



# MORTON

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## UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

Oct. 16, 2020

### Morton District 709 Weekly Update

It was a one-and-one situation in Morton classrooms this past week, with a single student and a single staff member absent due to a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis as of Friday, Oct. 16.

Student quarantines district-wide were at 23, continuing the trend of relatively low numbers in that category. Just one staff member is currently quarantining.

It was always our presumption that these numbers would fluctuate, but with the first quarter of this academic year behind us, Morton schools continue to show far lower COVID-19 numbers than the community and county at large, according to the Tazewell County Health Department. We explore that in greater depth below.

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 in-building enrollment of approximately 2,860 students on any given day, District 709's student positivity and quarantine rates are at .035 percent and .8 percent, respectively, which compare very favorably with the world outside our doors.

Meanwhile, remote learners continue to trickle back into our classrooms, with that number at 234 this week, compared to 257 three weeks ago.

Please see the chart below.

Current Daily Statistics Are Not Cumulative

	Col. Day	10/13/20	10/14/20	PT Conf	PT Conf
<b>Staff</b>					
Covid-19 Positive		0	1		
Quarantining		1	1		
FT Remote Teaching		4	4		
<b>Students</b>					
<b>Covid-19 Positive</b>					
Brown		0	0		
Grundy		0	0		
Jefferson		1	1		
Lincoln		0	0		
JH		0	0		
HS		0	0		
MA		0	0		
Total		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		
		<b>0.000%</b>	<b>0.035%</b>	<b>0.035%</b>	<b>0.000%</b>
<b>Quarantining</b>					
Brown		0	0		
Grundy		9	9		
Jefferson		1	1		
Lincoln		2	2		
JH		4	4		
HS		7	7		
MA		0	0		
Total		<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>		
		<b>0.000%</b>	<b>0.808%</b>	<b>0.808%</b>	<b>0.000%</b>
Remote Learning		243	234		
Homeschool/Private		86	86		

New analysis provided by the [Tazewell County Health Department](#), meanwhile, is encouraging, insofar as our schools are concerned. If Morton as a community has



Checkmate with MHS Chess Team

the second highest number of COVID cases in the county (behind Pekin) as well as the second highest rate of infection (behind Washington), with some spikes over the last month, the opposite is true inside our buildings. Indeed, schools and daycare centers have proven among the safest places to be in this pandemic. Children ages 0 to 9 also have been among the least affected by the illness.

As we shared last week, another very reassuring development has been student attendance overall, which would seem to show that our students are not sicker and may even be healthier, despite COVID. Though we continue to have students in quarantine – if fewer than before – we know anecdotally that the vast majority are feeling fine and would be in our classrooms had they not come into close contact with someone who tested positive for the virus.

It reaffirms our belief that in-person instruction is the best overall scenario for many educational, social *and* health reasons.

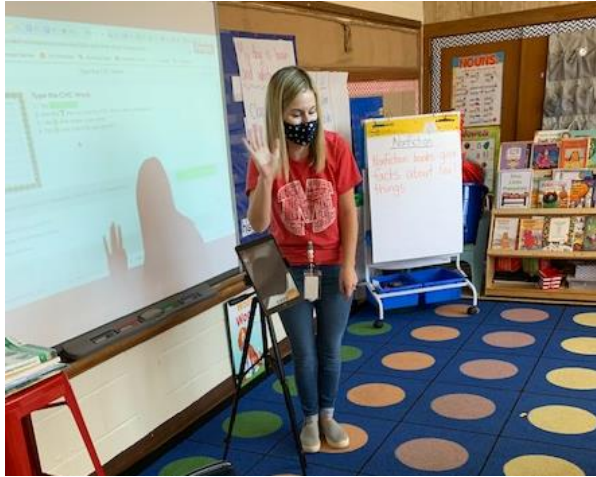
Meanwhile, we correspond daily with the Tazewell County Health Department regarding any COVID cases, close contacts and protocols. Please continue to utilize our [COVID form](#).



Ms. Vastine at Lincoln gets into the spirit of a lesson

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.



Ms. Parker at Jefferson waves to quarantined student

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.

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.

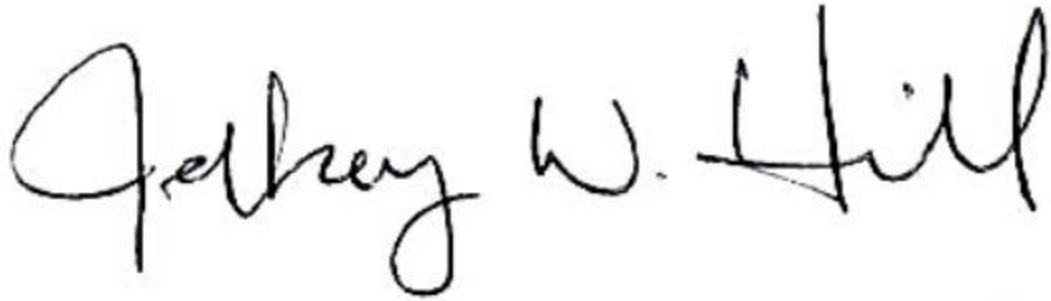
We are happy to answer questions as they come up, and again refer our families to our [Return to School Plan](#). If you have a concern, please contact your school principal, who will do his or her best to assist you.



Mr. Finck educates his Brown fifth graders

**I'm repeating myself, but thank you** to our parents and other community members 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 enclosed within a thin yellow rectangular border.

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