



MORTON

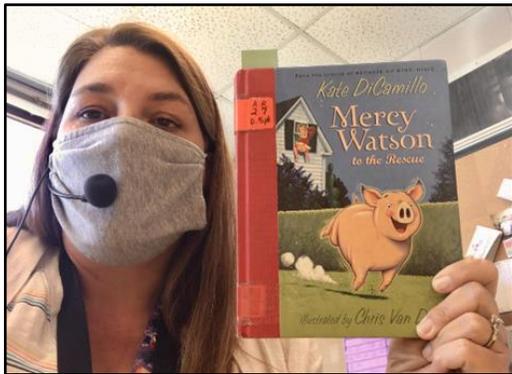
UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

Nov. 24, 2020

Happy Thanksgiving and keep up the good work

First things first: We cannot thank our teachers and staff in Morton District 709 enough for their ongoing effort, perseverance and unrelenting optimism in overcoming so many challenges this school year.

Our students are learning, and they are healthier than perhaps we had any right to expect, in no small way because of the employees whom we count among our many blessings this holiday season. May a deservedly restful and special Thanksgiving be yours.



Ms. Fisher at Grundy reads to first graders

Indeed, as we enter the holiday season, we are grateful that our COVID-19 and quarantine numbers have stayed relatively even or continued to decline even as they've climbed, unfortunately, outside our classroom doors.

As of today, 11 students were absent due to a COVID-19 diagnosis, compared to nine entering this past weekend and to a school-year high of 31 at the beginning of November. Our quarantines were at 185, down from 240 just a few days ago and from a 2020 peak of 348 on Nov. 5. Approximately 80 students are expected to return Monday, Nov. 30, including nine who'd previously tested positive.

The number of staff members out with a positive test decreased to one from four, with quarantines at 18, a drop from 24.

As we have indicated before, we remain committed to in-person learning with our students and staff as they return next week and as we begin the second semester following Christmas break. As such, now is no time to let down our guard.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has developed some tips on how to [celebrate Thanksgiving safely](#), but in short, enjoy this time with family but please mask up when you're out and about, keep a prudent distance, and be smart in your interactions, which added together equal being safe as we march forward.



Remote art class at MJHS

Should you or someone else living under your roof exhibit symptoms of illness, please stay home. If you or anyone in your household get tested for COVID-19, please **do not** come or send a child to school until a negative has been confirmed. This is not only in your best interests but consistent with our goal of trying to protect others. In that vein, we'd encourage everyone to read our [Healthy Quarantining Guide](#).

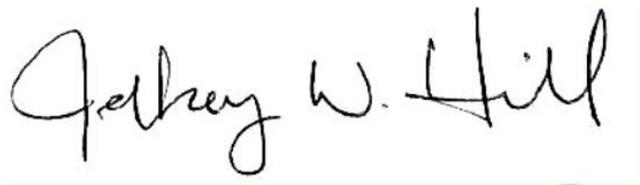


Ms. Berger at MHS conducts choir class

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

Finally, since this is traditionally a time for counting our blessings – actually, we do so frequently – we are thankful for our families and everything they have done to make this challenging school year such a successful one, so far. Enjoy the holiday, everyone, stay healthy and happy, and we'll see you soon.

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