

## Stay Connected

### Morton 709 Education and Administration Building

1050 S. Fourth Ave., Morton, IL 61550  
(309) 263-2581

### Transportation Facility

250 W. Courtland, Morton, IL 61550  
(309) 263-1086  
Director of Transportation: Nancy Weigle

### Morton High School

350 N. Illinois  
Morton, IL 61550  
(309) 266-7182  
Principal: Michael Gourley

### Jefferson Elementary School

220 E. Jefferson St.  
Morton, IL 61550  
(309) 263-2650  
Principal: Kate Wyman

### Lettie Brown Elementary School

2550 N. Morton Ave.  
Morton, IL 61550  
(309) 266-5309  
Principal: Faith Waterfield

### Morton Junior High

225 E. Jackson  
Morton, IL 61550  
(309) 266-6522  
Principal: Lee Hoffman

### Grundy Elementary School

1100 S. Fourth Ave.  
Morton, IL 61550  
(309) 263-1421  
Principal: Michael Saunders

### Lincoln Elementary School

100 S. Nebraska Ave.  
Morton, IL 61550  
(309) 266-6989  
Principal: Julie Albers

District Communications Coordinator: Amy Greiner — (309) 284-8046

### Find us online:

[www.morton709.org](http://www.morton709.org)

[www.facebook.com/Morton709](https://www.facebook.com/Morton709)

Follow us on Twitter — @DrHill709

We are grateful for the generous support of our sponsors!



Joe Wirth, CFP  
309-263-7811



Morton  
Community  
Bank

Member  
FDIC



Alltrust Financial  
Management



Kuhl  
Insurance™  
Protect | Advocate | Serve

# Morton School District 709



## Annual Report 2017



Photo: Illinois State's Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Smith explores MJHS' CareerMaker STEM lab.

## Mission

The Mission of the Morton District 709 Board of Education is to be a provider of and an advocate for the education of all children.

Morton Education and Administration Center  
1050 S. Fourth Ave.  
Morton, Illinois 61550  
(309) 263-2581

**Superintendent**  
Dr. Jeff Hill

**Assistant Superintendent**  
Dr. Craig Smock

**Director of Curriculum & Technology**  
Dr. Troy Teater

**Director of Student Support Services**  
Mrs. Carlie Owens

#### BOARD OF EDUCATION

**President**  
**Tom Neeley**  
thomas.neeley@mcusd709.org

**Vice President**  
**Dr. Shad Beaty**  
shad.beaty@mcusd709.org

**Secretary**  
**Jeff Schmidgall**  
jeffrey.schmidgall@mcusd709.org

**Kevin Austin**  
kevin.austin@mcusd709.org

**Michelle Bernier**  
michelle.bernier@mcusd709.org

**Dr. David Cross**  
david.cross@mcusd709.org

**Bart Rinkenberger**  
bart.rinkenberger@mcusd709.org

**Morton Community Unit School District 709 is a unit school district serving students in early childhood through 12th grade. The enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year was 2,994.**

## History of Excellence

Morton schools have a long history of excellence. MHS graduates are leaders around the world and right here in central Illinois. The Morton School District's success is a direct reflection of the values of the community and its alumni.

The Morton CUSD 709 Administration and Board of Education continue to honor the work of past leadership and the legacy of

the alumni. While much has changed in public education, one thing remains the same – the goal of educating the children of Morton and Groveland at its highest level. The Morton 709 School District supports that purpose.

This annual report provides a snapshot of the 2016-2017 school year and provides evidence of how the Morton School District is making progress towards its goals.



Class of 1971 Photo Caption: Class of 1971 celebrated their 46th high school reunion on September 15, 2017. First Row: Elaine Atkins-Duncan, Debra Rumbold-Wells, Monica Roberson-Whitman, Sue Schlenker-DiCaro, Roberta Tuttle-Griffith, Dianne Knapp-Wurmnest, Nan Fisher-Hume, Debbie Perdue-Resling, Bonnie Roth 2nd Row: Lonny Schultz, Vicki Lynn, Kirk Novakow, Barb Getz-Zimmerman, Linda Saletzki-Justus, Suzanne-Novakow-Riley, Jeannie Getz-Barth, Paula Kneip-Macy, Luanne Novakow-Stonewall, Julie Sells-Bethel, Gale Schock-Brinkoetter, Chris Moser-Lynn, Barb Rapp, Julie Yates-Rathburn, Becky Neukomm-Sauder, Sue Taylor-Getz, Lynn Atkinson-Brown, Bill Zwanzig, Greg Krantz, Third Row: Doug Adair, Connie Roth, Samuel (Dave) Getz, Rick Burritt, Dan Osterman, Joe Howard, Don Woerner, Allan Wenniger, Mike Driscoll, Greg Henry

## Morton District 709 Goals

**Achievement:** Morton District 709 will nurture and challenge each student to reach their potential through the highest quality teaching and evidenced based practices.

**Climate:** Morton District 709 will maintain a continuous improvement culture of mutual trust and respect demonstrated by all members of the school community.

**Communication:** Morton District 709 will strive to engage all members of the district and community in open, meaningful two-way communication providing timely information and opportunities for dialogue regarding key educational issues.

**Facilities:** Morton District 709 will develop and maintain facilities providing the current and future students with safe, well maintained, and functional space to support research based best practices in teaching and learning.

**Finance:** Morton District 709 will maintain a financial position which supports all district operations in an efficient, cost effective manner, providing long-term stability for the district.

## Climate

### Cohesive ■ Productive ■ Trusting ■ Highly Qualified

**Wellness** – District 709 offers a wellness program for employees that includes monthly health information, screenings, weight-loss competitions and cooking classes.

**Competitive salaries** – District 709 offers a competitive salary/benefits package.

**Recognition** – Our employees are a valuable asset. Monthly staff recognition honors exceptional work. The annual Master Potter award recognizes an outstanding District 709 educator. This award was established by the Board of Education as a tribute to someone who exemplifies the qualities of high standards, professionalism and dedication to students. Dr. Ben Wellenreiter, the American History teacher and the Social Studies Department Chair at the Morton Junior High, was the 2017 recipient. The Potter's Hand Award recognizes an outstanding member of the support staff. Cody Pullium, the Resource Study Hall Paraprofessional at Morton High School, was the 2017 recipient. New this year, is the Dana Ashby Memorial Service Award. It was named in remembrance of Dana Ashby, who was the former Director of Special Education. Ms. Denise Fountain, who is the Special Education Resource Teacher at Morton High School, was named the 2017 recipient.

**Qualifications** – We value a qualified staff because the most important part of a student's education is the teacher in the front of the room. Over 65% of our teachers have master's degrees; and we have five National Board Certified teachers.

#### Why is climate important?

Our goal is to create a positive environment most conducive to student learning and achievement.

## Communication

### Open ■ Meaningful ■ With Everyone

**Our tools** – We use our website, Facebook, Twitter, 709 Communicator, and MPTV to connect with citizens. We continue to look at ways to improve how we use these communications tools, and in January, our school district website, as well as the schools' websites, will have a new look and is expected to be more user friendly.

Our broadcasting brand, MPTV, airs locally on Comcast Channel 20 and iTV3 Channel 21. We also stream events live on the internet, including Board of Education meetings. MPTV produced about 170 programs in the 2016-17 school year.



#### Why is communication important?

We want to hear from and engage with our citizens and also share information about our schools. While we may have differing ideas, we are thankful to have a community that values education. Your input matters to us.



# Facilities

## Conducive To Learning ■ Growth ■ Needs ■ With Community Support

On March 15, 2016, District 709 voters approved a \$10.5 million bond issue for work in all six school buildings. The district also used \$1.5 million from reserves to complete the work. Below is the scope of work that was part of the bond issue and a timeline for work.

### Scope of Work:

**Lettie Brown Elementary:** 1 classroom, 1 gymnasium (5,000 square feet), restrooms, storage - Completed summer 2017

**Grundy Elementary:** 2 classrooms, 1 gymnasium (7,000 square feet), restrooms, storage - Completed summer 2017

**Jefferson Elementary:** New windows; east and west windows replaced as of summer 2017; north and south windows expected to be replaced in summer of 2018

**Lincoln Elementary:** 3 classrooms, 1 gymnasium (7,000 square feet), restrooms, storage - Completed summer 2017

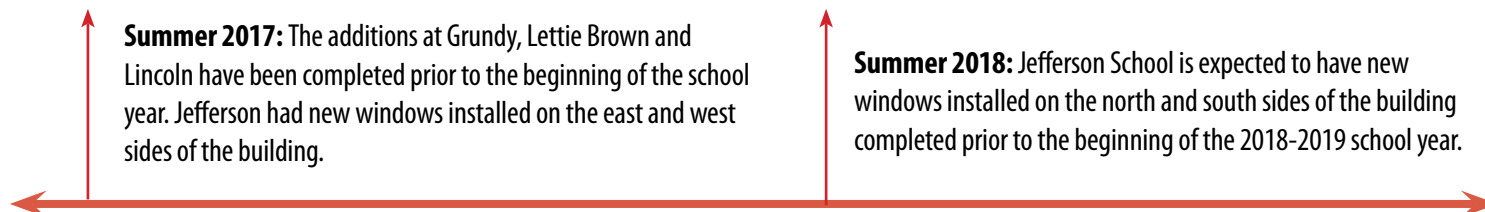
**Morton Junior High School:** Remodeled the band room/chorale room areas and other classrooms - Completed 2016

**Morton High School:** Remodeled the band room area, replaced outdoor storage building - Completed 2016



An inside look of the new gymnasium at Grundy School.

### Timeline:



### Regular Maintenance Projects:

These projects were completed during the summer of 2017 and are a part of the school district's five-year maintenance plan.

- ▶ Abatement and replacement of Lettie Brown's existing gym floor with new colors and court lines.
- ▶ Updated playground area at Grundy with new border and additional pea gravel areas.

- ▶ Abatement and replacement of kitchen and cafeteria flooring at Jefferson. Cafeteria remodel at Jefferson included new appliances, plumbing, and work station.
- ▶ New playground space added to existing play area on the east. Installed pea gravel, memorial area with slab, benches, and a memorial stone.
- ▶ Window replacement at MJHS on NW stairwell.

- ▶ Flooring abatement and replacement on north end corridor at MHS. Masonry repair on overhead door of woodshop and east face of 2nd and 3rd floor tower masonry with sealant and metal coping to the north, east and south sides of the tower. Remodeled three of the six home economics kitchens. Smoke partition walls installed in locations as required by 10-year Life Health Safety survey.

### Why are facilities important?

Our facilities directly impact the learning of our students; therefore, we keep them maintained, clean and safe.

# Achievement

## All Students ■ Opportunities ■ Highest Standards ■ Expectations

**Top Rankings for MHS** – Silver Medal from U.S. News & World Reports – 2nd time; Bronze Medal awarded 6 out of 7 years. The average composite ACT score for the Class of 2017 was 23.3. The state average ACT score was 21.4 and the national average ACT score was 21.

**Advanced Placement/Dual Credit at MHS** – 9 AP classes were offered at Morton High School. Many dual credit classes are offered as well, and in 2016-2017, 784 hours were earned at Illinois Central College by our MHS students.

**Class of 2017 Highlights** – 44 Illinois State Scholars, 3 National Merit Semi-Finalists, 16 ACE Award Winners, and 66 Mid-Illini Scholar Athlete Awardees.

**Morton Junior High** – The CareerMaker STEM Lab introduces students to hands-on career learning opportunities, which will initiate early exploration of potential career paths. In the CareerMaker STEM Lab there are 14 modules representing seven different career clusters. These learning modules engage students with problem-based, real-world technology. Students have the opportunity to choose the modules that best fit their interests and aptitudes.

**Morton District 709 Elementary Schools** – Morton District 709 continues to perform well on standardized tests when compared to other schools in Illinois. On all 2017 PARCC assessments, Morton District 709 outperforms the state average of Meets and Exceeds by over 15%. On 2017 Spring MAP tests, the mean of each grade level's reading assessment ranked at or above the 84th percentile.

**Enrichment** – About 15% of our elementary students qualify for enrichment

classes offered after school; 61 students participated in the summer enrichment program in 2017. This science-focused program is team taught by elementary and MHS teachers.

**English Language Learners** – Our school district served 20 English Language Learners, in various stages of language acquisition. Fourteen different languages were spoken by these students, including but not limited to: Amharic, Arabic, French, Gujarati, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish.

**MHS Academic Teams** – 7th-place state math team – for the last nine years, MHS has been the top-placing school that is not a private or selective enrollment school. The Chess Team also made a state academic appearance.

**2016-2017 Athletics** – Third consecutive state championship for the girls basketball team; boys golf team placed 5th in state following two consecutive state championships; boys cross country competed at state; over 26 students from the class of 2017 have committed to sports at the collegiate level, three of whom have signed to play at Division 1 schools.

**Music** – The MHS Marching Band brought home its 12th straight State of Illinois Marching Invitational Championship. Multiple individuals performed at the All-State Music Festival. The fall play, spring musical, "Plain and Fancy" and madrigal dinner were huge successes. Members of the Wind Ensemble travelled to Indianapolis to perform in the National Concert Band Festival. In addition, the release of the second annual Fine Arts Journal, Flight, showcased the artistic talents of many of our seniors.

**Red Wings Special Olympics** – There were 18 athletes involved in basketball. The team placed 2nd at the District Tournament. Jefferson student Morgan Zimmerman-Brown advanced to state for the Basketball Skills Competition. Sixteen athletes were involved in track and 11 qualified in at least one event for the State Meet.

**Service & Commitment** – The Class of 2017 gave back to their community by volunteering their time to serve in soup kitchens, fundraise for soup kitchens, host the senior citizen breakfast, donate to food drives, raise over \$5,000 for St. Jude, shovel sidewalks, participate in Pumpkin Festival cleanup, Adopt a Family, raise over \$62,000 for Children's Hospital, Toys for Tots, Center for Prevention of Abuse, Easter Seals, Samaritan's Purse, TCRC, and WeCare.

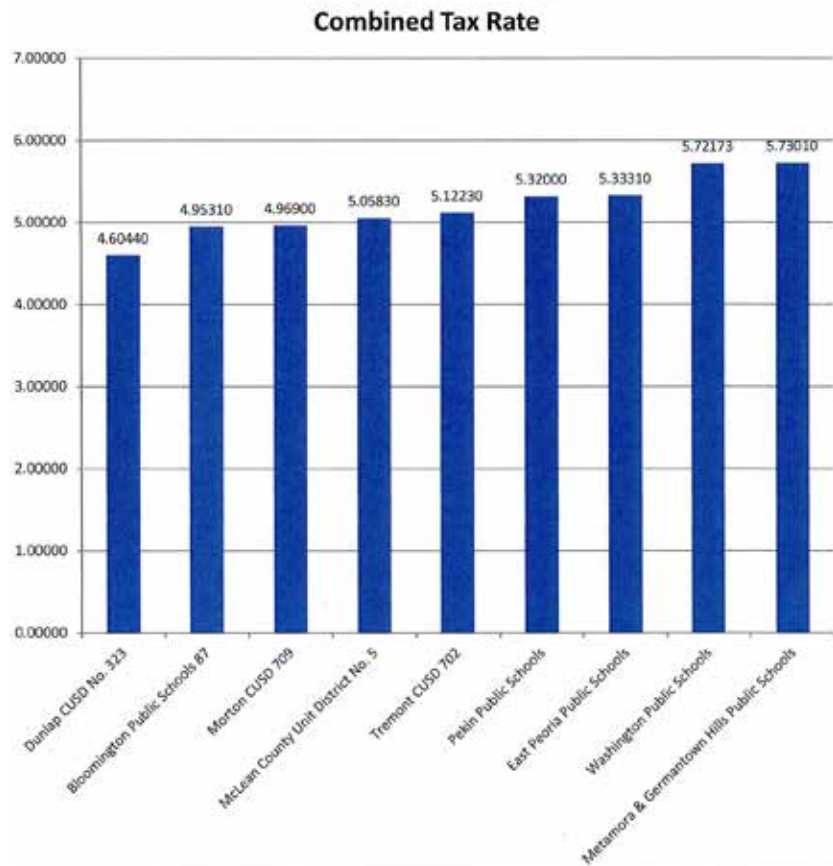
The 2016-2017 Morton Junior High School students volunteered at 24 locations in the Morton area during their annual Help-A-Thon fundraiser. The students raised over \$30,000 by seeking donors to sponsor their involvement in service projects within the local community. The funds are used to support the academic, athletic, and music programs as well as student field trips. The Help-A-Thon is designed to provide students with an opportunity to make a difference and grow as individuals.

**Technology** – The Morton schools are a technology rich environment, with students in early childhood through 12th grade having a personal device (iPad) assigned to them. The investment in technology represents our Board of Education's commitment to high expectations for learning and preparing our students for college and careers beyond graduation from Morton High School.

### Why is achievement important?

How our students perform tells us if we are preparing them for the next grade level and ultimately their next step after graduation. Testing is one way of determining achievement. We believe achievement in fine arts, athletics and service prepares young people for life. The creation of a technology-rich learning environment is also a priority. Our goal is to cultivate life-long learning, hard work, determination and the desire to do your best every day.

## Supports Learning ■ Efficient



### Tax Rate Comparison

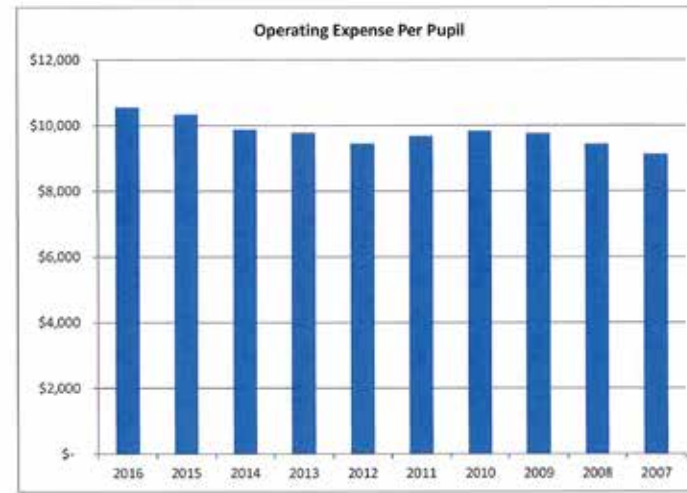
District 709 is proud to offer a competitive tax rate that is lower than most surrounding districts. Morton taxpayers receive excellent value from their schools for their tax dollars. We know young families evaluate the school district when they consider buying a home, and a competitive tax rate is part of the decision.

### Word problem:

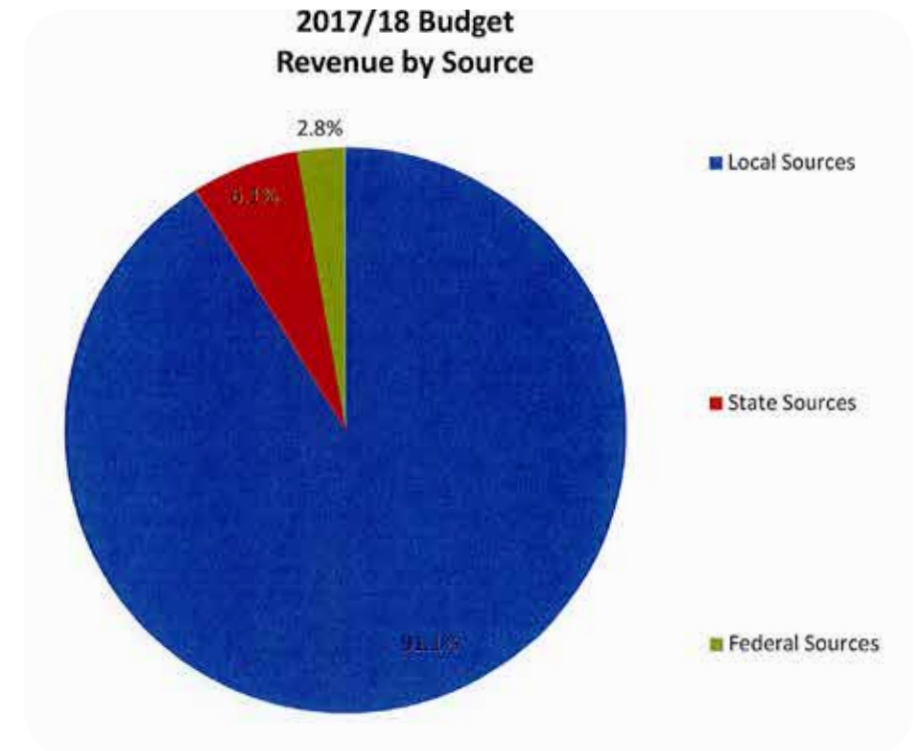
John and Susie bought a house in Morton for \$180,000. If the tax rate for the Morton School District is 4.9690 per every \$100 of EAV (one third of the assessed value of the home) then what is the school district portion of their tax bill?

### Answer:

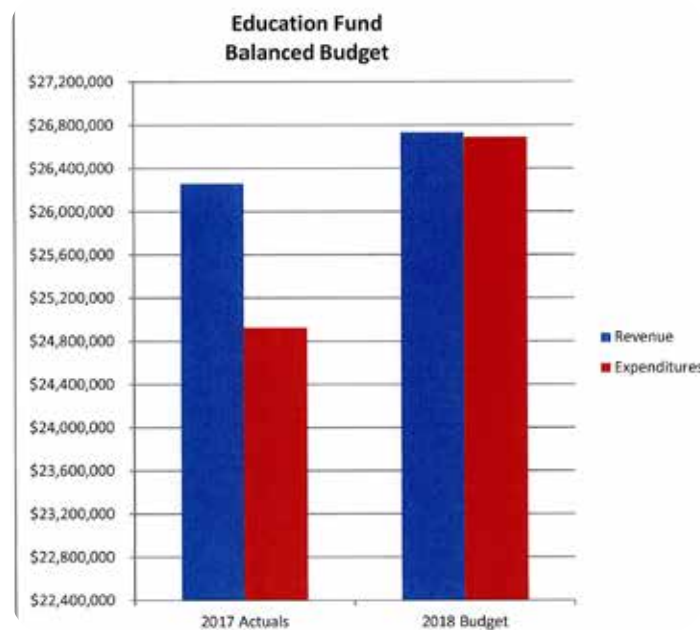
\$180,000 – value of home  
 \$60,000 – EAV of home (one-third of value)  
 Tax rate – \$4.97 for every \$100 of EAV  
 $\$60,000 \div \$100 = \$600$   
 $\$600 \times \$4.97 = \$2,982$   
 Annual school district portion of the tax bill – **\$2,982**



**Per-Pupil operating expense** — In District 709, \$10,343 was spent in operating costs to educate each child each year (2015 data). The state average in 2015 was \$12,821. Our goal is to provide the highest quality of education for our students at the best value to the taxpayer. Source: illinoisreportcard.com



**Revenue** — About 90 percent of our revenue comes from local property taxes.



### Financial Rating

— District 709 has received the highest rating for the last 14 years from the Illinois State Board of Education. In part, this is due to the district's level of reserves – well above the 180-day minimum for this rating.

### Why is finance important?

Most of the money we receive comes from our local taxpayers so we want to make sure they get the best value for their investment, which is educating the children of Morton and Groveland. The Board of Education has a history of planning ahead, building a reserve, and operating a balanced budget.