



Jan. 15, 2021

## Morton District 709 Weekly Update

As we enter what we hope is the final stretch of this COVID-19 pandemic, with a downgrade to Tier 2 restrictions and vaccinations just around the corner, we seem to be keeping a lid on new infections. Now is no time to let up on the pace.

As of Friday, Jan. 15, eight students had been diagnosed with COVID, compared to 17 the week before, with 114 in quarantine relative to 77 last week. Three staff members were positive, same as last week, and 16 were in isolation against eight on Jan. 8.

As reported last week, we are moving forward on getting teachers and other staff vaccinated. The Tazewell County Health Department tells us that the Tri-County region is moving to the 1B vaccination level, which includes educators, on Monday, Jan. 18.



Behind-the-scenes IT crew has made our efforts a big success

Staff members with questions should refer to memos issued by the district this week that contained important details about the voluntary vaccination program.

Please see this week's health and attendance chart below.

Current Daily Statistics Are Not Cumulative

	1/11/21	1/12/21	1/13/21	1/14/21	1/15/21
Staff					
Covid-19 Positive	3	4	4	3	3
Quarantining	12	13	14	14	16
FT Remote Teaching	5	5	5	5	5
Students					
Covid-19 Positive Now					
Brown	0	0	0	0	0
Grundy	2	2	3	3	3
Jefferson	1	0	0	0	0
Lincoln	2	2	2	2	1
JH	5	3	3	2	3
HS	8	6	4	4	1
MA	0	0	0	0	0
Total	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>
% Positive Now	<b>0.633%</b>	<b>0.457%</b>	<b>0.422%</b>	<b>0.387%</b>	<b>0.281%</b>
Quarantining Now					
Brown	7	7	6	6	8
Grundy	10	12	10	13	9
Jefferson	51	50	51	50	50
Lincoln	12	9	7	7	11
JH	11	13	10	10	10
HS	20	17	14	11	10
MA	16	16	16	16	16
Total	<b>127</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>114</b>
% Quarantined Now	<b>4.464%</b>	<b>4.359%</b>	<b>4.007%</b>	<b>3.972%</b>	<b>4.007%</b>
Remote Learning	155	155	154	153	153
Homeschool/Private	83	82	82	82	82

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.

As we move into Tier 2 mitigation, there are likely to be few immediate changes in the way we do business, with the exception of some athletic competitions. Sports considered “low risk” such as swimming and cheerleading can begin practicing. Weight training for various activities can resume with precautions. We await further guidance from the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) and the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA), both of which have been in conversations with the Governor’s Office and the Illinois Department of Public Health.

We’ll keep our fingers crossed that our athletes will have their seasons. Again, 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.

It has been a long time coming, but we really are building a bridge back to normal.



Our architect of tech services, Dr. Teater

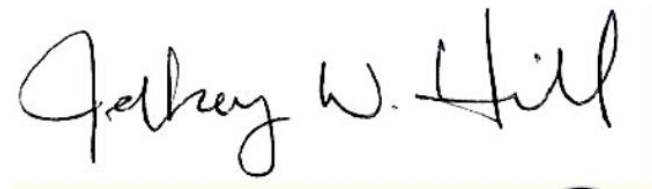
We will have more to say on that in the coming weeks, along with a game plan to go with it. It has been a challenging year but it also has been a valuable learning experience, it has forced us to be creative, and we may keep some of the teaching tools we’ve had to add. Academically, we continue to have the loftiest of expectations for our students. MAP testing has begun and will continue over the next six weeks. We anticipate having a full update on student achievement sometime in March.

Finally, we are happy to report that our remote learning ranks have dropped to a school year low of just over 150 students. We continue to believe that for the vast

majority of our young people, the classroom is the safest, happiest, most academically advantageous place for them to be.

As we speak, progress is happening. Your willingness to adapt along with us this school year has been nothing short of admirable. Please stick with us as we run this final lap.

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 rectangular background.

Jeffrey W. Hill, Ed.D

Superintendent

Morton Community Unit District 709