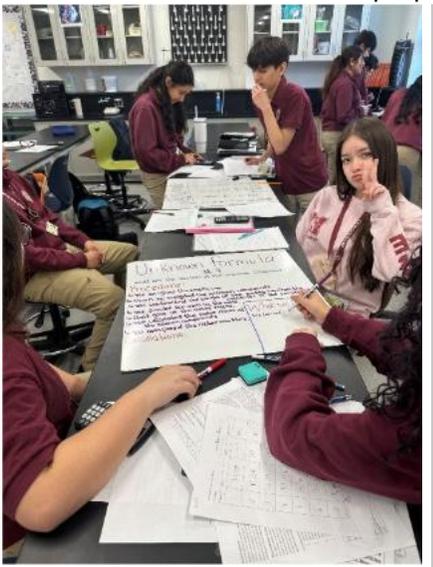
STEM Students launch stomp rockets to solve vertical acceleration problems.



Students doing Stoichiometry lab and calculations at East in Dr. Rundell's room.



Earth Science had to claim one prop to demonstrate erosion and relate to real world cause





Heart Dissection in PBS in Ms. Los' classes



1st time dissecting Iguanas in Zoology at West



Predator/Prey Relationships in Biology at West





English Department – Megan Delaney, Director

Professional Development

On February 27, 2026, English Department staff participated in professional development, selecting four sessions tailored to their individual interests and instructional needs from a variety of topics. Session offerings included *Universal Design for Learning: Practices for Our Community & Our Curriculum*, which explored UDL integration into backward design and curriculum planning; *Data-Driven Scaffolding in a Skill-based Classroom* featuring guest presenter Ashley Avila on strategic use of proficiency rubrics; *Accommodations with the "Best" Team*, covering IEP processes, legal mandates, and differentiation strategies; *Collaboration Time for EL and Inclusion Partners*, providing dedicated planning time for content teachers, EL support staff, and inclusion specialists; *Updates from Fargo: The Future of Skill-Based Grading* led by experts Allie Kollman and Hannah Nurmi; *Danielson 2022: Growing Towards Excellent*, preparing teachers for the upcoming transition to the Danielson 2022 Framework; and *EL and English Collaboration: A Journey in Literacy*, continuing literacy skill development conversations across all four domains. Additionally, the Institute Day included 75 minutes of dedicated PLT time, allowing staff to engage in cross-town collaboration with colleagues from their content areas and departments, fostering sustained dialogue and coordinated planning across the district.

Curriculum Updates

The English I and English II CORE curriculum teams are continuing their curriculum efforts grounded in the Understanding by Design framework, aligning instruction to WIDA Key Language Uses for social language and English Language Arts, as well as the Common Core ELA standards. Through this work, teachers have developed a year-long skills map that vertically and horizontally aligns essential reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, ensuring coherence across both grade levels. Building on that foundation, the teams have designed thematic units that incorporate a balanced literacy approach, integrating whole-class texts, independent reading, close reading, and explicit language instruction to support all learners, including multilingual students. In addition, they are collaboratively creating multi-domain units that purposefully integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening tasks, increasing opportunities for meaningful feedback and assessment while strengthening students' academic language and literacy growth over time.

Staff and Student Accolades

Joel Ruvalcaba, English teacher at Morton East, is being interviewed by NPR about the remarkable success his students have had with their podcast projects. In his classroom, podcasts serve as authentic literacy tasks in which students research compelling topics, write and revise scripts, and record and edit their work for a real audience. Joel's emphasis on student voice, storytelling, and collaboration helps students see themselves as creators rather than just consumers of media, and that ownership translates into high-quality, polished episodes that consistently stand out.

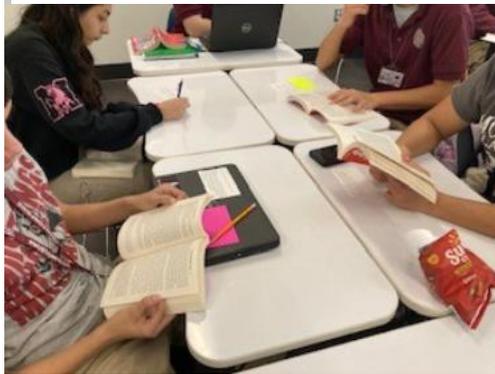
Also at East, Sophia Smith, Giselle Espinosa Carrera, and Mary O'Donnell piloted a new mentoring structure in which a mentee observes a veteran teacher alongside an instructional coach. During the lesson, the coach provides real-time, "play-by-play" explanations of the experienced teacher's moves, highlighting the purpose behind specific questions, grouping strategies, scaffolds, and checks for understanding. This new model transforms a traditional classroom expedition into a live learning lab.



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Dr. Josh McMahon
Assistant Superintendent for Educational Programs



Morton East teachers decorate the hallway to celebrate students during the month of February.



AP students creating an inferential timeline for *Sing, Unburied, Sing*.



Math Department - Megan Holub, Director

Curriculum Updates

We currently have three courses undergoing focused work: Quantitative Literacy, Integrated Math III Core, and Integrated Math III Honors. Each course is prioritizing the chunking of assessments into smaller, more frequent checks to better monitor and respond to student understanding. Teams are also intentionally embedding ACT-style questions across all grade levels to increase exposure and provide deeper, ongoing practice.

The Integrated Math III Core team has been aligning curriculum and assessments to the 90–10 skills-based grading model. Beginning next semester, Quantitative Literacy will begin curriculum writing to fully transition to this model as well. AP Statistics will continue refining its existing skills-based structure to strengthen consistency and clarity in grading practices.

In addition, Math–Science STEM collaboration is scheduled for February 26. Quantitative Literacy teachers are also participating in a MyMathLab demo and reviewing Pearson’s Quantitative Literacy resources. Across all courses, PLTs will examine assessment frequency and make necessary adjustments to ensure each skill is assessed at least three times per semester, reinforcing consistent grading practices and supporting career- and life-ready skills.

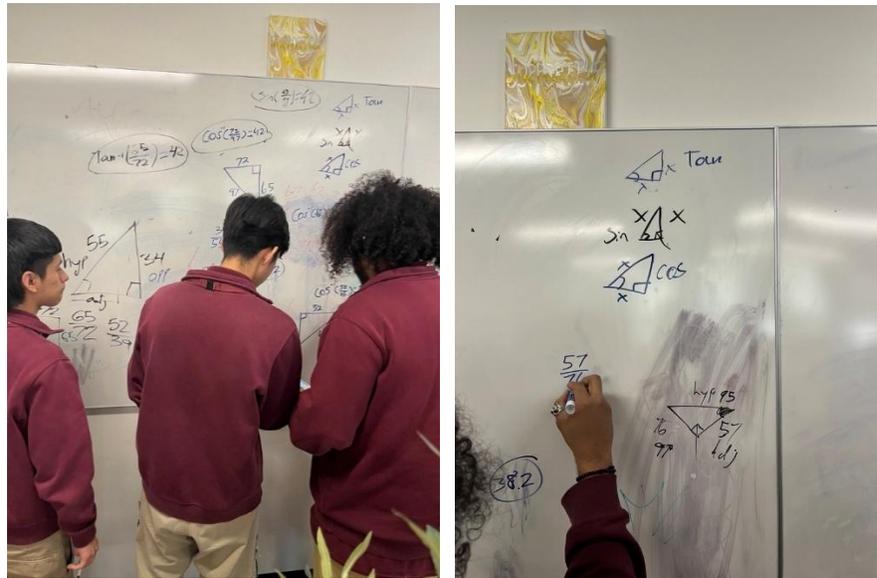
**Life Readiness:* Clear, consistent assessment practices help students better understand expectations, monitor their progress, and take ownership of their learning—skills essential for success beyond high school.

ACT & Assessment Alignment

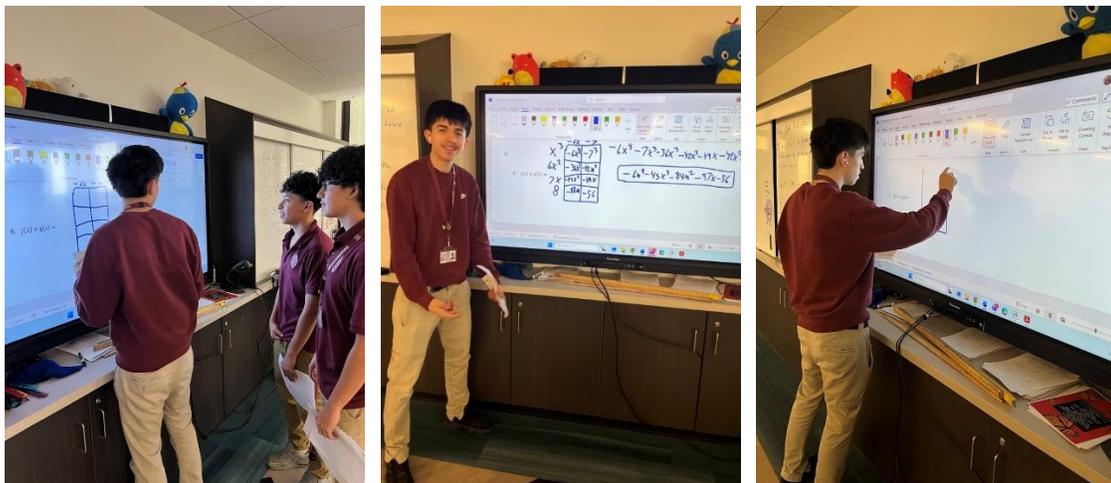
**College Readiness:* Across grade levels, teams are embedding ACT-style questions and chunking assessments into smaller, more frequent skill checks. This approach increases exposure to college-readiness standards while helping students build stamina and confidence with multi-step problem solving. Frequent reassessment opportunities emphasize growth and mastery — a mindset aligned with both collegiate expectations and career advancement.

Great Things We’ve Done:

Following the Full Day Institute Day in January and our professional development to **implement Building Thinking Classrooms**, which are classrooms where students work in groups of 3, standing and doing math problems at the markerboards. See the photos below from the month of January in Mr. Elkins classrooms as his students are doing math problems “Building Thinking Classrooms” style:



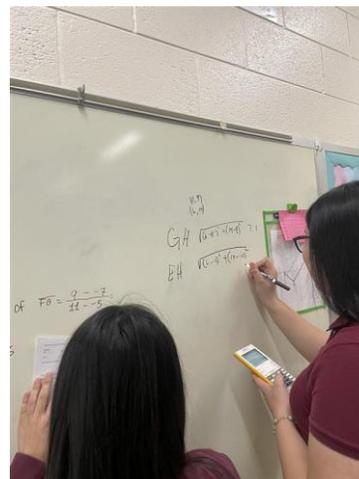
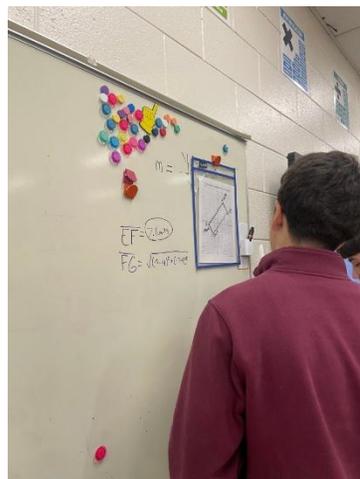
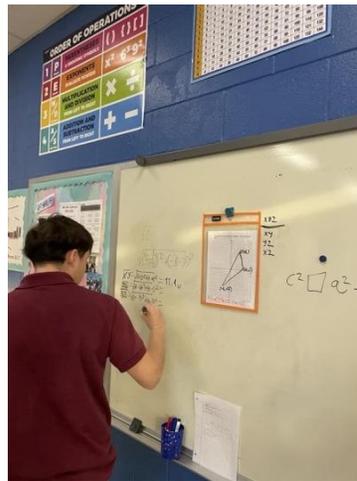
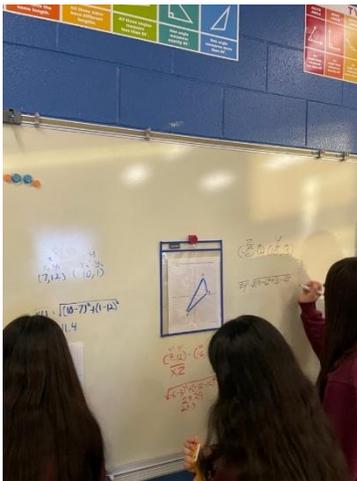
Below are some Honors Integrated Math 2 Core students doing quiz corrections on the Promethean Board in Mr. Elkin's class:



Picture from Mr. Dobrzanski's class doing BTC:



Ms. Cabral used random grouping to practice area and perimeter on vertical spaces.

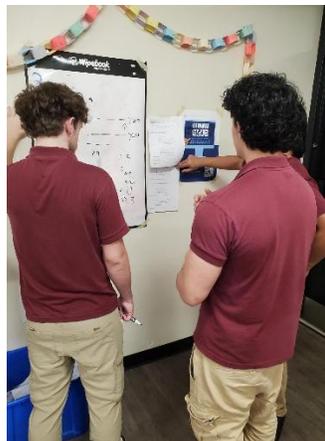




Here is an East department photo of us celebrating Dalton Elkins, Morton East Math Teacher of the Month:



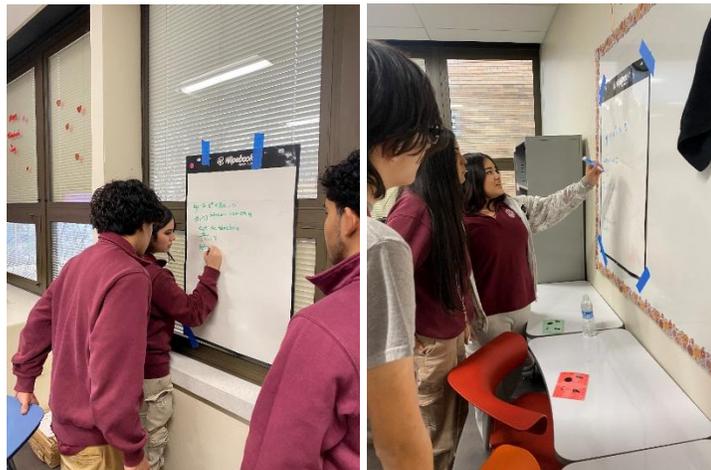
FC Building Thinking Classrooms:



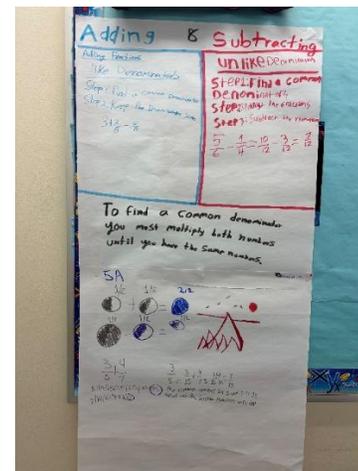
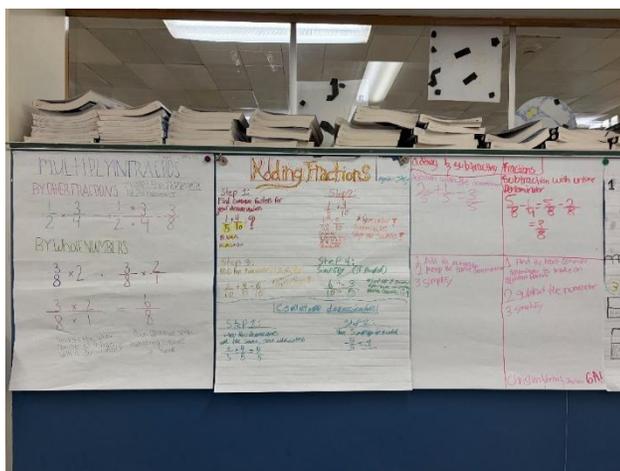
Graphing Art Mosaic projects from Math 3. Made using linear, cubic and radical functions



Math 2 students learning about the different forms of Quadratic equations at their vertical white boards!



Students in our Mustang Support courses closed out their 7-week cycle by creating posters to showcase what they learned.





Math I Students at West: Students finished their unit on rigid motions by learning about MC Escher's tessellations and how rigid motions can create them.

We learned that mathematicians realized 40 years later that his art represents a formula to the infinite expansion of space! So, with our knowledge of translations, rotations, and reflections we gave tessellations a shot! This was an excellent lesson in productive struggle & appreciation for the complexities of tessellations!



***College and Life Readiness:** Students regularly engage in structured collaborative problem-solving experiences where they must communicate their reasoning, evaluate multiple strategies, and build consensus around solutions. These classroom practices mirror both college seminar expectations and modern workplace environments, where teamwork, clear communication, and collective problem-solving are essential. By learning to articulate their thinking, listen to diverse perspectives, and refine ideas based on peer feedback, students are developing the interpersonal and analytical skills necessary for success in both postsecondary education and today's collaborative career settings.

Professional Development:

West Suburban Math Conference:

The Math Department sent 70 teachers to the West Suburban Math Conference at Glenbard North High School on February 27. We are excited and grateful that D201 has again designated this date as an institute day, allowing us to expand our professional learning through participation in an external conference. Additionally, several of our teachers will be presenting at the conference, which highlights the strong work happening within our department.

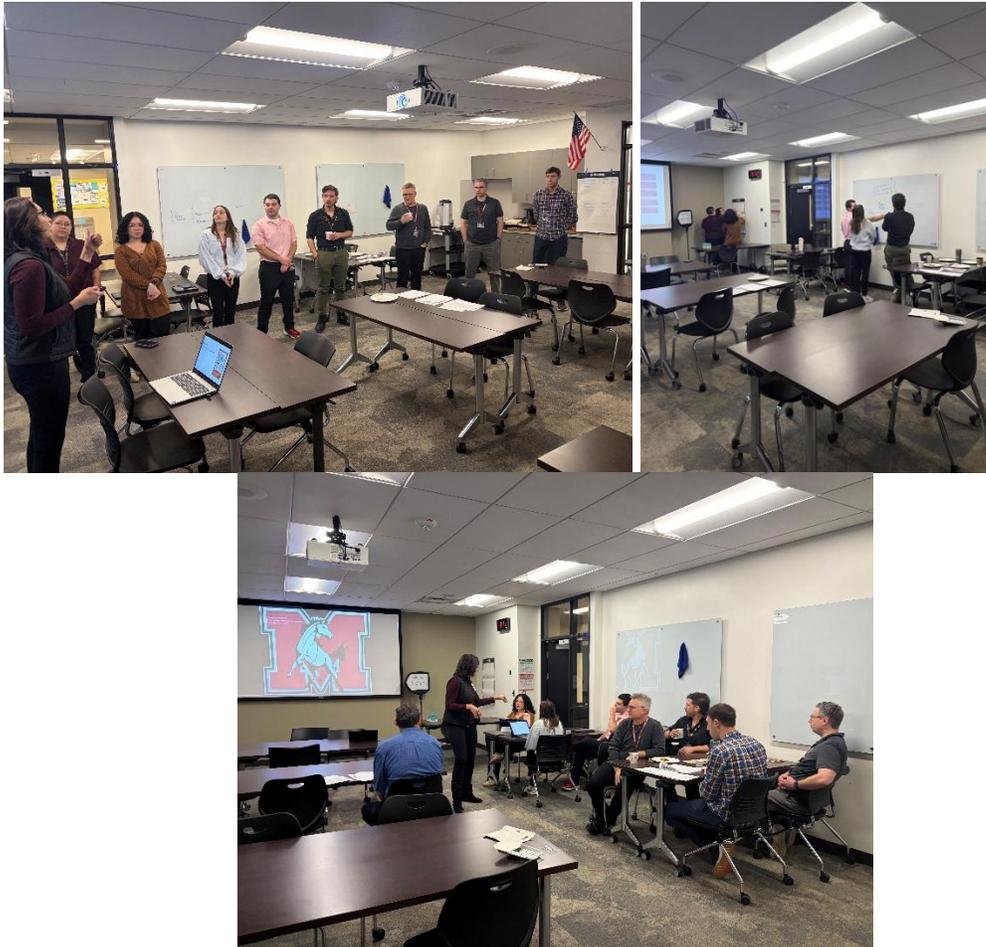
See the Padlet where teachers shared what they have learned on this day: [Math Department Conference Share-Out](#)



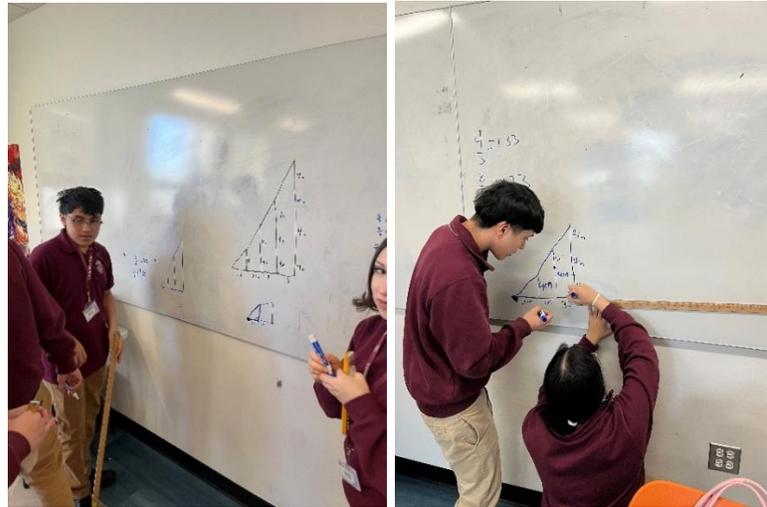
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Assistant Superintendent for Educational Programs

Carnegie Learning Math PD (BTC Strategies):

This PD was offered to all Math Teachers and it focused on using Carnegie Learning’s **BTC (Bridging Thinking Classrooms)** strategies to strengthen student sense-making and discourse in math classrooms. Teachers will explore practical routines that help students connect prior knowledge to new concepts, articulate their thinking, and engage more deeply with mathematical reasoning. The goal is to support productive struggle while making student thinking visible and actionable for instruction. See some photos below:



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Mathletes:

- **Morton West Mathletes:** The West Mathletes are currently planning the Middle School Mathlete Competition on March 10.

- **Morton East Mathletes:**

Morton East High School both hosted and competed in their fourth WSML math contest this month! Please read the report from Head Mathletes Coach, Mr. Volk:

WSML Meet #4 Results

On Tuesday, February 10th, 2026, the Morton East and Freshman Center Mathletes competed against all 16 schools in the championship for the West Suburban Math League, hosted by Willowbrook High School. We would especially like to congratulate our MVP for the season, Santiago Zarco.

The highlight of the competition was Pedro Alvarez getting 1st place in the Algebra 2 individual competition with a perfect score!!!

Bryan Gaborit-Moran also got 4th place in the individual Algebra 2 competition. The Calculator team got 4th place

Other top individual scorers were Santiago Zarco (PreCalculus), Evelyn Miranda (Geometry), and Claudia Pina (Algebra 1)

Top overall team finishes for the season were: Algebra 2 (5th), Pre-Calculus Individual (7th), Calculator (5th), Junior/Senior Relay team (7th)



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

Congratulations to all the Mathletes and their coaches: Rachel Hosek, Barb Kane, Kevin Volk, and Matt Horvath!

MVP Santiago Zarco:



Calculator Team:



Pre-Calculus team:



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Dr. Josh McMahon
Assistant Superintendent for Educational Programs



Algebra 2 Team:





Jr/Sr Relay Team:



J. Sterling Morton High School District 201

Lemont Invitational Results

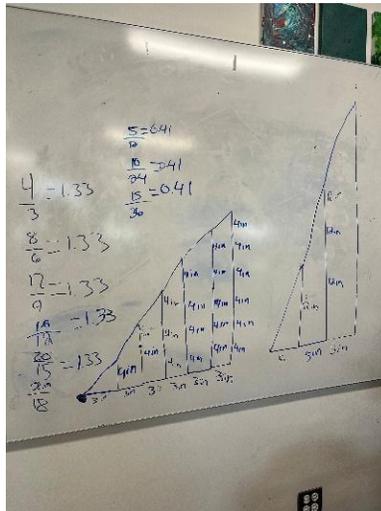
On Wednesday, January 28th, 2026, the Morton East and Freshman Center Mathletes competed against 20 schools at the Lemont Invitational Math Competition.

The highlight of the night was our calculator team winning 1st place!!!
Evelyn Miranda, Pedro Alvarez, Santiago Zarco, Oswaldo Barron-Alvarado

Algebra 2 team placed 4th, Top Scorers: Pedro Alvarez, Bryan Gaborit-Moran, Juan Castillo, Alexandro Gonzales, Selena Arellano, Sebastian Vega, Juan Urgiles

Geometry team placed 5th, Top Scorers: Gabriel Andablo, Evelyn Miranda, Dorian Vega, Valeria Haro, Ariadna Villegas Mendez

Congratulations to all of the Mathletes and their coaches: Rachel Hosek, Barb Kane, Kevin Volk, and Matt Horvath!



Middle School Math Competition

The Math Department is planning to host a Middle School Math Competition on **Tuesday, March 10th**, inviting students from all Morton middle schools. This event, which we also successfully hosted last year, provides an engaging opportunity for middle school students to participate in mathematical problem-solving and collaboration. Hosting this competition supports the continued growth of our Mathlete programs at both East and West while encouraging students to build early connections to our high school math community.



Social Science and Fine Arts- Kevin Vesper, Director

Curriculum Updates - College Ready

- On February 3, our AP World History teachers met for their first dedicated curriculum collaboration day. During the day, teachers completed a full review and revision of their common formative and summative assessments across seven units, focusing on clearer skill alignment. They also updated the corresponding skill rubrics in Class Companion to ensure consistent expectations and feedback for students. This collaborative work represents an important step toward increasing alignment and rigor within the AP World History program.
- On February 11, the AP Human Geography team met for their final curriculum collaboration session. The teachers completed revisions of all common assessments and organized them into a single shared document for easy access by current and future teachers, ensuring consistency and long-term alignment across the course.
- On February 18, the U.S. History Special Education team met for the first time to review implementation of the 2024 revised U.S. History Core curriculum. Building on a full year of classroom experience, the team strengthened and refined the modifications on all common assessments to better align with student needs. This work ensures that assessments provide clearer access points, more targeted supports, and improved alignment with IEP goals.
- Since February, all junior U.S. History and AP U.S. History teachers have continued implementing weekly ACT-style reading prompts and questions. Teachers are logging the texts they assign and the weeks of implementation, which allows us to monitor consistency and better align reading skill development across sections. Preliminary data shows:
 - All 23 U.S. History and AP U.S. History teachers have logged at least one practice assessment, demonstrating full participation across the department.
 - 44% of all entries involve primary-source readings, closely mirroring the types of stimuli students encounter on the ACT.
 - 70.2% of recorded practice assessments were completed by U.S. History (Core) students, while 29.8% were completed by AP U.S. History students, indicating strong implementation across course levels.

PLT Updates

- The AP Government & Politics team analyzed formative data tied to their Argumentative Writing SMART goal and refined skill-based formative quizzes. This collaborative data review is directly informing updates to writing expectations and assessment alignment.
- The AP U.S. History team conducted two rounds of instructional interventions (cause/effect practice and vocabulary building) and reviewed Unit 6 text-based question data. Their collaborative analysis of student errors, Tier II vocabulary gaps, and test-taking skills is being used to refine curriculum materials and strengthen reading-based assessments.



- Civics teachers collaborated with the biliteracy coach to design financial-literacy activities that support both ELL and general-education students. They also continued developing common formative assessments focused on media literacy.
- The U.S. History team created and implemented a CER (Claim–Evidence–Reasoning) graphic organizer to improve students’ use of evidence and will bring the resulting data to the next PLT. This tool is becoming part of the shared curriculum to standardize writing expectations across the course.

Career Ready

- Morton West Band hosted acclaimed American composer Jim Stephenson, a Chicago-based musician known for his extensive catalog of orchestral and wind ensemble works. Stephenson—whose compositions have been performed by major ensembles such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops, and “*The President’s Own*” U.S. Marine Band—worked directly with West’s music students, leading a workshop as they prepared for their Spring Concert. His visit offered students a rare opportunity to learn from a nationally recognized composer whose works span symphonies, concertos, chamber music, ballet, and opera.



Professional Development

On February 27th, all Social Science and Fine Arts teachers participated in a full day of professional development designed to deepen instructional practice and support ongoing curriculum work.

- 34 Social Science teachers attended the DuPage County Social Science Conference at Metea Valley High School, where they engaged in sessions led by regional educators and content experts. These sessions offered new strategies, resources, and instructional approaches aligned with state Social Science standards.
- Music teachers attended the Music and Arts Clinic, a discipline-specific professional learning event focused on pedagogy, performance practices, and ensemble development.

The remaining teachers participated in on-site PD at Morton West High School, choosing from seven different sessions that addressed a wide range of topics intended to support both classroom instruction and teacher well-being. These sessions provided staff with choice-based learning tailored to their professional goals and daily instructional needs.



Department Highlights:



East students participated in the *We the People* competition at Chicago-Kent College of Law, presenting thoughtfully crafted statements on the U.S. Constitution to a panel of judges that included university professors and state senators. The experience was both rigorous and rewarding for our students. The team earned a fourth-place finish and plans to compete again next year.





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Ms. Cantero helping students develop their sculpture skills after school.



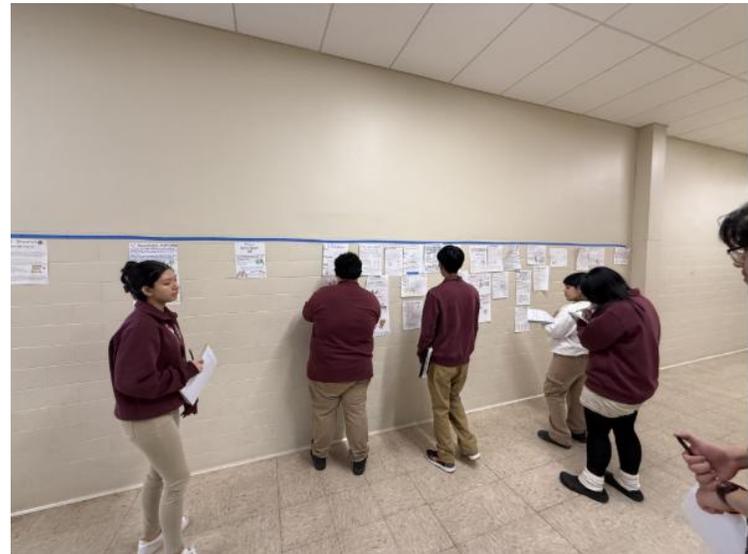
Mr. Ruff helping his guitar students with different chord progressions.



This was meant to be shared months ago! In September, Theater students attended a performance at the Paramount Theater in Aurora, Illinois. They were able to observe professional techniques and then transfer the skills and insights they gained into their classroom work and school performances.



Unified Art students created signs for fans to hold during the Special Olympics basketball games at Morton West High School.



Civics students engage in active analysis of amendments to the U.S. Constitution during a hallway learning activity.



Chicago History students participate in a presentation carousel during class.



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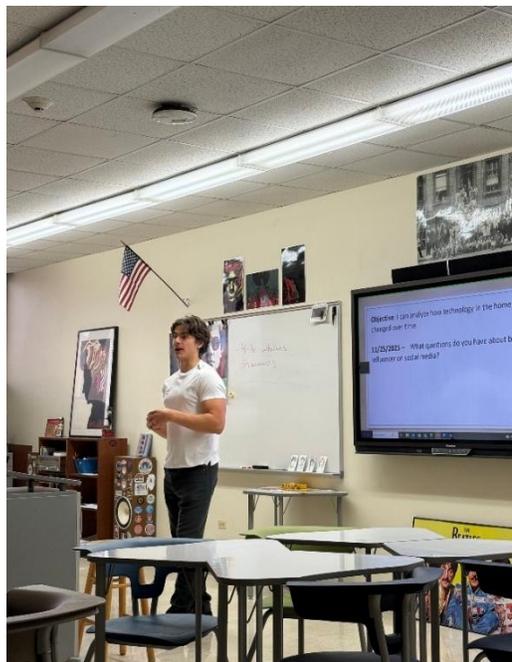
Morton East and FC music students perform for future Mustangs at Unity Jr. High School.



U.S. History students engaged in a carousel document analysis activity.



Mr. MacDougal's students participating in an SEL BARR activity.



Reality TV and social media personality Christian Lager met with Mr. Riley's Pop Culture classes to discuss social media influencing and content creation.



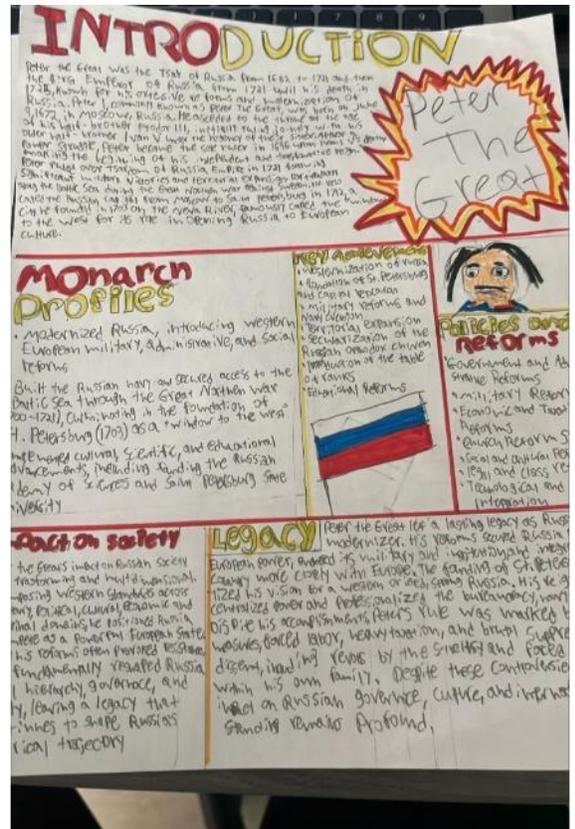
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Drawing students developing their *process* skill during the life drawing unit.



Mr. Hinojosa with his student of the month nomination.



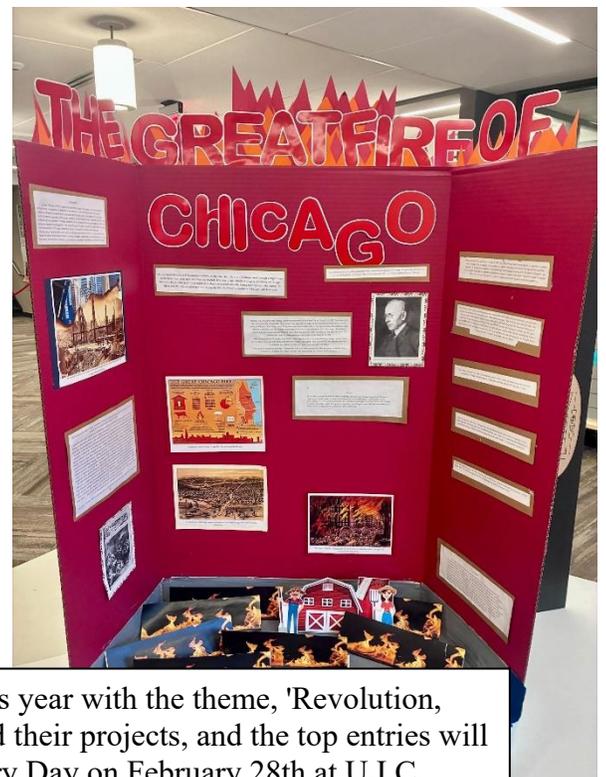
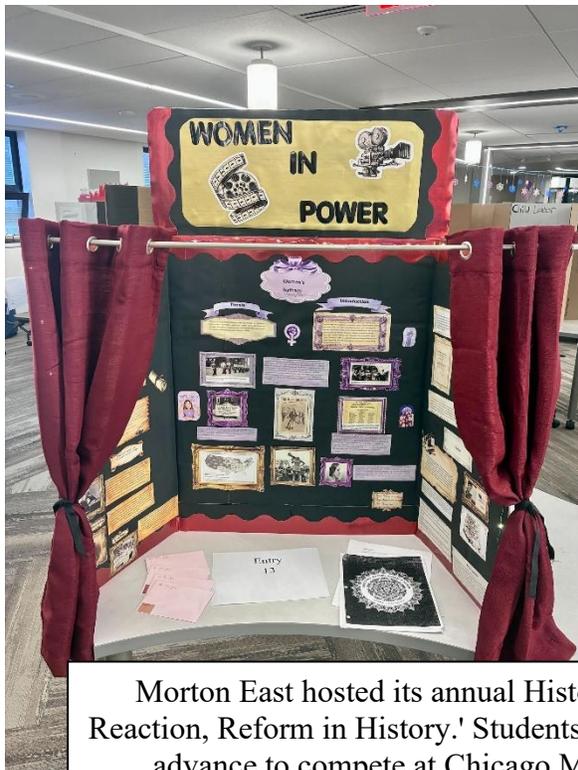
A student's poster that profiles a monarch in world history.



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Music teacher Eric Rauch hosted the inaugural '8th Grade Band Festival,' bringing all Unity music students to the Freshman Center to join current freshmen. Together, the students rehearsed the pieces they would perform later that evening for parents and the community.



Morton East hosted its annual History Fair this year with the theme, 'Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History.' Students showcased their projects, and the top entries will advance to compete at Chicago Metro History Day on February 28th at U.I.C.



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

College Ready

Tracey Bornheim (West), Chris Tompkins (West), Malika Manouzi (East), and Josh Scaletta (East) were at the Morton College Summit last Friday, February 27th. While working with Jamie Halmon and Dean Sara Helmus from Morton College, we were able to sign agreements for the following classes: Leadership and Physical Education Leader, Cross-Training, Walking III, Cross-Fit III. We will be inviting Mr. Billy Jacklin back to Morton College to sign the agreement for Physical Fitness III. Dean Helmus shared that any teacher could forward their credentials to her and she could review. This could provide more opportunities to sign more agreements for more classes. |

Career Ready

Officiating students at West Campus have been officiating the second hour and fourth hour leadership training classes during their volleyball unit. Officiating students worked the staff vs police basketball game along with Melissa Le Beau on Wednesday, February 18th. Some of the students from the Officiating class have been recently employed through the Lagrange and Lyons park districts. |

Life Ready

Samantha Gutheim was able to dive into the Phil Lawler DuPage County Institute and gain some insight into the use of AI as it relates to the Driver Education classroom. A presenter introduced Brisk Teaching, a SOPA-compliant AI tool that may be beneficial for our Morton students, particularly in Social Studies and Driver's Education. This platform offers both free and paid versions. Additionally, we will be looking into the use of this platform to see if it aligns fully with our district's privacy and data protection standards before moving forward. |

Freshmen Center

One of our second semester students broke the MFC Fitnessgram Pacer record with 140 laps! Santiago Rios now holds the title for most laps completed and intends to beat his own record by the end of the year. (picture below) |



The ASI students are incorporating cardio days into their program, as we do for our freshman PE program. ASI Students have engaged in mile runs, half miles, and a handful of other light jogging type of workouts on Wednesday. PE students are continuing to start off class every day with a workout that is geared towards increasing our Fitness Testing scores by the end of the year.

West Campus

Students are finishing up unit 2 activities, such as volleyball, badminton, team handball, floor hockey & swimming. The PE Department started a new incentive this month – students will be entered into a raffle for a perfect month of attendance and dressing. PLTs met and discussed what our plan might look like in regard to the March 5th intervention day and what a typical intervention might be, along with securing proper supervision for our classes.

East Campus

The East PE department has been rolling out interventions to detect students that are not on track right early this semester. We are running a variety of make-up opportunities before, during, and after school. The East team have been working on our intervention day plan for March to bring in students that are most at risk of not being on track. After reviewing the data we are off to a better start with our participation in these interventions than last semester.



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

College Ready

Across the district, we continue strengthening intentional career pathway development for students. At Morton East, 94% of students have completed the *Find Your Path* career interest inventory through SchoolLinks, providing personalized career suggestions and aligned educational pathways to support life-after-high-school planning. Seventeen students participated in the ASVAB on February 24, expanding military and technical career pathway exploration. Counselors met with students demonstrating high absence rates to identify barriers and implement attendance agreements to increase engagement.

Workforce partnerships were strengthened through collaboration with Construction Industry Service Corporation (CISCO), resulting in an expanded student career event coordinated with Jamilla Muhammad. In addition, MAS is finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding with Lumity to expand post-secondary pathway support for students pursuing alternative graduation timelines or nontraditional options.



Morton East staff show their college pride and share their stories.



FC Counselors Present on Credit Recovery



Career Ready

College readiness efforts remained focused on access, planning, and transition support. Seniors and families participated in two workshops to fulfill the Illinois State Board of Education financial aid graduation requirement, and four college representatives visited to expand direct exposure to post-secondary institutions.

Counselors conducted 10th grade registration cleanup meetings to ensure accurate course selections and follow-through. Students were supported through administration of the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. A Credit Recovery Presentation was held for off-track students, connecting them to night school, summer school, and Tapestry advocates to develop actionable recovery plans.

Collaboration with Morton College continues to expand dual credit and enrollment opportunities, and additional field trip experiences are being coordinated. Articulation work with Unity Junior High School District 99 included leading ELA and Math PLTs through placement criteria, meeting with ELL teachers to clarify programming structures and recommendation procedures, and meeting directly with incoming freshmen to review placements and adjust elective requests. Individualized senior meetings also focused on credit recovery planning and post-secondary transition mapping.



East student, Xavier Aleman commits to the Army and his future education.

Life Ready

Life-readiness efforts continued to prioritize student wellness, self-regulation, and family engagement. Student support teams hosted a Black History Month event centered on identifying and celebrating personal strengths, and staff conducted over 100 individual follow-ups with students connected to freshman presentations, junior mindfulness sessions in partnership with National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and BSU programming. Social workers presented to families at Coffee with the Principal on teen dating, teen violence, boundaries, and strategies to support adolescents.

Peer Mediators are being retrained to sustain student-led conflict resolution efforts. Counseling staff facilitated an Impulse Control Lab and personal relationship activity within the Green 1 young men's group. "March into Wellness" is being held each Friday during lunch periods, offering yoga, art therapy, and structured wellness activities. The school psychologist attended the National Association of School Psychologists National Conference to strengthen district practices. Students also participated in



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programming through Selah Freedom focused on personal safety and boundaries. Blue 2 Edge and Green 1 Edge students engaged in mindfulness activities emphasizing present-moment awareness and physiological regulation, and the GIRLS group participated in an art therapy session to support emotional expression. Student support staff continue to provide structured emotional support during Supervisory periods to ensure responsive, relationship-based care throughout the school day.

Curriculum Review and Updates

Curriculum development and refinement efforts continue across campuses. Planning is underway for implementation of the Signs of Suicide (SOS) program for all sophomore students at West, strengthening proactive mental health education and prevention efforts. The Junior Counselor PLT developed an entirely new junior presentation and student exploration component aligned to the PaCE framework, ensuring stronger alignment between career exploration, post-secondary planning, and structured student reflection. At MAS, six new students have transitioned since the last Board meeting, and counseling supports continue to adjust programming and services to ensure responsive onboarding and individualized planning.



Morton Counselors at Morton College