



MORTON COLLEGE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NO.527
Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday, August 27, 2025

Approved

1. Call to Order

The Regular Board meeting was called to order by Board Vice Chair, Anthony Martinucci at 10:11 AM on Wednesday, August 27, 2025, at the Centennial Room, located at 3801 S. Central Ave., Cicero, IL 60804.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Present:

Susan Grazzini, Trustee
Charles Hernandez, Trustee
Anthony Martinucci, Trustee
Oscar Montiel, Trustee
Frances F. Reitz, Trustee
Eliana Ruiz, Student Trustee

Absent:

Leonard Cannata, Trustee
Jose Collazo, Trustee

Also Present:

Dr. Keith D. McLaughlin, President
Edward Wong Attorney, Del Galdo Law Group, LLC

4. Citizen Comments

None

5. Reports

5.1 Student Trustee – Eliana Ruiz

Eliana Ruiz introduced herself and shared her background. She is currently pursuing an Associate's degree with plans to become an elementary school teacher. Eliana is active in Student Government, Phi Theta Kappa, and STEM Club. Her priority for the year is the creation of a community garden, the re-establishment of the Morton College merchandise store, and advancing campus sustainability. Eliana also reported on Welcome Week and student engagement activities like the successful New Student Orientation (NSO) with strong participation, guided introductions to key campus resources, including the gym, library, tutoring center, and student union. The CCE has also been making its presence felt through tabling events and student conversations. Eliana also highlighted the thriving Summer Bridge Program, fostering academic and social connections before the fall semester. Overall, the college community has begun the 2024–2025 academic year with strong momentum, energy, and student involvement.

6. President's Report

Dr. McLaughlin welcomed the trustees back following the summer recess, noting the favorable weather and opportunities for relaxation. He announced that budget highlights for FY26 would be reviewed later in the meeting before the Board's formal action.

Dr. McLaughlin introduced Micheal Kott to report on his International Exchange Program in Costa Rica over the summer.

Micheal Kott reported on the Costa Rican Language, Culture, and History Program conducted in June. The program hosted 18 students from Illinois; students lived with host families in San José, attended the Costa Rican Language Academy, and participated in cultural activities including cooking, dance, and weekend excursions. Educational excursions included visits to volcanoes, waterfalls, and the Costa Rican National Museum. Students received credit equivalent to two semester courses. He noted Costa Rica's unique history, including the abolition of its army in 1948 and reinvestment of funds into education. Micheal expressed gratitude to the Board for support and presented a photo gift. Additionally, he reported on theater program success: last year's *City of Angels* production involved 21 cast and crew, with more than half being students – a first in his 18 years.

President McLaughlin thanked Mr. Kott for his leadership and contributions.

Dr. McLaughlin also paused to extend a welcome to our new student trustee. They look forward to working with Eliana this year and thanked her for taking on this leadership role and for really being the voice of students. And so, they want to make sure they're responsive to what she brings forward to the board in terms of priorities and what's important to the students.

Dr. McLaughlin invited Dr. Sheldon Walcher, Vice President of Academic Affairs, with support from Jamar Orr, Dean of Student Services, to talk about our enrollment report and a CRM Proposal.

Dr. Sheldon Walcher started out by giving a quick enrollment update. Overall enrollment increased by 6% in headcount and 5% in credit hours over the prior year. Despite a mid-summer 25% decline, final enrollment exceeded expectations. Adult Education programs (GED, ESL, ABE) showed strong growth under the leadership of program directors Laurie Cashman and Claudia Mosqueda.

Dr. Walcher stated that findings from last year's CampusWorks audit identified the lack of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system as the College's most significant gap. The current processes are fragmented, manual, and dependent on spreadsheets and email, leading to long wait times, inefficiencies, and staff burnout. We are recommending the adoption of Element451, an AI-driven student engagement platform already used by over 300 institutions, including Harper College and Heartland Community College.

The system capabilities include:

- Automated, personalized communication via email, text, and phone.
- Recruitment and admissions management.
- Data integration for campaign effectiveness and student tracking.

- Engagement and success modules for current students, including proactive outreach to re-engage students at risk.

The implementation plan:

- Phase 1 (Year 1): Marketing and Admissions modules.
- Phase 2 (Year 2): Engagement and Success modules.

Projected outcomes:

- Average 7% enrollment increase.
- 75% reduction in staff time spent on manual communications.
- 200% ROI over five years, with \$1.5M projected additional tuition revenue.
- Elimination of redundant systems (e.g., texting platforms).

Jarmar Orr emphasized that while enrollment has grown by 6%, the college likely lost additional students during this cycle—those who reached out by phone or email, or who visited but left due to long wait times or other barriers. He noted that with the right tools in place to better address students' needs, enrollment gains could have reached closer to 10%. While appreciative of the current increase, he stressed the importance of planning not only for immediate improvements but also for long-term growth over the next 5–10 years, ensuring the college maximizes opportunities with students who are already interested in attending.

Trustee Hernandez inquired whether staff positions would be affected.

Dr. Walcher confirmed that there would be no job reductions.

Dr. McLaughlin explained that marketing has shifted with technology, making traditional methods like radio, TV, and billboards less effective. He noted that retaining students who have already applied is the most efficient strategy, yet many applicants never move forward to enrollment, creating high attrition. The proposed system would help address this gap by converting applicants into enrolled students, thereby strengthening retention and enrollment outcomes.

Trustee Montiel raised concerns regarding over-automation and communication overload.

Dr. Walcher assured them that the system allows for personalization and opt-out options.

Trustees asked whether the decision could be deferred to September for further review. Administration responded that the system had been thoroughly vetted through CampusWorks focus groups and internal review, but additional information could be provided if the Board preferred to delay.

Trustee Reitz emphasized that the important thing is that the proposal had been thoroughly vetted and commended staff for their work. Dr. McLaughlin thanked the team for their efforts and noted that the college had benchmarked the system against similar institutions.

Dr. McLaughlin provided an update on campus perimeter renovations, noting visible progress over the summer and inviting trustees to view the work in the courtyard. Major construction is expected to be completed by October, with landscaping and new signage to follow. Trustee Hernandez encouraged the use of local businesses for landscaping projects. Joe Florio, Executive

Director of Facilities Management and Police, explained that as a Capital Development Board project, bidding and subcontracting are managed at the state level, though efforts are made to promote neighborhood participation.

Additional discussion included the installation of a new sprinkler system. Trustee Reitz emphasized support for future landscaping and potential integration with the proposed community garden.

Dr. McLaughlin then highlighted upcoming policy audits in preparation for the Higher Learning Commission reaffirmation visit.

A budget overview was presented, emphasizing strategic investments in technology upgrades to modernize operations, improve efficiency, and enhance student experience. The budget reflects conservative spending while also addressing salary and benefit increases negotiated through collective bargaining agreements.

Trustee Hernandez commended the administration for maintaining a balanced budget and stressed the importance of supporting competitive salaries. Dr. McLaughlin confirmed that compensation adjustments will be addressed in the September personnel actions.

Dr. McLaughlin concluded his report by noting future capital project requests submitted to the state, including a proposed new \$10 million facility that we think would be a significant addition to the college, perhaps on the rocket property in the future.

7. Approval of the resolution adopting the Annual Budget for FY26, beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, of the Illinois Community College District No. 527, as submitted

Trustee Hernandez made a motion to approve the Annual Budget for FY26.

Trustee Montiel seconded the motion.

Ayes: Trustees, Grazzini, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, Reitz, and Ruiz

Nays: None

Absent: Cannata and Collazo

Motion Carried

8. Consent Agenda

Trustee Hernandez made a motion to approve the consent agenda, which includes agenda items 8.1 to 8.29.2, as listed below.

Trustee Montiel seconded the motion.

Ayes: Trustees, Grazzini, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, Reitz, and Ruiz

Nays: None

Absent: Cannata and Collazo

Motion Carried

- 8.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board meeting held on June 25, 2025.
- 8.2. Approval and ratification of accounts payable and payroll for June 2025 in the amount of \$2,756,753.00 and budget transfers in the amount of \$0.00.
- 8.3. Approval of the Monthly Budget Report for the fiscal year to date ending in June 2025.
- 8.4. Approval of the Treasurer's Report for June 2025.
- 8.5. Approval of the English 10% compensation for Adjunct Faculty for the Summer 2025 semester, in the amount of \$954.50 as submitted.

- 8.6. Approval of the Adjunct Faculty assignment/employment report for Summer 2025 semester, in the amount of \$128,198.60 as submitted, pending additional class cancellations and/or additions.
- 8.7. Approval of the Faculty Overload Employment Report for the Summer 2025 semester, in the amount \$601,998.03 as submitted, pending additional class cancellations and/or additions.
- 8.8. Approval of the renewal of the yearly agreement for contracted services for maintenance at Hawthorne Athletic Complex for Hector Munoz, for FY26 in the amount of \$2,500.00 per month, not exceeding \$30,000.00 a year.
- 8.9. Approval of Real Estate Advisory Services for Vacant Site (Rocket Property) with Volz Company LLC, in the amount of \$45,000.00.
- 8.10. Approval of the Nicor Gas services for fiscal year 2026, not to exceed \$45,000.00.
- 8.11. Approval of the gas provider, Direct Energy, for FY26, not to exceed \$75,000.00.
- 8.12. Approval of the State of Illinois, Department of Innovation & Technology, Technology Management Revolving Fund, in the amount of \$27,000.00.
- 8.13. Approval of the migration from AT&T PRI to Comcast OTT fiber circuits, in the amount of \$27,600.00 annually.
- 8.14. Approval of Konica Minolta for printing and printer management, maintenance, equipment, and supplies, in the amount of \$60,000.00.
- 8.15. Approval of Ellucian for Business Objects licensing and maintenance, in the amount of \$64,766.00.
- 8.16. Approval of Apple licenses, support, and equipment in the amount of \$75,000.00.
- 8.17. Approval of NobelTec for IT Networking Managed Services and infrastructure, application, and client service licenses, support, and equipment, in the amount of \$90,000.00.
- 8.18. Approval of a three-year agreement with NobleTec for additional Barracuda cloud backup and recovery services, in the amount of \$102,621.26 (\$34,207.00 annually).
- 8.19. Approval of Paragon Micro for IT infrastructure, application, and client service licenses, support, and equipment, in the amount of \$150,000.00.
- 8.20. Approval of the renewal of the 5-year contract with Watermarks Insights, LLC for the Morton College curriculum management system, in the amount of \$78,261.84.
- 8.21. Approval of the Nursing ATI Program for FY26, in the amount of \$145,000.00.
- 8.22. Approval of the ICCB 2026 RAMP Report to maintain the infrastructure of the Morton College Campus.
- 8.23. Approval of the removal of obsolete equipment in the Auto Shop.
- 8.24. Approval of Ford Motor Company Vehicle Donations, including Vehicle Donation and Bailment Agreements.
- 8.25. Approval of the resolution approving and adopting a master educational affiliation agreement between Morton Community College District 527 and Good Life Physical Therapy.
- 8.26. Approval of the Separation and Settlement Agreement and Waiver and Release of all Claims between Marisol Velazquez and Morton Community College District No. 527.
- 8.27. Approval of Full-Time Employment
 - 8.27.1. Daynelis Canino, Custodian (Temporary), Non-Union, \$15.10 per hour, effective August 4, 2025.

- 8.27.2. Salvador Martinez Jr., Faculty, English, Union, effective August 18, 2025.
- 8.27.3. Nadia Robinson, Faculty, Nursing Simulation Coordinator, Union, effective August 25, 2025.
- 8.27.4. Stephanie Schmidt, Assistant Fitness Center Manager, Non-Union, \$55,000.00, effective August 25, 2025.
- 8.27.5. Daisy Aranda, Financial Aid Clerk I, Union, effective September 2, 2025.
- 8.27.6. Rodolfo Ranola, Nursing Educational/Retention Specialist, Non-Union Position, \$75,000.00, effective September 9, 2025.

8.28. Position Changes

- 8.28.1. Mauricio Guerrero Bucio, PT to FT, Cashier/AR Specialist, Union Position, effective August 11, 2025.

8.29. Approval of Facility Use Permits

- 8.29.1. Approval of Chi-Town Classics Car Club to hold (3) three car shows on 8/29/25, 9/19/25, & 10/10/25 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the west side of the parking lot.
- 8.29.2. Approval of Brawlers Baseball and Softball games and tournaments, from August 2025 to October 2025, on the field on 32nd St., at no charge.

9. Informational Only 9.1 – 9.3.1

10. Closed Session - Canceled

11. - 16. Approval of items 11-16, the updated board policies.

Trustee Hernandez made a motion to approve items 11-16: the updated board policies.

Trustee Grazzini seconded the motion.

Ayes: Trustees, Grazzini, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, Reitz, and Ruiz

Nays: None

Absent: Cannata and Collazo

Motion Carried

17. – 25. Approval of items 17-25, the first reading of board policies.

Trustee Grazzini made a motion to approve items 17-25; the first reading of the board policies.

Trustee Montiel seconded the motion.

Ayes: Trustees, Grazzini, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, Reitz, and Ruiz

Nays: None

Absent: Cannata and Collazo

Motion Carried

26. Approval of the Information Technology Service Agreement with CampusWorks, not to exceed \$192,396.00.

Trustee Montiel made a motion to approve the Information Technology Service Agreement with CampusWorks, not to exceed \$192,396.00.

Trustee Grazzini seconded the motion.

Ayes: Trustees, Grazzini, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, Reitz, and Ruiz

Nays: None

Absent: Cannata and Collazo

Motion Carried

27. Approval of up to \$250,000.00 for the Del Galdo Law Group, LLC to provide annual comprehensive legal services to Morton College during the period of July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 (FY26).

Trustee Grazzini made a motion to adjourn the Regular Board Meeting at 10:35 a.m.
Trustee Montiel seconded the motion.
Ayes: Trustees, Grazzini, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, Reitz, and Ruiz
Nays: None Absent: Cannata and Collazo
Motion Carried

28. – 29. Approval of ComEd electric services, not to exceed \$300,000.00, and FreePoint electrical energy services, not to exceed \$340,000.00 for FY26.

Trustee Montiel made a motion to approve ComEd electric services, not to exceed \$300,000.00 and FreePoint electrical energy services, not to exceed \$340,000.00 for FY26.
Trustee Grazzini seconded the motion.
Ayes: Trustees, Grazzini, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, Reitz, and Ruiz
Nays: None Absent: Cannata and Collazo
Motion Carried

30. Approval of the purchase and implementation of Element451, a comprehensive customer relationship management (CRM) platform, for a five-year contract, for a total of \$759,247.00.

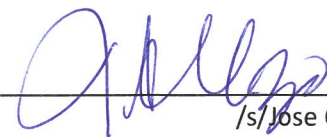
Trustee Reitz made a motion to approve the purchase and implementation of Element451, for a five-year contract, totaling \$759,247.00.
Trustee Hernandez seconded the motion.
Ayes: Trustees, Grazzini, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, Reitz, and Ruiz
Nays: None Absent: Cannata and Collazo
Motion Carried

31. Adjournment

Trustee Grazzini made a motion to adjourn the Regular Board Meeting at 11:08 a.m.
Trustee Montiel seconded the motion.
Ayes: Trustees, Grazzini, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, Reitz, and Ruiz
Nays: None Absent: Cannata and Collazo
Motion Carried



/s/ Leonard Cannata,
Board Chair



/s/ Jose Collozo
Secretary