



MORTON

UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

Jan. 8, 2020

Morton District 709 Weekly Update

With the first week of the second semester now officially in the books, we look forward, with optimism, to keeping our COVID numbers manageable, to a vaccine, to our athletes playing again, to continued learning, and to the routine rhythms of life that, once upon a time, we may have taken for granted.

We intend to keep marching toward all of the above, sometimes with fingers crossed but purposefully, nonetheless.

Overall, our health and attendance numbers remain decent. As of Friday, Jan. 8, 17 students had been diagnosed with COVID, compared to 14 the week before, with 77 in quarantine relative to 26 as we came off the Christmas break. Three staff members were positive, compared to one last week, and eight were in isolation against four on Jan. 1.

Again, until a vaccine is readily available, zero absences due to COVID are unrealistic, but we should continue to strive for the lowest numbers possible.

Please see this week's chart below.



Ms. Bishop reads aloud with Brown 4th graders

Current Daily Statistics Are Not Cumulative

	1/4/21	1/5/21	1/6/21	1/7/21	1/8/21
Staff					
Covid-19 Positive	6	5	5	4	3
Quarantining	2	4	4	5	8
FT Remote Teaching	5	5	5	5	5
Students					
Covid-19 Positive Now					
Brown	0	0	0	0	0
Grundy	2	2	2	1	2
Jefferson	1	1	1	2	2
Lincoln	5	5	5	3	2
JH	2	3	3	3	3
HS	7	6	6	8	8
MA	0	0	0	0	0
Total	17	17	17	17	17
% Positive Now	0.598%	0.598%	0.598%	0.598%	0.598%
Quarantining Now					
Brown	5	6	6	8	8
Grundy	4	5	7	8	7
Jefferson	1	4	3	2	2
Lincoln	17	19	17	19	17
JH	15	19	19	21	20
HS	24	21	21	20	20
MA	0	0	0	0	3
Total	66	74	73	78	77
% Quarantined Now	2.320%	2.601%	2.566%	2.742%	2.707%
Remote Learning	187	152	149	151	155
Homeschool/Private	83	83	83	83	83

Our families should continue to monitor symptoms and to keep their children at home when they are not feeling well or when a family member is awaiting a COVID test result. Common-sense precautions inside our school buildings such as masking and physical distancing remain in place. We correspond daily with the Tazewell County Health Department regarding any COVID cases, close contacts and protocols. Please utilize our [COVID form](#). Our [Healthy Quarantining Guide](#) and our [Return to School Plan](#) should remain go-to resources, as well.

Meanwhile, **COVID-19 vaccines are coming**. All staff members should have received a district communication that covers how school employees will be in the next wave of vaccinations, after health care workers and other first responders. We will be ordering doses of vaccine soon, so we ask employees to



read that memorandum and **respond** with a “yes” or a “no” regarding your interest in participating **no later than Sunday, Jan. 10**.

We apologize for the short notice. At this point, we do not have a time frame or a schedule for the administration of the shots. The vaccinations eventually will happen at the Tazewell County Health Department office at 1800 Broadway in Pekin. Vaccination is not mandatory. We ask that employees research the matter with the links provided or with other reliable materials at their disposal, consult with their own doctor if they wish, and then make their own decisions.

On the athletics front, Illinois High School Association (IHSA) and Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) officials have at long last met with representatives of the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Governor’s Office.



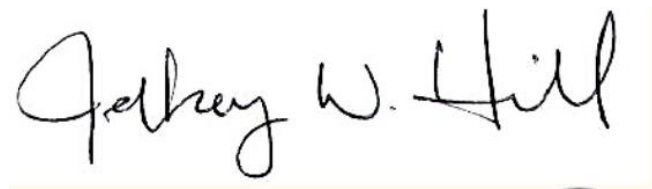
Morton High Color Guard performs

I would like to say that the meeting produced definitive answers regarding the return of our sports programs, but nothing yet. With the school calendar shrinking and the logistical challenges of coordinating and scheduling, we can be hopeful but also realistic. A decrease in COVID positivity rates and the dispensation of the vaccine will be key to salvaging what we can of our extra-curricular activities this school year.

That said, bit by bit, we *are* making progress toward the light at the end of this long tunnel. It is important that we keep our spirits up, that we recognize the gains we have already made this school year, that we keep putting one foot in front of the other, and that we finish out this race in a way that makes us proud.

Great job so far. Let's keep it up.

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 light yellow rectangular border.

Jeffrey W. Hill, Ed.D

Superintendent

Morton Community Unit District 709