



MORTON

UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

Oct. 9, 2020

Morton District 709 Weekly Update

It was a mirror image of the week before in Morton classrooms, with no staff and just one student absent due to a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis as of Friday, Oct. 9. At one point this past week, it was zero on both counts.

Student quarantines district-wide were at 20, the lowest number since the second day of school. More than twice as many students were out last week at this time. Ten of those students are due back within the next seven days. Three staff members were quarantining, same as a week ago.

It was always our presumption that these numbers would fluctuate, but with the first quarter of this academic year now behind us, Morton schools have reached a steady state regarding classroom attendance. If we could not have imagined that at the beginning of the school year, gladly, we can now.

Again, please do not confuse quarantines with COVID positives. Just because someone is in self-isolation does not mean they have contracted COVID. It just signifies that they *may* have been exposed. The vast majority are not sick or suffering symptoms.

With overall attendance of approximately 2,840 students on any given day, District 709's student positivity and quarantine rates are at .035 percent and .7 percent, respectively, which compare very favorably with the world outside our school doors.

Please see the chart below.

Current Daily Statistics Are Not Cumulative

	10/5/20	10/6/20	10/7/20	10/8/20	10/9/20
Staff					
Covid-19 Positive	0	0	0	0	0
Quarantining	3	2	2	3	3
FT Remote Teaching	4	4	4	4	4
Students					
Covid-19 Positive					
Brown	0	0	0	0	0
Grundy	0	0	0	1	1
Jefferson	0	0	0	0	0
Lincoln	0	0	0	0	0
JH	0	0	0	0	0
HS	0	0	0	0	0
MA	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	1	1
	0.000%	0.000%	0.000%	0.035%	0.035%
Quarantining					
Brown	0	1	0	0	0
Grundy	2	2	2	1	9
Jefferson	3	3	3	3	2
Lincoln	7	3	7	3	0
JH	7	5	8	6	2
HS	27	8	8	8	7
MA	0	0	0	0	0
Total	46	22	28	21	20
	1.617%	0.773%	0.984%	0.738%	0.703%
Remote Learning	243	244	244	244	243
Homeschool/Private	86	86	86	86	86

One of the reassuring developments of this first nine weeks revolves around an analysis of student attendance for the months of August and September, 2020 vs. the same time period in 2019, which shows that our students are not sicker and may even be healthier, despite the pandemic. It is not quite an apples to apples comparison, but it's close enough to provide some perspective, and confirms what we already sensed – that though we had dozens of students in quarantine at any given time, the vast majority were feeling fine and would have been in our classrooms had they not come into close contact with someone who tested positive for the virus. While that is good news, in a way it's also frustrating.



Grundy third graders, outdoor spelling lessons

Please note that 243 students are now in remote learning, down from 257 two weeks ago as families continue to trickle back to our buildings. We welcome



Attentive first graders at Lettie Brown

them, as we continue to believe in-person instruction is the best overall scenario for many educational, social *and* health reasons.

Meanwhile, we continue to correspond daily with the Tazewell County Health Department regarding any COVID cases, close contacts and protocols. Please continue to utilize our [COVID form](#).

Again, we would emphasize that students who find themselves quarantined per the Tazewell County Health Department are supposed to be avoiding social activities in general. While engagements outside the classroom are family decisions, we appreciate everyone's help as we seek to preserve as traditionally normal a schedule and daily routine as possible.

We cannot stress strongly enough, to parents and students, that if you have tested for COVID-19 but have not received your results, please **do not** come to school until you have confirmation of a negative test. This is not only in your best interests but consistent with the goal we should all share of trying to protect others.



Our cafeteria workers go above and beyond

Beyond that, we would encourage everyone to read and become familiar with our [Healthy Quarantining Guide](#).

We remain committed to transparency as we move forward, whatever comes our way, to getting our constituents the most accurate, reliable information that we can, and to keeping as many students as possible physically present in school with their teachers and peers.

We are happy to answer questions as they come up, and again refer our families to our [Return to School Plan](#). If you have a concern, please contact your school principal, who will do his or her best to assist you.

Thanks to our staff, students and families yet again for everything all of you have done to make this 2020-21 school year such a success so far.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jeffrey W. Hill'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is set against a light yellow background.

Jeffrey W. Hill, Ed.D
Superintendent
Morton Community Unit School District 709