



# MORTON

## UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

Sept. 17, 2021

## Morton District 709 Weekly Update

It may be coming up pumpkins in Morton this week, but on the health and attendance front, it was pretty much coming up roses, too.

COVID diagnoses were down, to just four students districtwide from 11 a week ago, for an overall infection rate of .13 percent in a student body of more than 3,200. That represents our low for the year, notwithstanding the Delta variant. Meanwhile, two staff members were at home with COVID, compared to one last week. Please see the chart below:

Covid Positive Now		9/13/21	9/14/21	9/15/21	9/16/21	9/17/21	%
Staff		2	2	2	2	2	
Students	Brown	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
	Grundy	1	1	1	1	1	0.26%
	Jefferson	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
	Lincoln	3	2	2	2	2	0.39%
	JH	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
	HS	2	2	2	1	1	0.09%
	MA	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.13%</b>

Again, we ask that families keep ill children, COVID or no COVID, at home. We recommend that parents review our [Back to School Plan](#) and our [Frequently Asked Questions document](#). Please consult our [COVID reporting form](#), as well.

Our overriding goal for the 2021-22 school year is to keep healthy students in our classrooms. So far, so good.

Meanwhile, we are moving forward with testing for staff who have not been vaccinated. Ultimately, we will be using SHIELD, a saliva test that is less invasive and more accurate than other alternatives. To begin, however, we will be using a nasal test while SHIELD is being set up. Testing is funded by the federal government, at no cost to Morton District 709. Even so, the mandate has taken a substantial amount of planning and time in a very short period.



Jefferson students getting into the Morton Pumpkin Festival spirit

As a district, we continue to push state government to allow more decision-making at the local level. To that end, we had an audience with the State Board of Education this past week in Springfield, along with many other superintendents who were there to share the same concerns. We are one of 146 districts that have joined the Make It Local Initiative.



The classroom heads outside at Grundy



This is *my* Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown

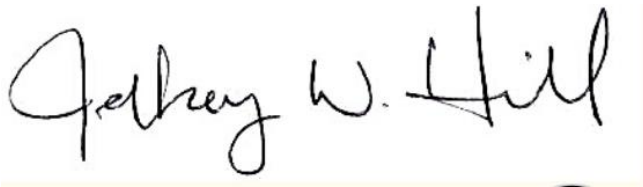
High school homecoming week is just 10 days out, and many of our other rites of passage are happening or are in the planning stages, in keeping with our unwavering commitment to normalcy.

Finally, we want to make everyone aware of a presentation at Morton Junior High School – “The Parent’s Guide to Generation

Z: Smart Phones, Social Media, and Stress” – starting at 6 p.m. next Thursday, Sept. 23. Author Andrew McPeak will be here to speak to the very modern issues that many of our families are confronting.

Our students had a half day Friday as we gave them and their families an early start on this weekend’s Morton Pumpkin Festival. Have fun, stay safe, and we’ll see everybody back in class on Monday.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey W. Hill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'J' and 'H'.

Jeffrey W. Hill, Ed.D

Superintendent

Morton Community Unit District 709