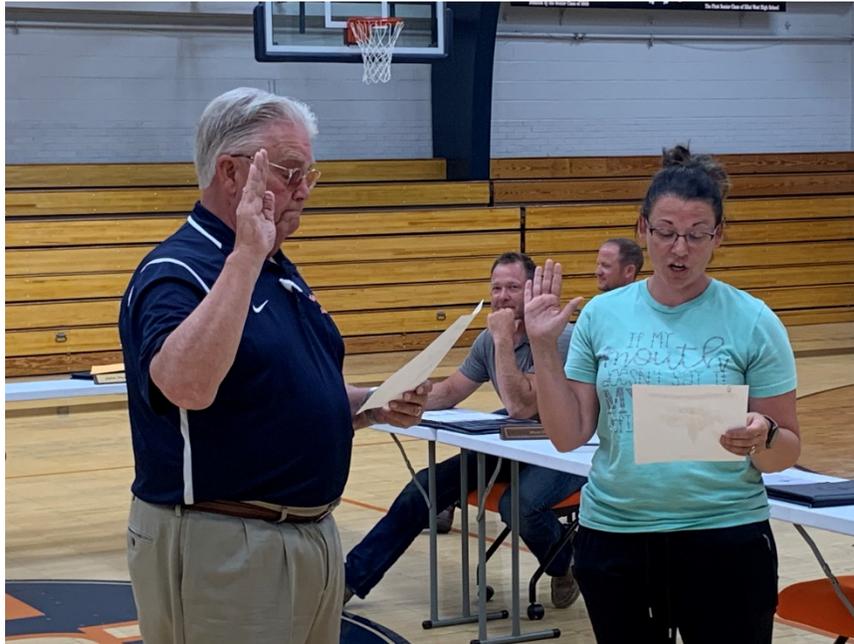


Joy Swearingen
J-P correspondent

The Illini West High School now has a full, seven-member board with the approval of Darcy Stonger of LaHarpe. Stonger was installed at the regular Illini West board meeting on June 16.

The seat had been vacant since April, when no one ran for election from the LaHarpe Elementary School district, to fill the spot left open when Shannon Pence did not seek re-election.



The board approved a proposed Behavior and Discipline Code as a supplement to the already approved student handbook for the coming school year. Superintendent Jay Harnack explained the program that he has used in every district he's been in for the last 15 years. "One of the things we've discussed is that we have students coming into Illini West from three different school districts where they have had different forms of discipline," Harnack said. "The goal is to provide for consistency in decision making and improve communication. So that anytime we know, if a certain thing happens, what the potential consequence will be. It takes the subjectivity out of discipline."

- The plan is set up in a matrix grid fashion. It provides a framework for discipline with flexibility for the administrators to take into context whatever the situation might be, if it is a minor offense or if it is a repeated action or an extreme incident.
- Grant Surprenant, student services director, said copies of the plan will be provided to parents and faculty. It will be presented to teachers during in-service days before school, explained to students during freshman orientation and on the first day of school, and will be posted on the website. "(Principal Jim Short) and I looked at it and have tailored it to what is in our handbook. Transitioning in my new role with discipline, this is something I want to get to the students and to the teachers, and parents too," Surprenant said.
- Short commented on the consistency and the subtle value of students knowing consequences of certain actions. "If we have a student come for disruption, we can go to that grid, and they will know it and we will know the range of consequences," said Short. "One question I often hear is, 'Why did I get that?' With this, students should know what happen."

Harnack reported that the Illinois State Board of Education has approved a general resolution for the return to in-person learning for the fall, however no direction has been given. Even though the state has opened, he noted that the governor is still operating under executive orders, and has mandated masks and social distancing remain in place for summer school. He also noted that there are no specific for fall requirements.

- “Nothing would make me happier than to put all this in the rear view mirror and go back to educating students,” Harnack said.

He praised custodial workers and unit staff for quickly and completely moving his office to be part of the unit office at the southeast corner of the building.

Short told the board that 20 students had been taking summer credit recovery classes at the computer learning center. Some have already completed their goals.

Following executive session, the board accepted the resignations of Zak Huston as athletic director and drivers ed teacher, and Kelly Keckler as science teacher.

They approved hiring Carrie Buxman to teach art, LeeAnn Lambert to teach science, David Casper for drivers ed, and Tim Lafferty as athletic director.

John Huston, board president, explained the Triple I Convention in Chicago in November for school administrators and board members. He urged members to attend and stressed the value of the sessions offered on a broad number of school topics for seasoned school officials and new board members.