



J.S. Morton Director's Board Report

Director: Megan Holub Department(s): Mathematics

Month September

1. Instructional Focus (Literacy/Numeracy)

On Opening Day, the Math Department explored our Math ACT Department Plan, with a focus on strengthening numeracy skills and preparing students for success on the ACT. Teachers reviewed our department-wide ACT focus and collaborated on ways to intentionally embed ACT-style practice into daily instruction across courses. PLTs will continue working together to incorporate consistent ACT practice and strategies throughout the year, with a particular emphasis on our department focus area of **Geometry**.

The window for all Sophomore and Junior level students to take the STAR assessment has been opened for all Math and English students. This assessment data will assist Morton Educators to support our students Numeracy and Literacy skills moving forward.

2. Walkthrough Data (Instructional Monitoring)

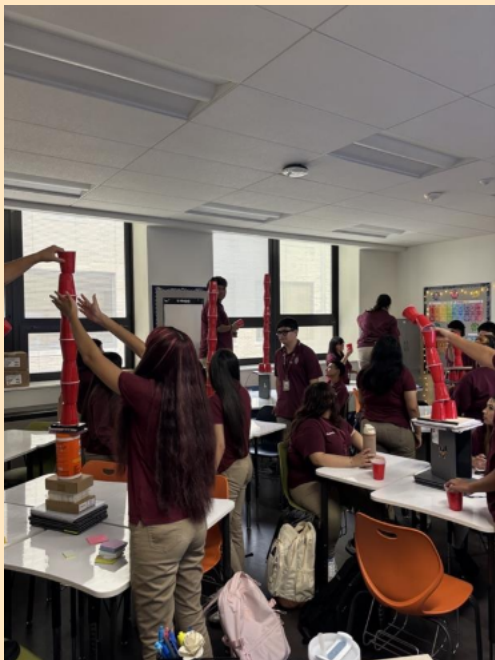
During Math Department walk-throughs on August 25th, at Moton East about 67% of the rooms that were visited during second hour had math instruction occurring using "Building Thinking Classrooms" (BTC) or just wrapped up using BTC methodology. Another classroom was also doing a variation of BTC with students sitting at their desks using handheld whiteboards.

3. PLT Progress (Instructional Improvement Cycle)

First PLT Meetings: Teachers held their first PLT meetings at the end of August. Teams focused on establishing PLT norms and expectations to help build a strong foundation for collaboration throughout the school year. Teams will begin looking at data once the STAR Assessment window is closed. They have begun discussing instructional strategies like Building Thinking Classrooms.

The group formation process of Integrated Math Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) will continue by finding common lessons in Mathia that will be beneficial for all students to experience. In addition, PLTs can further discuss our math department's ACT plan and prepare for implementation.

4. Student Highlights



In Ms. Valenti's math class, students are team building while constructing towers of cups to start the school year.



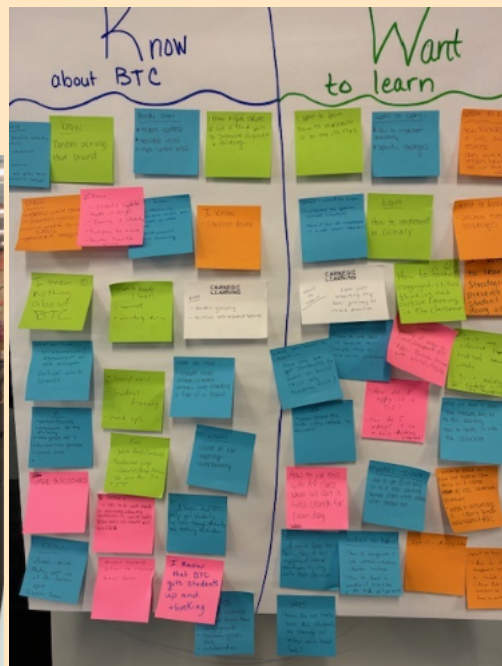
Mr. Elkins and Ms. Herrera students are collaborating math with "Building Thinking Classrooms" style of learning.

5. Professional Learning / Support

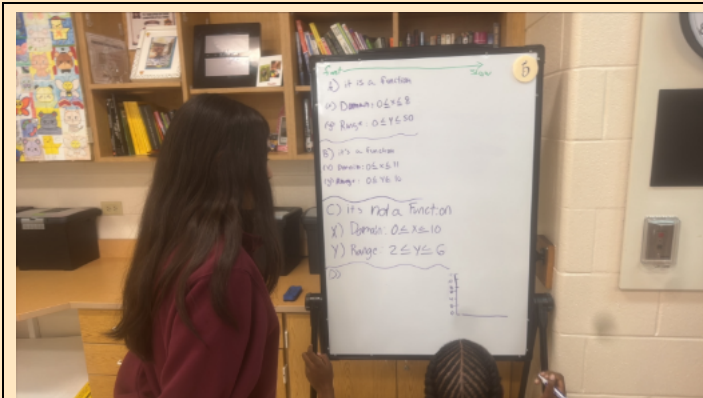
On August 25, a group of 25 teachers from across the district and representing multiple departments participated in a full-day Building Thinking Classrooms (BTC) professional learning session at Morton West High School. The training took place from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. and was part of a three-day professional learning series focused on strategies for creating more student-centered, collaborative, and thinking-focused classrooms.

Teachers engaged in hands-on learning and experienced BTC strategies from the student perspective, while also exploring ways to incorporate these practices into their own classrooms. Participants will continue building their understanding throughout the three-day series and will bring strategies, resources, and learning back to their departments and PLTs.

Photos from the August 25th session are included below.



Here are photos that teachers shared after participating in the Building Thinking Classrooms PD. They are already putting their learning into action and incorporating BTC strategies into their classrooms!



6. Next Steps

Participants of the BTC Professional Learning will continue their learning through two additional days on September 1st and September 16th. As teachers deepen their understanding and bring their learning back to their colleagues and PLTs, we look forward to seeing BTC strategies increasingly implemented in classrooms across all departments and throughout the district.

7. Board Summary Statement (1–2 sentences)

The Math Department began the year with a strong focus on **numeracy, ACT preparation, and Building Thinking Classrooms (BTC)**, with teachers collaborating through PLTs to strengthen instruction and use student data to guide next steps. Early walkthroughs show promising implementation of BTC and differentiated instruction, while upcoming professional learning will continue supporting the expansion of these strategies across the district.



J.S. Morton Director's Board Report

SPED

Department Lead: Carol Best

Department/Team: SPED Reporting Month: September 2026

1. Instructional Focus (Literacy/Numeracy)

Campus focus/action: What literacy and/or numeracy priority was addressed this month? Briefly describe the work completed.

The year is off to a good start. All sped teachers are settling in and getting to know their students. The STAR assessment is taking place this month for both literacy and numeracy. Once we get the results, we will be able to begin singling in on specific skills that students need to be working on. (Freshman Center)

Teachers and students are beginning to work on the first window of the STAR assessment. SPED teachers and GenEd teachers are collaborating on building literacy/numeracy growth in their classrooms. (East)

PLTs focused on identifying academic needs, strengthening data tracking, and building functional literacy skills. Vocational PLTs specifically targeted job-application vocabulary and comprehension. (West)

This first month was spent collecting baseline data on functional literacy and numeracy data through various assessments. The focus is on reading functional materials (ex: recipes, job applications, menus, etc.) and functional numeracy (ex: money management, budgeting, etc.) (MTC)

Evidence and impact: What data, student work, participation, or other evidence shows progress or identifies a need?

Once we get the STAR data we will have a better idea of how to progress monitor student growth. (Freshman Center)

Teachers will collect and review STAR data as the window closes. We also have a PD planned so teachers can utilize Panorama for student data, which we feel will give us a better picture of our student levels of achievement. (East)

Teams identified students needing additional academic support and began collecting classroom data. Two students secured employment at a local banquet facility, demonstrating growth in functional career-readiness skills. (West)

All teachers collected baseline data via assessments to help gauge student level, needs, strengths, and help guide and inform instruction moving forward. (MTC)

2. Walkthrough Data (Instructional Monitoring)

Walkthrough findings: Summarize the strongest campus patterns observed during instructional walkthroughs.

Walkthroughs begin at the end of the month. (Freshman Center)

Walkthroughs were conducted at East the last full week of August. The strongest pattern to start was the wonderful academic and welcome culture in the classroom as teachers welcome students to their classrooms. Also, the Building Thinking Classrooms were being implemented and seemed to have good traction. (East)

Mustang Musts were shared with PLT's , and walkthrough expectations were outlined. Teachers were provided guidance on clearly posting and communicating objectives, skills and learning targets. (West)

Learning objectives were present and students were engaged in all settings. (MTC)

Growth area/support: Identify a trend that needs continued attention and the support being provided or planned.

Once we have the walkthrough data we will be able to address what areas need attention and support. (Freshman Center)

Learning Targets or specific skills identified need to be displayed for students in the classroom (East)

Continued walkthroughs will provide us with the feedback and support needed to improve instructional expectations. (West)

There are a significant number of students with social emotional needs and we will continue to address and work with them individually and in groups. (MTC)

3. PLT Progress (Instructional Improvement Cycle)

PLT progress: What progress did campus PLTs make within the instructional improvement cycle?

First PLT meetings will begin the last week in August. (Freshman Center)

PLT meetings are meeting this week and teachers are excited to meet with their professional learning groups and discuss ways to better serve our students. (East)

PLT's established group structures and norms, reviewed student needs, and identified specific areas for follow-up across Inclusion, ASI, FSI, LDI, and Vocational Programs. (West)

The first month was spent on planning, preparing for the year and deciding on our PLT goal. (MTC)

Evidence and adjustment: Share the evidence reviewed, what was learned, and any adjustment to the PLT action steps.

PLT meetings have not started, but when they do, we can look into what adjustments need to be made. (Freshman Center)

PLT meetings at East were used to establish norms and roles and get prepared to tackle a great school year! (East)

Teams reviewed academic performance, attendance, behavior, and student placement concerns. Action steps include targeted data collection, case management adjustments, and continued monitoring of students requiring additional support. (West)

We are in the beginning stages of our PLT goal. Our PLT Goal is as follows: 80% of students will be able to access and utilize the PAES Lab independently from start to finish with no more than 1 teacher prompt by May 14th, 2027. (MTC)

4. Student Highlights

Student success: Highlight a campus student achievement, growth trend, or meaningful success connected to this work.

Students are off to a good start at the Freshman Center. We are getting students registered and making sure that our attendance is off to a good start. We have already begun to have important conversations with students about grades, attendance, and behavior so they will be successful in high school. (Freshmen Center)

The ASI/FSI programs are off to a great start at Morton East. The teachers and students have been doing a great job transitioning in and getting things kicked off. Those teachers and students really add positively into the Morton East culture and climate (East).

Students in the Vocational program demonstrated meaningful progress in carer readiness and employment skills. (West)

In our first month, we have been able to get all students set up in the PAES Lab. (MTC)

Board-ready story/evidence: Provide a brief example or data point that illustrates the impact. Do not include student names.

None to report on just yet. (Freshman Center)

With ASI/FSI not returning to East, they have transitioned well. Those classrooms got new furniture to better meet the needs of students and teachers, and it has been exciting to see that program take shape here (East)

Students secured employment at a local banquet facility following career-readiness experiences, providing evidence of impact of work-based learning and vocational programming. (West)

All students have accounts and are able to clock-in. Some classes are still working on beginning stages while others are fully running through the PAES Lab, including our new students. A total of 20/53 students are currently completing jobs fully, however all students are currently active in some capacity in the PAES Lab. (MTC)

5. Professional Learning / Support

Learning/support provided: What professional learning, coaching, collaboration, or direct support occurred at your campus?

The year is just getting started. We have been having meaningful conversations about students within our house model at this time. We are reaching out to parents to have that initial BARR advocate conversation. (Freshman Center)

The Inclusion teams completed a Collaboration Agreement Form this year for the first time where teachers established norms, roles, and expectations in the classroom. This has been a great tool to spark conversations amongst teachers about how they expect their classroom to look and feel during instruction time. (East)

Staff received support for Formative accommodations, Skyward case-management updates, Red Rover procedures, IEP implementation, data tracking, and strategies for teaching functional job-application vocabulary. (West)

Staff received a refresher training on our Ori curriculum. Given our need to all work closely together in all areas we are in constant collaboration with each other. (MTC)

Impact/follow-up: How is the support strengthening practice, and what follow-up is needed?

Support is increasing consistency in documentation, accommodation, and student monitoring. Continued coaching and follow-up will focus on IEP compliance, data collection, and implementation of student-specific support. (West)

The Ori refresher ensures that all staff are on the same page regarding delivering instruction via their platform to our students. (MTC)

6. Next Steps

Next-month priorities: List the key action(s) your campus will take before the next report.

We will have more walkthrough data as well as more BARR data to look at before reporting next month. The STAR assessment and Panorama will be up and running with important data as well. (Freshman Center)

East will use our walkthrough data to see what we are doing well and what we need to improve within our department. (East)

Continue monitoring IEP service delivery and student placement. Strengthen academic/behavior data collection for identified students. Continue career-readiness and community-based learning opportunities. Finalize and communicate inclusion program information to families. (West)

Continue getting all students fully set up on all of our technology and curriculum platforms (MTC)

District support/coordination: Note any resources, decisions, or cross-campus support needed to move the work forward.

It is always nice to meet at cross-campus lead teachers once a month if possible. We are able to get on the same page regarding star and freckle lessons as well as share information that should be alike across campuses. (Freshman Center)

Speaking with the other lead teachers in my department from the various campuses has been tremendous support. (East)

Continued coordination among case managers, counselors, admin and related service staff to address all placement, scheduling and compliance issues. (West)



J.S. Morton Director's Board Report

Director: Melody Becker Departments: English Learners and Modern Languages

Month: September

1. Instructional Focus (Literacy/Numeracy)

EL students take the same core and honors classes as their peers. Their teachers follow the same curriculum and collaborate in PLTs to determine what skills to emphasize. Additionally, their teachers embed English language development skills in collaboration with ESL or Bilingual certified teachers. At the Freshman Center, Biology students are observing and tallying insects and plants from the gardens using academic vocabulary to categorize data. In World History, students are making inferences from images to sort and categorize using academic vocabulary. In Math, students are using Building Thinking classroom strategy to increase student discourse.

EL 4 students are learning about SPACECAT and annotation techniques as an analysis tool for nonfiction and fictional texts. Students will continue to expand upon their knowledge of literary elements, devices, rhetorical appeals and choices.

EL students in U.S. History are learning the five founding ideals (*equality, rights, liberty, opportunity, and democracy*). Students analyze and utilize the reading to define all five ideals. All students utilize the same text which helps the class have a common understanding of these key terms that will be used throughout the entire school year.

EL students in AP Seminar received instruction and opportunities to engage with CAPE discussion roles as well as QUEST annotation using fun bookmarks to guide their reading and thought process.

EL 1 students are learning to create plot maps and literary devices to support their reading comprehension and literary analysis skills.

EL students in Math are learning new skills and vocabulary through notetaking and practice forming and evaluating expressions. EL support includes simplified terms and definitions broken down on a unit note sheet.

Modern Language students new to their language are beginning to develop their academic vocabulary in the target language. Students in Spanish Language Arts are reinforcing their vocabulary and can communicate with their classmates in the target language.

The emphasis is focused on intentional teaching and reinforcing of academic vocabulary in the target language during instruction, discussions, and hands-on learning.

AP Spanish Language and Culture has begun the Argumentative Essay. Students need to synthesize three sources and write a five-paragraph argumentative essay. This requirement connects to the ACT because students need to read critically, analyze different viewpoints, find evidence, and evaluate arguments. This reinforces several of the same higher-order skills students need for the ACT, especially reading, analysis, evidence-based reasoning, and clear written communication.

AP Spanish Literature and Culture has started to study the literary works of the Medieval period. Students need to interpret literary texts and audio sources, identifying literary devices such as metaphors, hyperbole, tone, and narrative voice and connect a literary work or excerpt to its historical, social, and

geographic context. These are transferable literacy skills that directly support the analytical reading, interpretation of figurative language, understanding of tone and point of view, and evidence-based reasoning required on the ACT.

EL students and their families have received their Notice of Enrollment letters to inform them that they qualify for English Language Development services and will be taking the ACCESS test in January or February. The students' services are determined through the courses they take and the certifications of their teachers.

In addition to the mailing, students, families and teachers can view their 2026 ACCESS Scores in Skyward under test scores.

EL students are visible through green indicators on the students' profile. This is a good way for teachers to get to know their students' needs.

2. Walkthrough Data (Instructional Monitoring)

Walkthroughs have begun at all campuses. The focus is on literacy and numeracy skill development, as well as our Mustang Musts. Walkthroughs serve as a snapshot to understand the current status of teaching and learning in our department.

As teachers are getting to know their students and setting up classroom procedures, they are displaying their learning outcomes for students to refer to during class. Their learning outcomes include three parts: the skill, the content and the process. Each learning outcome should include the language domain students are using to make meaning within the class: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

3. PLT Progress (Instructional Improvement Cycle)

EL English classes are completing benchmark assessments in STAR and No Red Ink. Many teachers observed that laptops were still an issue and took longer than normal to administer. Request for assessment laptops to be available in classrooms took multiple requests through Mustang Portal, but they were provided which improved the testing experience for students.

PLTs wrote SMART goals and reviewed the main instructional priorities for the semester.

4. Student Highlights

Students and parents attended the Open House. Families received information about BARR, a brief introduction to their courses, and an invitation to Parent Teacher Conferences in October.

Teachers also shared upcoming testing information (STAR, ACCESS, AAPPL, ACT) with families. They also explained how the tests connect to the Seal of Biliteracy, evaluate their English proficiency, and prepare them for ACCESS and ACT testing.

Multilingual Resource teachers shared with parents about how this course is a safe, welcoming space designed to help students adapt to the school and help them integrate socially and academically to Morton.

Students have been engaged in a variety of student-focused activities and icebreakers get into the school routine and get to know one another.

5. Professional Learning / Support

On August 10th and 11th, teachers engaged in professional learning to prepare for the new year. Teachers learned about the updated district improvement plan and our focus on literacy and numeracy. They engaged in a Building Thinking Classrooms activity while doing a close reading of the Mustang Musts and Walkthrough questions. Teachers learned more information about MTSS Tiered Supports, No Red Ink and Newsela platforms that will support our district goals.

Several teachers from the EL department shared their expertise at Festival Ignite. Thank you, Kyle Boyd, Angelica Chavez, Erin Fagan, Ashley Glickman, Nydia Valle-Cabrera and Iomil Villanueva.

6. Next Steps

The following actions can be expected during the month of September to support our Literacy and Numeracy goals:

- Training for our new platform, Progress Learning. This platform will allow for two ACT practice tests and personalized ACT practice for students.
- PLTs will analyze data from the Star Assessment and embed skill development into their lessons.
- Seniors will receive their Progress to the Seal of Biliteracy to learn which requirements they have already met for the Seal of Biliteracy. Seniors at Morton East will begin testing for the Seal of Biliteracy. They will demonstrate a high level of proficiency in English and another language.
- Walkthroughs will be taken to understand how our literacy, numeracy and Mustang Musts are being enacted in classes.
- English Learner data will be updated in both Skyward and SIS to accurately report student programming. This data will be used for Pre-ID labels for the ACCESS test.

7. Board Summary Statement (1–2 sentences)

The English Learners and Modern Languages departments are focused on developing literacy, numeracy, and academic vocabulary through grade-level instruction, collaborative teaching practices, targeted language supports, and rigorous coursework that promotes critical thinking, analysis, communication, and content mastery.

Walkthroughs, PLT goal setting, family engagement, student support initiatives, and professional learning efforts demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous instructional improvement and student success.



J.S. Morton Director's Board Report

Director: **Colleen Del Monaco**

Department(s): **Career and Technical Education**

Month: September

1. Instructional Focus (Literacy/Numeracy)

CTE teachers continued integrating literacy and Building Thinking Classroom strategies into instruction. AP Cybersecurity incorporated Building Thinking Classroom strategies to strengthen collaborative problem-solving and student reasoning, while Culinary and Industrial Technology courses emphasized literacy through explicit instruction and application of content-specific vocabulary, particularly within safety lessons.

Classroom walkthroughs and observations showed students engaging in collaborative problem-solving, academic discussion, and use of technical vocabulary. In Culinary and Industrial Technology, students applied safety-related terminology during instruction and hands-on activities. Continued focus will be placed on consistent use of content vocabulary and thinking strategies across CTE classrooms.

2. Walkthrough Data (Instructional Monitoring)

Student Engagement & Learning: Students demonstrated strong intellectual engagement with learning outcomes, with 82% at East and 69% at West. At East, 73% of students could clearly articulate what they were learning.

Positive Classroom Culture: Respectful and positive interactions were a consistent strength across both campuses, evident in **91% of East classrooms and 97% of West classrooms**.

3. PLT Progress (Instructional Improvement Cycle)

PLT Goal Setting & Instructional Focus: PLTs held their first meetings and established SMART goals aligned to their content and ACT literacy or numeracy area of focus. Teams discussed instructional strategies they will implement to address their identified focus area and documented agendas, norms, and action steps.

Assessment Alignment & Collaboration: PLTs continued conversations around common assessments and instructional consistency, focusing on alignment of Common Summative Assessments and continuity of expectations across classrooms and campuses.

4. Student Highlights

AP Cybersecurity Achievement: 92% of students enrolled in AP Cybersecurity earned a 3, 4, or 5 on their first Common Summative Assessment, demonstrating strong early mastery of course content.

Student Communication & Collaboration: AP Business students delivered presentations and engaged in constructive peer feedback using the Glow & Grow method, identifying strengths and areas for improvement while developing communication and collaboration skills.

5. Professional Learning / Support

CTE Lead Teachers and first-/second-year teachers participated in Building Thinking Classrooms professional learning prior to the start of the school year, building a shared foundation for implementing strategies that promote student thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving.

Four additional CTE teachers from across the district participated in Building Thinking Classrooms professional learning throughout August to expand their toolkit of strategies and identify ways to embed thinking routines across various CTE content areas.

6. Next Steps

Strengthen Literacy, Numeracy & Thinking Strategies: Continue supporting teachers in embedding disciplinary literacy, content vocabulary, numeracy, and Building Thinking Classroom strategies into daily CTE instruction, with an emphasis on student discourse, problem-solving, and communicating their thinking.

Continue PLT Alignment & Collaboration: PLTs will use their SMART goals and ACT literacy/numeracy focus areas to guide instructional strategies and review common assessment data. Teams will continue working toward consistent common assessments and instructional expectations across CTE classrooms and campuses.

7. Board Summary Statement (1–2 sentences)

The CTE Department continues to strengthen instructional practices through targeted professional learning, collaborative PLT work, and the integration of literacy, numeracy, and Building Thinking Classroom strategies. Early student outcomes demonstrate strong engagement and achievement, with continued focus on instructional consistency, content vocabulary, and common assessment practices across campuses.



J.S. Morton Director's Board Report

Director: Kevin Vesper Department(s): Social Science & Fine Arts

Month: September 2026

1. Instructional Focus (Literacy/Numeracy)

The AP U.S. History team revised course syllabi to explicitly identify the ACT literacy skills aligned to key course learning outcomes and skills. Teachers will introduce and review these alignments with students at the start of the school year, reinforcing the department's commitment to intentional literacy instruction and helping students monitor their growth in critical reading, analysis, and evidence-based writing.

The cross-town AP Human Geography PLT established a numeracy SMART Goal aligned to the district's literacy and numeracy priorities. The goal states: "Students will use models to analyze data and solve problems. Students will take a quiz by September 16 and meet expectations by earning a score of 70% or higher." To support this goal, the PLT is sharing and modeling Tier 1 instructional strategies that help students analyze data spatially using maps and understand the broader implications of the data.

In Social Science classrooms, teachers implemented Big Thinking Classroom strategies to launch lessons with engaging, inquiry-based hooks tied to learning outcomes. In AP Psychology, students analyzed case studies to determine potential diagnoses. In AP Government and Politics, students examined real-world scenarios connected to themes from the *Federalist Papers*. In History of American Pop Culture, students

used evidence to evaluate Dolly Parton's legacy as a musician, philanthropist, entrepreneur, or pop culture icon.



2. Walkthrough Data (Instructional Monitoring)

Social Science: 94 walkthroughs

Top 3 Highest-Observed Indicators

Rank	Indicator	% Observed
1	Respectful and positive interactions are observed	88.3%
2	Students are engaged in disciplinary literacy and/or problem solving	73.4%
3	Students are intellectually engaged in the learning	73.4%

Bottom 3 Lowest-Observed Indicators

Rank	Indicator	% Observed
1	Students provide peer-to-peer feedback using success criteria	8.5%
2	Students use feedback to plan next steps	8.5%
3	Students provide self-feedback using success criteria	9.6%

Strength: Social Science classrooms are characterized by strong relationships and high levels of student engagement in literacy, problem-solving, and learning tasks.

Opportunity: Student ownership of learning through self-assessment, peer feedback, and using feedback to determine next steps appears infrequently during walkthroughs and may represent an area for departmental growth.

Fine Arts: 42 walkthroughs

Top 3 Highest-Observed Indicators

Rank	Indicator	% Observed
1	Respectful and positive interactions are observed	92.9%
2	Students are intellectually engaged in the learning	76.2%
3	The content is clear and visible in the outcome	61.9%

Bottom 3 Lowest-Observed Indicators

Rank	Indicator	% Observed
1	Students provide peer-to-peer feedback using success criteria/rubrics	14.3%
2	Students provide self-feedback using success criteria/rubrics	16.7%
3	Students use feedback to plan next steps for learning	19.0%

Strength: Fine Arts classrooms demonstrate exceptionally strong classroom culture and relationships, with high levels of respectful interactions and student engagement. Students also tend to have a clear understanding of the content being learned.

Opportunity: Similar to Social Science, the greatest opportunities for growth involve strengthening feedback practices. Self-assessment, peer feedback, and students using feedback to guide next steps in their learning were observed infrequently and may be valuable areas for departmental focus.

3. PLT Progress (Instructional Improvement Cycle)

The FC World History PLT met on August 26 to review common assessments and evaluate their alignment to the district's focus on skills-based assessment and literacy/numeracy. Through collaborative analysis, the team determined that six assessments required revision to better address these priorities. To move this work forward, each PLT member selected a common assessment to revise and will bring proposed changes back to the team for review and feedback.

The Core U.S. History (West) PLT identified cause and effect as the ACT skill area for its SMART Goal. The team established a target of 80% of students meeting proficiency by December and is implementing instructional strategies designed to strengthen students' ability to analyze historical relationships and draw evidence-based conclusions.

In AP African American Studies, students analyzed primary sources related to Great Zimbabwe to strengthen the ACT skill of drawing conclusions. Through the examination of historical evidence, students developed their ability to make informed inferences, support claims with textual evidence, and engage in critical analysis of historical events and societies.



The Music PLT established a SMART Goal focused on improving music literacy by strengthening students' ability to read and interpret musical notation. Students will demonstrate growth through their ability to accurately read, identify, and apply concepts such as rhythm, notation, dynamics, articulation, form, and musical vocabulary. Progress will be measured through common music literacy assessments administered throughout the year, with students expected to demonstrate an average improvement of at least 20% from their baseline assessment.

The Visual Art PLT established a SMART Goal focused on improving literacy through artwork analysis. 80% of students will interpret artworks bi-weekly, identify the artist's message, and support their claims with visual evidence. Student growth will be measured through common assessment tasks.

4. Student Highlights

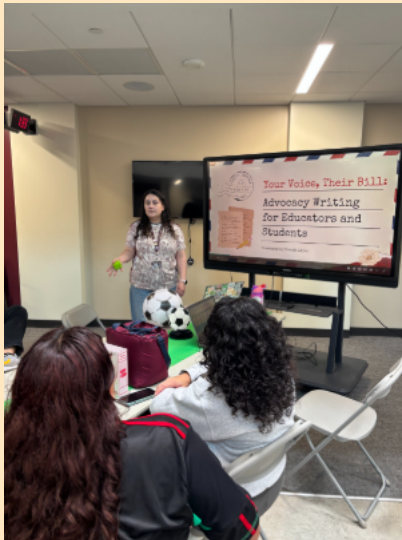
Two of our talented painters, Ilynn Bernal and Laisha Dominguez, will be participating in this exciting event on September 1st at the Book Loft in Oak Park (across from the theater on Lake Street). Author, Mark Benson, has invited young artists to illustrate chapters of his new book, *The Scattering*, in paintings. These paintings will be part of his book launch and will be available to buy at the event. Please come support our Mustang Painters at this special evening.

5. Professional Learning / Support

Jenell Radojevich, Jennie Crownson, Gerardo Acevedo and Elizabeth Casillas attended a week-long workshop entitled *Founding Principles: Nature, Rights, and the New Science of Politics*, which was hosted at Roosevelt University from June 22–June 2. It was hosted by the Montesquieu Forum at Roosevelt University, and funded by the US Department of Education, this seminar brings together distinguished scholars and advances the philosophic and classical heritage that helped shape the American Founding and its enduring principles. Here is a picture of them during a lunch break.



Brenda Lopez presented at Festival Ignite, providing examples for teachers to bring in more civic engagement in the classroom.



6. Next Steps

The department will use walkthrough data and Professional Learning Team meetings to strengthen student ownership of learning, with a particular focus on self-assessment, peer feedback, and students' use of feedback to guide next steps.

Teachers will continue implementing literacy and numeracy strategies aligned to district priorities while examining student work and assessment data to monitor progress toward departmental SMART goals.

7. Board Summary Statement (1–2 sentences)

During August, the Social Science and Fine Arts Department launched the school year with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy through ACT skill alignment, targeted PLT work, and instructional monitoring. Early walkthrough and PLT data have identified strengths in student engagement and classroom culture while providing clear direction for continued growth in student ownership of learning.



J.S. Morton Director's Board Report

Director: Eric Bjornstad Department(s): Science

Month: September

1. Instructional Focus (Literacy/Numeracy)

For quarter 1 action plans, all science staff are incorporating Newsela articles into instruction to support ACT literacy. Quarter 2 plans will include interventions from Progress learning platform.

Biology students began the year learning about ecology and designing their own investigation (many in the garden). STEM is starting with Energy. PBS has started with a murder; discovering the cause of death of the victim by reviewing the crime scene.

2. Walkthrough Data (Instructional Monitoring)

Great use of MLO's in most science classes. Observed some great examples of the Mustang Musts and lots of student engagement.

Student engagement and collaboration have been great to start the year, with many (over half) of all science walk-throughs seeing students engaged with indoor/outdoor laboratory activities.

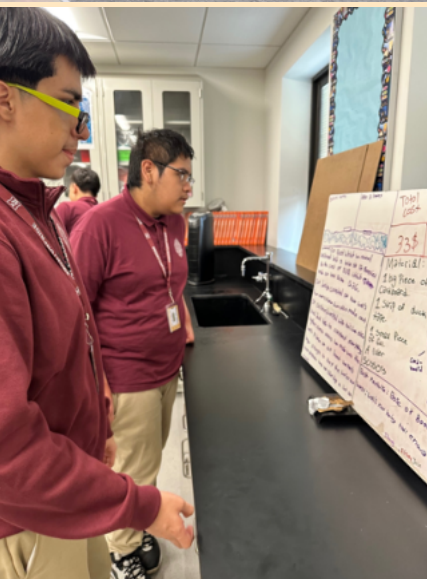
3. PLT Progress (Instructional Improvement Cycle)

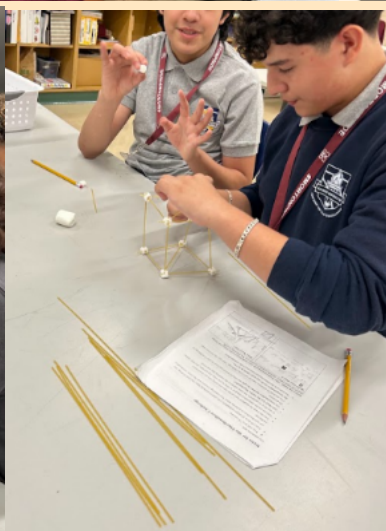
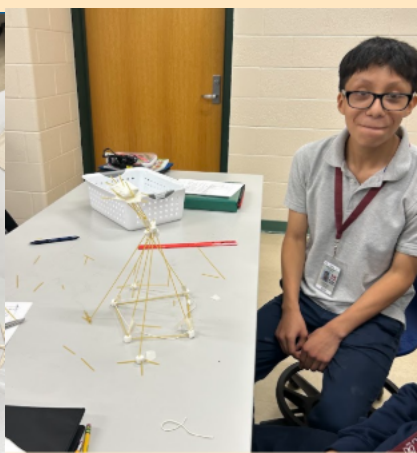
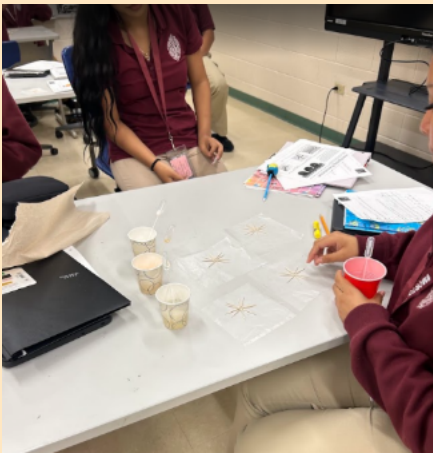
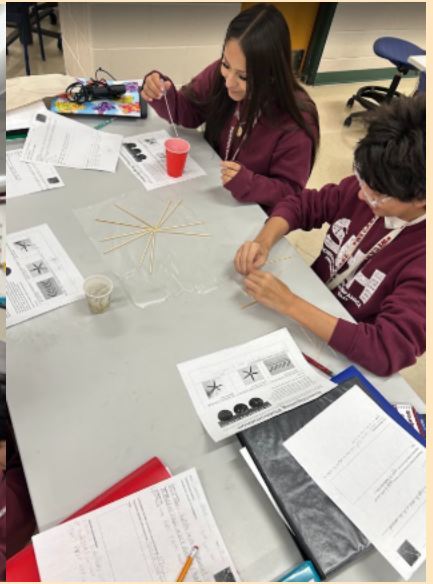
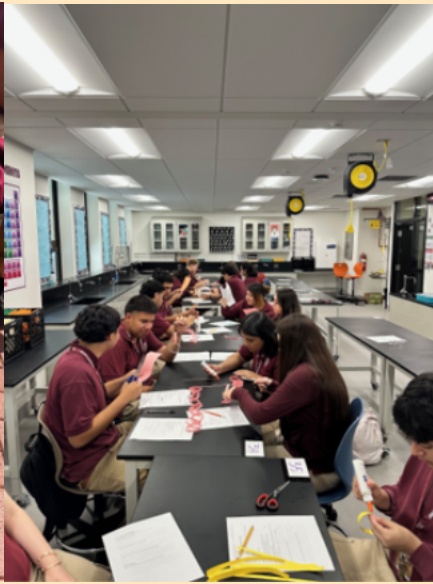
All science PLT's have created ACT action plans that align the ACT focus skill (Interpretation of Data) to their local skills via SMART goal. PLTs have also identified three to five skills via the STAR assessment that align to the local skill for active progress monitoring towards ACT growth in those areas.

FC Honors Biology set the Smart Goal - 70% of students will receive a 4.0 or higher on Analyzing and Interpreting Data, by the end of 1st semester. This will be measured on the Heat Island FA - complete by Sept 25th and Population CA - complete by October 31st. To accomplish this goal the team shared instructional strategies, including a data and analysis notes and a sorting activity to assist students.

4. Student Highlights

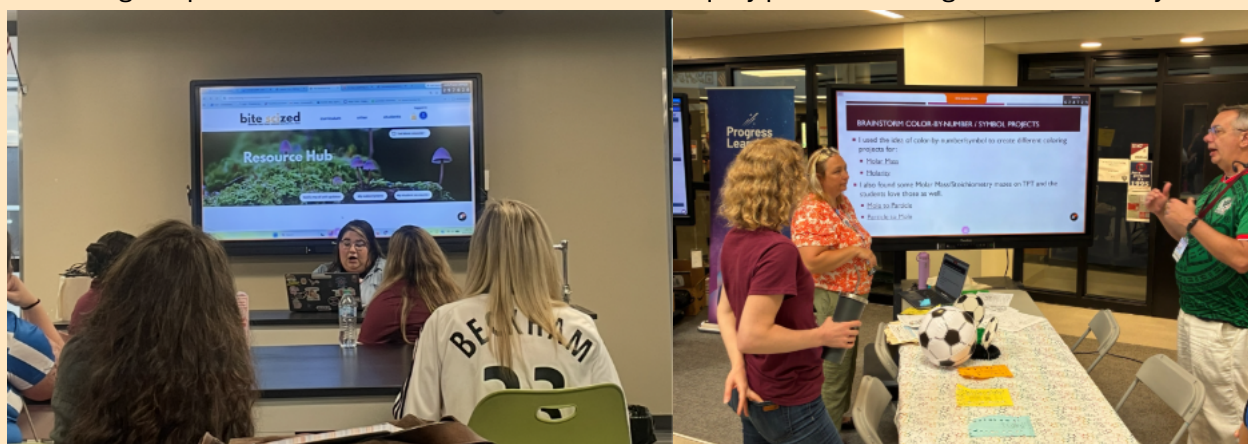
Pictures of students engaged in activities from around the District.





5. Professional Learning / Support

Festival Ignite presentation to staff about Accessible inquiry process through food chemistry.



Sam L, Dina C, and Anne S all are attending the BTC 3-day Professional Learning Experience

6. Next Steps

Identify and implement Newsela articles into instruction for all science PLTs.

Ensure fidelity and student participation in the Progress learning fall assessment so that we have accurate student data. This will ultimately help the department select the best interventions to help students be successful on the ACT in the spring.

7. Board Summary Statement (1–2 sentences)

Overall, the science department has made great progress with identifying processes, progress monitoring, and outcomes associated with ACT goals, as well as increasing overall literacy and numeracy. Our focus will now shift to instruction and interventions associated with helping students achieve the learning outcomes.



J.S. Morton Director's Board Report

Director: **Megan Delaney**

Department(s): **English & Media Services**

Month: **September**

1. Instructional Focus (**Literacy/Numeracy**)

Across campuses, August English work centered on two district priorities: aligning instruction and establishing baseline literacy data. PLTs refined text selections to match course skills, themes, and appropriate complexity, while NoRedInk and STAR benchmarks established starting points for instructional planning. Together, this work gives PLTs a common starting point for identifying high-leverage literacy needs, setting goals, and planning targeted instruction as the first instructional cycle begins.

2. Walkthrough Data (Instructional Monitoring)

Across 104 English walkthroughs, the clearest districtwide strength was classroom culture: respectful and positive interactions were observed in 95% of visits. Other emerging strengths included intellectual engagement (73%), visible learning outcomes (72%), disciplinary literacy/problem solving (69%), and academic vocabulary development (66%). MAS also identified student connection as a campus strength.

September support will emphasize purposeful discourse, responsive instruction, and clearer integration of success criteria and feedback cycles.

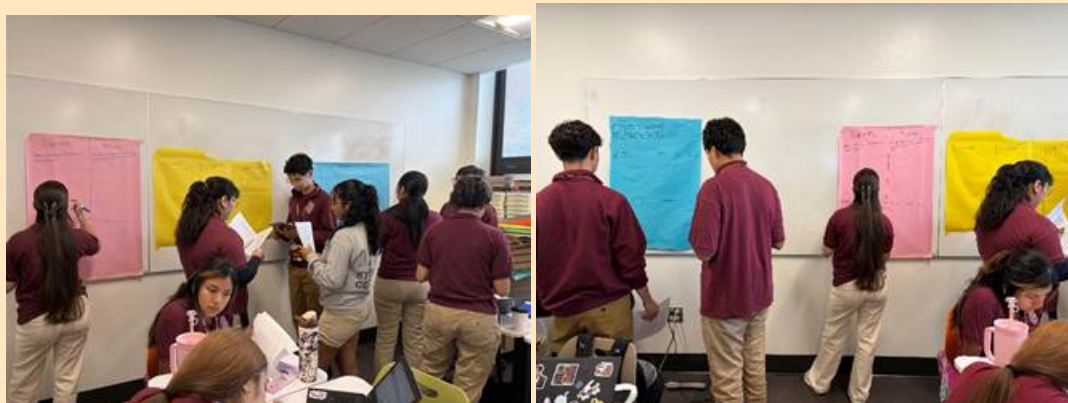
3. PLT Progress (Instructional Improvement Cycle)

Across campuses, PLTs used August to establish the foundation for the instructional improvement cycle through baseline assessment, semester pacing, text alignment, and goal setting. English PLT teachers at all campuses were collectively building the structures needed to move from planning into evidence-based instructional action.

In September, PLTs will use emerging NoRedInk, STAR, common assessment, and implementation evidence to refine action steps. This includes targeting ACT-related literacy skills, adjusting English I implementation as evidence develops, and supporting MAS students in setting and monitoring personal and academic goals.

4. Student Highlights

Because August focused heavily on baseline assessment and curriculum launch, districtwide evidence of student outcomes is still emerging. Early indicators are encouraging: West benchmark data show strong readiness in two ACT language skills, while MAS reported improved tardiness and used relationship-building activities to strengthen student connection.



Building Thinking Classrooms (BTC) in English classrooms at Morton East

5. Professional Learning / Support

Professional learning and support focused on strengthening implementation of the district's literacy, assessment, and student-support systems. Teachers received support with NoRedInk and STAR, lead teachers engaged in Building Thinking Classrooms learning, and MTSS structures were reinforced through campus collaboration and training.

September follow-up will focus on translating assessment data into targeted instruction, expanding interactive and student-centered practices, and strengthening shared resources for intervention and support. MAS will also continue MTSS coordination, pursue Newsela training, and develop community partnerships with youth outreach and the Cicero Library.

6. Next Steps

September will shift the department from baseline collection to instructional response. PLTs will analyze NoRedInk and STAR data, identify priority literacy skills, develop common formative responses, and monitor early curriculum implementation. Walkthrough follow-up will reinforce student discourse, responsive instruction, and visible success criteria/feedback.

District coordination will continue to support consistent expectations for text alignment, benchmark use, instructional resources, and data-informed PLT cycles while allowing campuses to respond to their specific student needs.

7. Board Summary Statement (1–2 sentences)

August established a common foundation for English instruction across campuses through aligned curriculum resources, baseline literacy data, instructional monitoring, and professional learning. September work will focus on turning that foundation into targeted PLT action, stronger student ownership of learning, and measurable instructional response.



J.S. Morton Director's Board Report

Director: Gloria Ramirez-Solis

Department(s): MTSS

Month: September

1. Instructional Focus (Literacy/Numeracy/Life-Readiness)

Across campuses, August's primary Student Services focus was Life-Readiness and supporting students' successful transition into the new school year. Student Support Teams prioritized relationship-building, student connection, attendance, safety, and early identification of student needs. Staff supported incoming freshmen and students in Adaptive/Functional Life Skills programs, provided services for students with IEPs and 504 Plans, and assisted students returning to school following mental health hospitalizations. MTSS teams also began reviewing prior Panorama and attendance data to identify students needing early intervention and establish Life-Readiness priorities for the year.

Early evidence includes Panorama data, attendance patterns, critical grades/credits, student participation, staff observations, and communication with students and families. MTSS teams have begun using these data to identify emerging attendance and student-support needs earlier in the school year. Student Support Teams are also monitoring service delivery and individual student needs, including 241 students currently receiving social work services through their IEPs at West. These initial data and observations will establish a baseline for monitoring Life-Readiness, attendance, student connection, and intervention needs throughout the year.

2. Student Support Monitoring

Across campuses, early-year monitoring identified several consistent priorities related to attendance, academic progress, and student support needs. Teams are addressing attendance concerns early through collaboration among administrators, Student Support Teams, truancy staff, and community partners such as West40. Counseling teams are also reviewing transcripts and credits to identify students who are off track and connect them with academic recovery opportunities, including RISE and Night School. At the same time, campuses are experiencing a notable level of student mental health needs, requiring crisis response, hospitalization/re-entry support, and coordinated follow-up. Special education support staff are also reviewing IEP services, goals, and individual student needs to ensure appropriate supports are in place.

Initial evidence demonstrates the importance of early identification and coordinated intervention. The Freshman Center responded to approximately eight student crises during the month while also updating its

student and family resource guide. At East, approximately six acute mental health crises occurred among sophomores within the first 12 days of school, with several requiring hospitalization or crisis stabilization. At West, counselors are actively identifying off-track students and connecting students to credit-recovery and post-secondary opportunities, including Dual Enrollment with Morton College. These patterns will continue to be monitored through attendance, credit accumulation, student support data, and MTSS processes to ensure students are connected to timely academic and Life-Readiness supports.

3. PLT Progress (Instructional Improvement Cycle- Problem Solving)

Across campuses, Student Support Team PLTs used August to establish coordinated systems for identifying priority students, assigning supports, and clarifying team responsibilities. Teams reviewed and organized caseloads, identified students requiring immediate or ongoing support, and coordinated services across counseling, social work, psychology, MTSS, and community partners. Priority areas included students with IEP/504 needs, critical attendance concerns, students experiencing mental health crises, incoming students with previously identified needs, and students requiring additional social-emotional or family support. Teams also established or assigned student groups, planned health and prevention programming, and coordinated follow-up supports to promote continuity across grade levels and campuses.

Teams reviewed multiple sources of evidence, including Panorama attendance data, IEP and 504 service information, student records, prior intervention history, referrals, McKinney-Vento data, and current crisis trends. Early review showed a need for more proactive mental health and attendance supports, particularly as campuses experienced frequent student crises early in the school year. In response, teams are reviewing crisis patterns during PLTs, reassessing caseloads, placing students into appropriate individual and group supports, connecting students with community-based services when needed, and strengthening early-intervention processes. These data will continue to guide adjustments to supports and follow-up actions as additional current-year information becomes available.

4. Student Highlights



During open house, FC student support team were able to give parents resources for outside resources for mental health. During the presentations, the students had questions about the “See something/say something” lesson and mental health questions.



The Counseling Department took over 40 college-ready students to tour the UIC campus and meet with admissions representatives, working on our goal to promote post-secondary options and plans. Special thanks to Mr. Ryan Smith and Ms. Dayanna Rodriguez in the CCC.

West students demonstrated strong progress in both post-secondary readiness and college access. Four students were identified as semifinalists for the POSSE Scholarship Program, reflecting strong academic achievement, leadership, and college readiness. In addition, 36 students have participated in Morton College Dual Enrollment Visit Days, providing students with direct exposure to college-level opportunities and pathways available while still in high school.

5. Professional Learning / Support

Student Support Teams engaged in ongoing collaboration, peer learning, and cross-department coordination to strengthen consistent student support practices. Social workers, psychologists, counselors, administrators, and teachers collaborated around referral processes, mental health and Life-Readiness supports, student lessons, and procedures for responding to student and family needs. The Freshman Center also initiated collaboration with MAS social workers, while East clarified processes for referrals to resources such as the Comfort Closet and student support fund. At West, the Senior/CCC team partnered with the PTO to align college- and career-readiness efforts with family and community needs.

This collaboration is helping campuses establish more consistent systems, shared expectations, and coordinated responses to student needs. Teams will continue refining referral and support procedures, strengthening cross-campus collaboration, and identifying additional professional learning needs as student trends emerge. Planned follow-up also includes continued family and community engagement, including West's developing "Pizza and College Prep" parent event and a community service initiative connected to the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

6. Next Steps

Student Services teams will focus on using Panorama Life-Readiness data to identify students at elevated risk, prioritize needs, and connect students with timely interventions and follow-up supports. MTSS teams will continue addressing critical attendance and academic concerns, while social workers and psychologists will expand prevention and student-support efforts through health presentations, suicide prevention programming, cross-campus collaboration, and the development of targeted student groups. Teams will also

continue strengthening postsecondary readiness through college visits, application workshops, Morton College support, ISAC resources, military recruiter visits, and outreach to students and families.

Campus teams will review Panorama results collaboratively, develop response plans for identified students, and meet directly with students requiring additional support. College and Career Center teams will provide targeted assistance with Common App, college essays, applications, and postsecondary planning ahead of key fall deadlines. Additional priorities include senior on-track/off-track communication with families, SchoolLinks guardian access, continued collaboration with MAS social workers, and preparation for campus events such as the Portrait of a Graduate Fair. These actions will be monitored through MTSS, PLT, and Student Support Team processes to ensure follow-through and adjust supports as student needs emerge.

7. Board Summary Statement (1–2 sentences)

Across campuses, Student Services teams began the year with a strong focus on Life-Readiness, early identification, and coordinated supports, using attendance, Panorama, academic, and student support data to respond proactively to emerging needs. Moving forward, teams will deepen MTSS problem-solving, expand targeted mental health and attendance interventions, and strengthen college, career, and family engagement to ensure students are connected to the supports needed for success.