



March 5, 2021

## Morton District 709 Weekly Update

Health and attendance numbers were almost a mirror image of the week before in Morton public schools as we approach our 130<sup>th</sup> day of in-person instruction.



No one misses out on Kindness Week at Lettie Brown

As of Friday, March 5, seven students had been diagnosed with COVID-19, unchanged from the week before, with 89 in quarantine relative to 79 last week. One staff member was positive, same as last week, with four in at-home isolation, compared to five the Friday before.

Meanwhile, the drumbeat continues in Morton schools, with each passing week seeming to get us a step or two closer to what we think of as normal.

Indeed, adaptable as the 2020-21 school year has required us to be, in many ways, we have just gone about our business. Case in point is our standardized test scores, which are pretty much in line with where they've been the last five years, despite this year's challenges. Some of the greatest gains have been made among students who have struggled previously, owing to our emphasis on remediation. Math scores are not quite as far along as reading, but all in all, we are very pleased with where we are academically.

Please see this week's chart below.

Current Daily Statistics Are Not Cumulative					
	3/1/21	3/2/21	3/3/21	3/4/21	3/5/21
Staff					
Covid-19 Positive	0	1	1	1	1
Quarantining	3	3	3	5	4
FT Remote Teaching	4	4	4	4	4
Students					
Covid-19 Positive Now					
Brown	1	1	2	2	2
Grundy	1	1	1	0	0
Jefferson	0	0	0	0	0
Lincoln	1	1	1	1	2
JH	0	0	0	0	0
HS	3	3	3	3	3
MA	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	6	7	6	7
% Positive Now	0.211%	0.211%	0.246%	0.211%	0.246%
Quarantining Now					
Brown	9	9	5	5	3
Grundy	17	16	16	16	4
Jefferson	3	3	3	4	3
Lincoln	5	7	7	7	31
JH	2	2	2	3	4
HS	38	39	37	33	44
MA	0	0	0	0	0
Total	74	76	70	68	89
% Quarantined Now	2.601%	2.671%	2.460%	2.390%	3.128%
Remote Learning	155	155	155	155	155
Homeschool/Private	79	79	79	79	79

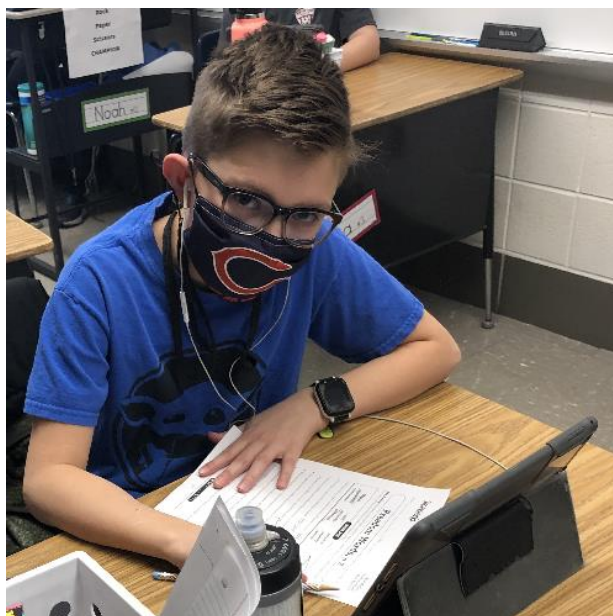
As referenced above, we celebrated our 129<sup>th</sup> day of in-person instruction on Friday. We are very proud of what our teaching team, our students and our community in general have accomplished this year.

In fact, we can demonstrate progress against our goals across the board -- in achievement, school climate, finances, communication, and facilities (on that latter front, we're ahead of schedule on the Morton Junior High expansion, which is rolling toward completion). It's why we are looking forward to this fourth quarter with such optimism.



Grundy's Ms. Gunn teaches fractions to an eager audience

That said, it is very important that we finish the year strongly, and that means looking forward rather than in the rear-view mirror.



Lincoln 4<sup>th</sup> grader levels "Da Bears stare" as he studies

First, we are asking our parents to fill out the [5Essentials Survey](#) being conducted by the University of Chicago, on behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education.

The five indicators that have the greatest impact on student success are effective leaders, collaborative teachers, involved families, supportive environments, and ambitious instruction. Research has shown that schools strong on at least three of those five factors are 10 times more likely to have superior student outcomes.

Our teachers and students are filling out the survey, too. In short, the more participation, the more accurate the findings, the better tool this becomes to help us improve the education we give our children. Read more about it [here](#).

Second, as always, 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. 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.



**Morton High chess team competes in the state finals online**

Again, we continue to have COVID cases and quarantines, which can disrupt learning. The vaccine rollout will have a positive effect on those numbers, but so do common-sense precautions such as masking and physical distancing, which is why we continue to apply them.

In short, we're doing great. Let's see it all the way through.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey W. Hill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeffrey W. Hill, Ed.D

Superintendent

Morton Community Unit District 709