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709 Communicator



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MORTON COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709 SERVING THE GROVELAND-MORTON AREA

MJHS curriculum, facility improvements taking shape

Over the past two years Morton District 709 has made significant improvements to the programs and facilities at Morton Junior High School. A new schedule with new courses enhancing curriculum was implemented in the Fall of 2019, and Phase 1 of a two-phased building project is near completion, adding security, improved traffic flow, additional classroom and cafeteria space, as well as a new gym and locker room facility.

Phase 1 of the project focuses on establishing a safe entry into the school and improving the main office complex. The new entryway and office are 95 percent complete and work has begun on transforming the old office into two additional classrooms. As a result of the renovation, several items on the 15-year maintenance plan also will be completed.

“The secure vestibule at the new main entrance has already made a difference in the security of the building. It is not only safer, but is also more personable than our old entrance,” said Principal Lee Hoffman.

In addition to the increase of safety and security measures, the updates at Morton Junior High School offer benefits to



A blueprint rendition of MJHS Phase 1 and 2 completed.

the school's neighbors and the community. One of the benefits is that the updates will be paid for out of both the annual budget and the district's reserves; thus, not costing taxpayers additional dollars. Another potential benefit is that upon completion

of the project, traffic should be improved because student drop-off areas for both buses and cars were built into the plan.

Phase 2 bids were approved at the Dec. 17 board meeting and include a gymnasium, storage, and new locker rooms as well as

a new drive, drop-off area and parking area. The parking, drive, and drop-off areas are a joint project with the Village of Morton thus lowering the cost. Phase 2 is expected to start this spring and slated to be finished this December.

Once the new gym is completed, the current P.E. room will no longer be necessary and will create two additional classrooms. In addition, more cafeteria space will be gained when the concession stand area moves to the new gym, providing

Please see MJHS, Page 2

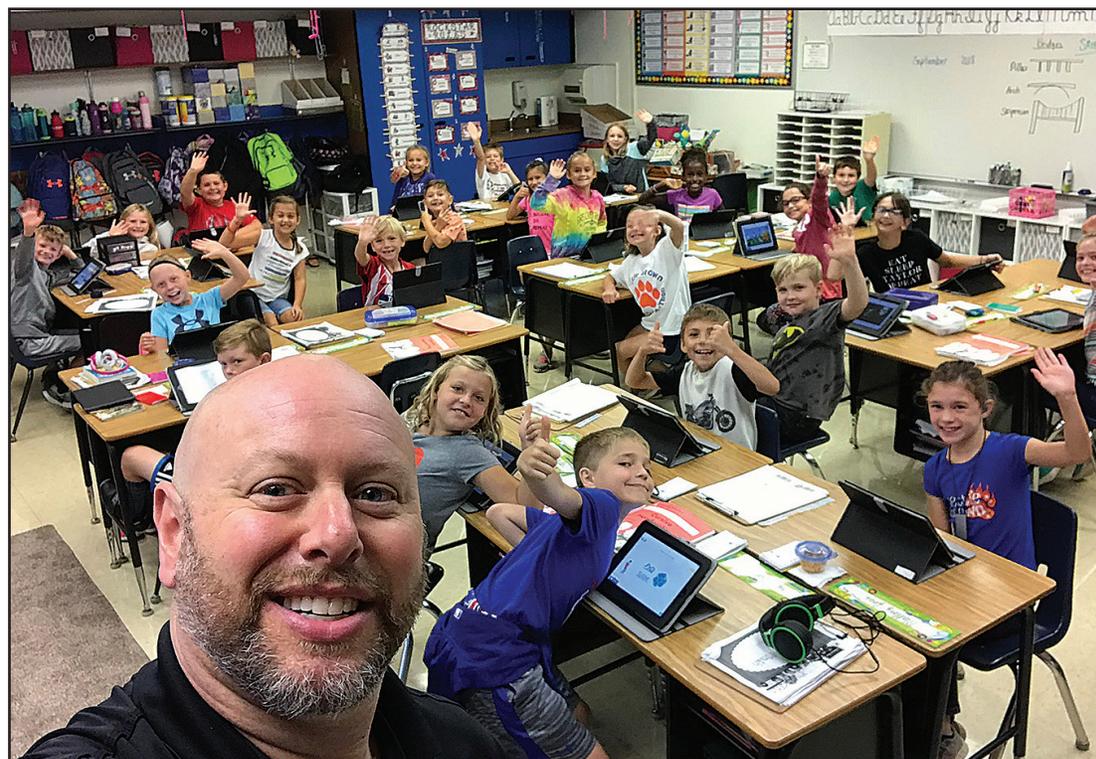
Increasing student engagement with iPads

Since the Morton School District has incorporated the 1-to-1 iPad program six years ago, the way the device is being used now, versus in the beginning, has evolved. To support the devices and the users, Mr. Don Sturm made a career change from being a 23-year seasoned high school teacher to serving as a Technology Integration Specialist.

He reported that when the iPads were first introduced in the classroom, the teachers were using the device to replace the traditional tools like the pen and paper. For example, the students were taking notes using the Notability app.

Now, he sees the device being used to create higher levels of student engagement. Mr. Sturm added, "I have seen math students take a picture of a graph that the teacher had up on the board. They snap the picture and put into their notes, they enlarge it, they circle things, and they annotate it. The student can make the note theirs. That to me is the beauty of the iPad because it allows you to do that."

He has also seen teachers use the slow-motion and time-lapse camera for science. "The teachers will create a time-lapse of a plant in slow motion to demonstrate



Mr. Don Sturm and Lettie Brown Elementary School students pose for a picture as they are working on their iPads.

what happens to the plant when you put it in front of the light," said Mr. Sturm. He also pointed out that teachers have assigned the students to create podcasts. "My goal is to show teachers that you can do a lot more with the device."

Mr. Sturm has also seen his new role evolve with the use of

technology. "The intent of the position in the beginning was there needed to be someone who helped teachers integrate iPads into their curriculum. Now, my position has kind of morphed into that of an instructional coach because one has to know good educational practices in order to integrate technology."

A teacher may ask Mr. Sturm to demonstrate how to use a specific app. He will often show the teacher how to use the app and get the instructor to think about why he or she wants to use the app, further encouraging the teachers to think about the purpose of the app and if it will benefit students. There

have been times Mr. Sturm has told teachers that he would recommend the use of pencil and paper for a certain task or project.

Mr. Sturm also noted that the teachers are not having the students use the iPad for long periods of time. "If you walk into our schools, you do not see the students buried in their iPads for hours and hours," he said.

In addition, Mr. Sturm has worked with app companies like Buncee to offer his insight on the app usage for educational purposes. His outreach to network with the companies and other teachers in the United States has offered more insight as to how to engage the students with the use of the iPad in the classroom. He has also contributed chapters for books about good educational practices. The professional development further assists our teachers and ensure our students are receiving the high-quality support they need.

It is Morton School District's goal to give the students a high-quality education utilizing technology as a resource for engagement and information, better meeting the demands of college and careers.

MJHS

Continued from page 1

space for more cafeteria tables. "These updates provide an opportunity to improve safety and security at MJHS, while also advancing our academic and athletic spaces," Mr. Hoffman added.

Until the completion of the project, Mr. Hoffman asks the community to be extra cautious while traveling near the school. "Traffic throughout the school year could still be challenging, depending on the pace of construction and the timing of Phase 2, so we ask for everyone's patience as we make

progress toward an improved facility," he said.

In addition to the construction, MJHS has also made changes to the courses offered with students enrolling in an additional course for a total of eight classes each day.

"We now offer additional Encore classes

to give students a more well-rounded experience," said Mr. Hoffman. The new offerings include Spanish, Computer Science with Project Lead the Way, and a class entitled "Future Readiness" which helps students think strategically about their skills, knowledge, and aptitudes as they

prepare for post-secondary options.

Students will also receive an additional English Language Arts class, which provides more writing instruction and emphasizes critical thinking. These new offerings complement the current offerings of 2D/3D Art and CareerMaker,

allowing students to complete modules in different career clusters such as engineering, technology and health. The Encore classes, in addition to the academic and music offerings, are the foundation and enrichment students need to be prepared for high school.

Morton School District 709 Directory

2020 District Calendar

Morton 709 Education and Administration Center



JEFF HILL

1050 S. Fourth Ave.
Morton, IL 61550
263-2581
Superintendent: Jeff Hill, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent: Craig Smock, Ed.D.
Director of Curriculum and Technology: Troy Teater, Ed.D.
Director of Special Education: Carlie Owens

Morton High School

DEIDRE
RIPKA

350 N. Illinois, Morton, IL 61550
266-7182
Principal: Deidre Ripka
Assistant Principals: Jamie Adolphson and Matthew Oyer
Assistant Principal/Athletic Director: Scott Jones
Reporting absence: 263-0611
Student Services: 263-0611
Guidance: 263-8585
Food Service: 263-7451

Transportation



JULIE THARP

250 W. Courtland; Morton, IL 61550
263-1086
Director of Transportation: Julie Tharp

Morton Junior High



LEE HOFFMAN

225 E. Jackson, Morton, IL 61550
Principal: Lee Hoffman
Assistant Principal: Chris Carter
Main Office: 266-6522
Reporting absence: 284-5000

Grundy School

MICHAEL
SAUNDERS

1100 S. Fourth Ave.
Morton, IL 61550
Principal: Michael Saunders
Main Office: 263-1421
Reporting absence: 284-2000

Lettie Brown



FAITH WATERFIELD

2550 N. Morton Ave., Morton, IL 61550
Principal: Faith Waterfield
Main Office: 266-5309
Reporting absence: 284-1000

Jefferson School



KATE WYMAN

220 E. Jefferson St., Morton, IL 61550
Principal: Kate Wyman
Main Office: 263-2650
Reporting absence: 284-3025

Lincoln School



JULIE ALBERS

100 S. Nebraska Ave., Morton, IL 61550
Principal: Julie Albers
Assistant Principal: Michelle Peterson
Main Office: 266-6989
Reporting absence: 284-4000

January

1-3 Christmas Vacation continues
6 School resumes
8 Early dismissal day
20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no school

February

5 Early dismissal day
17 Presidents Day, no school

March

4 Early dismissal day
6 Inservice Half day a.m., no school p.m.

April

1 Early dismissal day
6-13 Easter Break, no school

May

6 Early dismissal day
17 Morton High School Graduation Ceremony, 2 p.m.
25 Memorial Day, no school
28 Last day for students, half-day a.m.
29 No school: Teacher Institute Day

Note: In the event that no emergency days are used, May 20 would be the last student attendance day and May 21 a Teacher Institute Day.

District 709 Board of Education

President: Dr. Shad Beaty

First Elected: 2015; Term Expires: 2023
shad.beaty@mcusd709.org

Vice President: Jeff Schmidgall

First Elected: 2015; Term Expires: 2023
jeffrey.schmidgall@mcusd709.org

Secretary: Kevin Austin

First Elected: 2017; Term Expires: 2021
kevin.austin@mcusd709.org

Tim Braker

First Elected: 2019; Term Expires: 2023
tim.braker@mcusd709.org

Dr. David Cross

First Elected: 2017; Term Expires: 2021
david.cross@mcusd709.org

Tom Neeley

First Elected: 1989; Term Expires: 2021
thomas.neeley@mcusd709.org

Bart Rinkenberger

First Elected: 2017; Term Expires: 2021
bart.rinkenberger@mcusd709.org

Contacting the board

Stakeholders in District 709 are encouraged to contact school board members at any time with questions, comments and concerns. Board members can be contacted by email through their individual email addresses listed above or as a group at board@mcusd709.org.

More information

More information about the Board of Education is available on our website – www.morton709.org. Board meetings are streamed live on the Internet and posted on Comcast Channel 20 and iTV3 Channel 21. Click on the MPTV logo on our website for a broadcast schedule and to go to the online streaming feature.



Photo Credit: Jacque Austin

District 709 Board of Education: Front row, left to right; Jeff Schmidgall, Dr. David Cross, and Tom Neeley. Back row, left to right; Bart Rinkenberger, Tim Braker, Dr. Shad Beaty, and Kevin Austin.

Mission

The Mission of the Morton District 709 Board of Education is to be a provider of and an advocate for the education of all children.

Goals

Achievement: In order to ensure all students have opportunities to achieve their potential, our academic programs will maintain the highest standards and expectations for learning.

Communication: Provide open and meaningful two-way communication with all members of our community.

Climate: Maintain a cohesive organizational system which facilitates and fosters a productive and trusting climate with a highly qualified staff.

Facilities: Provide facilities conducive to student learning and growth, based on evolving needs, with the support of the community.

Finance: Support student learning (which includes achievement, climate, facilities, and communication) in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Upcoming meetings

The Board of Education meetings are at the District Office, 1050 S. Fourth Ave. The school board is scheduled to meet on the following dates:

2020

Jan. 14 – 6:30 pm

Jan. 21 – 7:15 pm

Feb. 4 – 6:30 pm

Feb. 18 – 7:15 pm

Mar. 3 – 6:30 pm

Mar. 17 – 7:15 pm

Apr. 21 – 7:00 pm

May 5 – 6:30 pm

May 19 – 6:30 pm

Jun. 2 – 6:30 pm

Jul. 7 – 6:30 pm

Neeley elected as the IASB President

Longtime Morton School Board member advocating for public schools across Illinois

Mr. Tom Neeley has the honor to sit at the head of the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB). He was elected as the IASB President at the IASB Annual Conference Delegate Assembly on Nov. 23, 2019.

Mr. Neeley shared his list of items he hopes to achieve for the new year as the IASB President: "My goal is to continue advocating for Illinois public schools and good school board governance. In addition, I seek to provide leadership in dealing with NSBA (National School Boards Association) issues impacting Illinois. I also plan to provide leadership in fulfilling the mission of the Illinois Association of School Boards, which is to; 'Light the Way for its members by developing their competence and confidence through a robust toolkit designed to build excellence in local school board governance.'"

Service to benefit others is a common thread in the life of Mr. Neeley. After he graduated from Dee-Mack High School, he was drafted by the Army to serve in the Vietnam War. Since his return from his military service, he has devoted his time to his church, family and community. Neeley was encouraged to become a Lincoln School PTO member and from there, a school board member. So far, he has served on the Morton School District's Board of Education for 30 years. In addition, Mr. Neeley has served as treasurer, vice president, and now president of IASB, since becoming an IASB Board of Directors member



Morton School Board Member and IASB President Tom Neeley

in 2007.

What has motivated Mr. Neeley to serve on the Morton School District's Board of Education for

over 30 years? Mr. Neeley answered, "There are many things that have motivated me to serve on the MCUSD 709 Board of Education.

Most important, is the need to continue offering our students an opportunity for a good education. Good public schools and good school board governance are very important. All stakeholders look to the board of education to make appropriate decisions that are in the best interest of students, parents, staff, community and taxpayers. Public education serves as a cornerstone of our democracy."

As the Vietnam Veteran continues to serve as the IASB President and a MCUSD 709 School Board member, it is important to note that he will be proudly advocating for the education of 2.3 million students and providing support for 848 school districts in Illinois.

Mr. Neeley is far from taking a back seat on any issues that public education faces. Sitting on the side lines is not his forte'. His leadership and service to the United States of America, the IASB, and the Morton School District is commendable.

Morton School District Superintendent Dr. Jeff Hill expresses his thoughts of Mr. Neeley's service: "Mr. Neeley has provided a lifetime of service and leadership to the students of Morton and to districts throughout Illinois. On behalf of the students and staff of Morton District 709, we congratulate him on his appointment as president of IASB and look forward to his continued contributions!"

Morton Moving Forward



An update from
Superintendent Dr. Jeff Hill

Morton District 709 District Goal Achievement:

Morton District 709 will nurture and challenge each student to reach their potential through the highest quality teaching and using evidence-based instructional practices, curriculum, programs, and services.



Morton Moving Forward - where are we now, what is next?

In the fall of 2017, Morton Moving Forward was developed and proposed during the year. The purpose of the study was to identify gaps in academic programming and propose changes to improve student achievement. The District 709 Board of Education approved the Morton Moving Forward plan.

In the fall of 2018, Morton School District began implementing **Strategy 1, Systemic Focus on Reading**, with full-day Kindergarten and literacy/instructional coaches. The district also placed an emphasis on getting every

student involved with extracurricular activities; adding robotics and eSports to assist in that effort.

This year, Morton Moving Forward implemented: **Strategy 2, Intentional Transition to Secondary and Strategy 3, Improving College and Career Readiness**. Actions to pursue these strategies include:

2019 Morton Moving Forward Implementation:

1. 5th/6th departmentalization
2. New junior high schedule
3. High school certificate programs/

career pathways

Looking beyond 2019, the focus is to continue to develop Morton High School in ways that can better serve all students to become college and career ready. High school staff and administration will work to accomplish the following:

2020 Morton Moving Forward Implementation:

1. Continue to develop/refine career pathways and work-based experiences for 7th-12th grade students
2. Increase opportunities to earn college credit
3. Develop/approve high school schedule change
4. Leverage a new schedule to provide greater support for all students

In addition to the areas identified through Morton Moving Forward, other important topics have emerged through our Districtwide Teaching and Learning Council. These would include:

Emerging topics/areas for development:

1. Communicating student progress on academic content standards and habits

of success standards.

2. Trauma-informed practices, social/emotional intelligence, and digital citizenship
3. Teacher evaluation/teacher leadership development
4. Improving mathematical thinking and understanding

We have seen favorable results in the past two years, as Morton High School, Morton Junior High School, and Lincoln Elementary School all earned Exemplary ratings from the Illinois State Board of Education, while all the other schools have earned commendable ratings.

You can review all district goals and results on our District Dashboard: <https://www.morton709.org/mcusd-709-dashboard->.

Jeffrey W. Hill, Ed.D
Superintendent

Morton District 709 Facilities Update

"Morton District 709 will develop and maintain facilities providing the current and future students with safe, well maintained, and functional space to support research-based best practices in teaching and learning."

Morton Junior High Phase 2 Bids and MHS improvements approved:

The Morton District 709 15-year plan prioritizes maximizing utilization of our facilities. We currently have in place a maintenance and repair plan guiding this process, and over the last 6 months the Board has identified renovation work to existing facilities that will help us reach our Facilities goal. Phase 1 of the MJHS project has been mostly completed

and students and staff will be enjoying the benefits of this new space beginning 2nd semester of this year. Phase 2 bids which include a gymnasium, new drive and drop-off area and additional parking, was approved by the Morton District 709 Board in December. The 15-year plan can be found in the Meeting Information, located under the Board of Education tab, on the Morton School District website, www.morton709.org.

Morton High School facility work:

Morton High School is next in terms of facility improvement, and the Board has approved work for the summer of 2020 at Morton High School

that will enhance opportunities for students. MHS will be creating two STEM classrooms to better support science and math courses. In addition, the current weight/fitness room will be expanded to accommodate more up-to-date equipment to be utilized by physical education classes and athletic teams.

Safety/Security work:

In addition to the improved safety and security environment at MJHS, every school in the district was part of a safety audit. Our 15-year facilities plan will be modified to include recommendations from the safety audit.

Thank you, support staff!

There are about 230 people that work throughout District 709 in support roles that meet specific needs of our staff, schools, and/or students. The Morton School District is proud to honor the aides, building secretaries, cafeteria workers, clerical staff, crossing guards, custodians, district office staff, interpreter, maintenance staff, technology support staff, transportation crew, and MPTV staff. These people fill the many positions throughout the buildings, and their work is vital to the success of our school district.



Lisa Schafer, Morton High School Principal's Secretary and Maranda Joos Main, Morton High School Main Office Secretary.

District Office

Sandra Bowen, Anthony Crum, Keri Dodson, Kristen D'Alfonso, Allen Fort, Amy Greiner, Brenda Heppard, Adam Jacob, Carolu Kizer, Lisa Kowalski, Patty Munson, Greg Murphy, Clayton Payne, Diana Schauer, Scott Schoon, Rodney Schuck, Leonard Shumaker, Rhonda Stalter, Emily Stubbs, Don Sturm, Lauri VanDerVoorn, Ryan Widby, Jason Winkel, and Amy Zimmerman.

Grundy

Pam Addams, Olgajean Atteberry, Anna Bennett, Amanda Derrick, Tracy Fick, Angel Fisher, Heidi Hartter, Emily Hauter, Marjorie Henderson, Theresa Hermancinski, Rachel Herrmann, Esther Hofstetter, Leslie Householter, Jan Huette, Lisa Kaufman, Jennifer Landrith, Jessica Moeller, Celeste Paulson, Pamela Riddle, Jennifer Sadler, Katie Schlappi, Dwight Schuck, Shelly Shallenberger, Kathy Shaw, Beth Shook, Leanne Sommer, Anita Stidman, Jamie Stratton, Kristyn Studebaker, Danielle Tolly, and Jennifer Wilson.

Jefferson

Brittini Austin, Lavette Brown, Elaine Campbell, Mandy Collins, Sara Dirks, Sarah Fore, Amy Glass, Nicole Gold, Theresa Goodspeed, Stacey Guerra, Roslyn Heffner, Julia Hischke, Douglas

Aide Appreciation Day

► **Aide Appreciation Day is March 16, 2020.** In remembrance of Amy Hardin, who was an aide at Lincoln Elementary School, the school district honors all aides on Amy's birthday.

Hutchison, Amy Jones, David Keen, Stacy Krantz, Valerie Messer, Grace Nessler, Lindsey O'Donnell, Kelsey Phillis, Christy Powers, Tammy Presley, Nan Reynolds, Wanda Righi, Judy Rosenberg, Dayrim Sheehan, Robin Sizemore, Brittini Taylor, Zoe Troxell, Sarah Webb, Keshia Wenninger, Nadine Worstell, Stacy Zukowski, and Dante Williams.

Lettie Brown

Abbey Carpenter, Elizabeth Cigelnik, Teresa Detloff, Sondra Dole, Brandi Edwards, Tim Epkins, Linda Fanning, Brenda Grimm, Jan Hauk, Anna Johnson, Jennifer Johnson, Tammy Lami-rand, Amanda Luttrell, Dominique Mackey, Carolyn Main, Valerie Mellen, Jean Melvin, Teresa Pheasant, Katie Riddle, Heidi Robbins, Julie Schmidgall, Molly Smith, Brianne Stump, Judith Taylor, Lisa Tillison, Lauri VanDerVoorn, Tracey Vickerman, Sabrina Vior, and Corinne Wong.

Lincoln

Jeffrey Ales, Jennifer Bakirdan, Jill Barnard, Cindy Chambers, Leah Collins, Rachel Cushman, Caitlin Dillard, Mary Dralle, Rachel Eichorn, Ronae Fender, Natalie Friend, Ashlie Geiger, Angie George, Michelle Gilbert, Tyne Haas, Dwight Hamilton, Robert Harkless, Sonya Hillrich, Jamie Hilt, Lisa Horn, Clair Huette, Kyla Jackson, Rebecca Knight, Rhonda Konieczny, Katie Kraft, Nancy LaGrow, Lynnette Litwiller, Brittany Long, Debra Maxwell, Anne Miller, Benjamin Miller, Julia Miller, Sally Miller, Mikaela Monday, Michelle Mullen, Karyn Phillips, Leslie Porubcansky, Amy Prince, Rebecca Schelkopf, Darci Slocum, Sueann Spinder, Kristine Stieglitz, Marci Tewksbury, Heidi Tovey, Joy Voorhees, Andrea Ward, Bonni Whalen, Dante Williams, Jennifer Williams, and Amy Zbinden.

Morton Academy

Krista Naab, Austin Weyland

Morton High School

Bobby Barker, Mary Blair, Laura Chambers, Becky Christianson, Lisa Cook, Rodney Dune-hew, Daniel Epkins, Rick Everetts, Richard Fiedler, Kimberly Fonner, Jennifer Fort, Samantha Frey,

Nicole Friend, Jodi Garner, Leah Getz, April Goggins, Barbara Goggins, Caitlin Gschwend, Jacqueline Harrison, Brandon Jacob, Maranda Joos, Diane Kirk, Debra Lane, Tina Mckimney, Lorissa Os-mers, Amie Pearce, Doreen Propst, Cody Pullium, Kristi Ruxlow, Millicent Sanders, Lisa Schafer, Tammi Schaff, Dan Stimpert, Katrina White.

Morton Junior High

Jacqueline Akers, Jeffrey Arbisi, Carley Baer, Ronda Bensel, Bradley Berry, Dawn Blunier, Kyle Bunting, Diane Conklin, Steven Culbertson, Kari Dyche, Erika Happach, Mark Moore, Clara Ogden, Holli Pfeifer, Michael Rusch, Kimberly Serrurier, Emily Shelburne, Mary Smith, Valerie Smith, Elliott Spinder, Ashley Turner, Daniel Williams, Wendy Wright, and Andrew Zuck.

Morton Potter Television (MPTV)

Robyn Batsell, Phillip Belcke, Brianna Bohling, Becky Christianson, Rachel Henderson, Brook Janes, Dawn Rade-maker, Kobe Tomblin, and Philip Vior.

Special Education

Dawn Cole, Keri Gillette, Molly Suellen-trop, and Marcia Wallace.

Transportation

William Akers, Jeri Baldovin, Sandra Bowen, Amanda Bray, Heather Brooks, Steven Castleman, Lori Clark, Nancy Domnick, Raymond Finck, Christina Garcia, Pamela Glascock, Theresa Goodspeed, Joe Grant, Kandis Grant, Stacy Grawe, Charles Haddad, Linda Kerby, Jennifer Landrith, John Pfeifer, Elizabeth Miltenberger, Edmund Railey, Christine Rankin, Karen Remmert, Sara Savicz, Ruth Smith, Michelle Spicer, Nancy Stephens, Julie Tharp, Donette Waller, Deborah Warner, Nancy Weigle, Danny Wolf, and Julie Zoss.

Time for 2020 kindergarten screenings

It's may only be January but planning for the first day of school in the fall is already under way. Sign-up for Kindergarten pre-registration and screening will begin in February.

On March 19 and 20, Morton School District 709 will conduct the pre-registration and screening at the District Office, 1050 S. Fourth Ave., for students who will be 5 years old by Sept. 1.

"The screening helps schools plan for the number of kindergarten classes needed and to get some baseline data on our new students," said Michael Saunders, principal at Grundy Elementary.

"It helps us to get to know each child as a learner."

The screening process takes about 30 minutes and is conducted by kindergarten teachers. The screening includes letter, number and color identification, counting, shapes, and fine motor skills. Following the screening, parents will receive feedback from the teacher.

"It gives parents a clear picture of their child at that point," Mr. Saunders said. "The teacher will let the parent know what they can be working on before school starts."

All students will need to be screened prior to the first day of school. **To schedule an appointment, call 263-2581.**



ABOVE: A kindergarten student at Lincoln Elementary School reads her book about the Letter "L". TOP: Mrs. Hoelscher's Kindergarten class listens as their teacher gives them instructions for their project.

Fact Box

What: Kindergarten pre-registration and screening

Who: Children who will be 5 years old by Sept. 1, 2020

When: 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. March 19 and 8 a.m. – noon March 20

Where: District Office, 1050 S. Fourth Ave.

How: Call 263-2581 to make an appointment

Other: Screening takes about 30 minutes, parents will receive feedback

Please bring: Certified birth certificate (the one from the county, not the hospital); immunization records; most recent physical, dental, and vision exam if you have them.

Free developmental screenings



WHO: For children ages birth through 5 years who are residents of Morton School District 709

SCREENING DATE: Feb. 12, 2020

LOCATION: Morton 709 District Office
1050 S. Fourth Ave., Morton

THE SCREENING WILL ADDRESS:

- ▶ Early Academic Concepts
- ▶ Motor Development
- ▶ Communication and Language
- ▶ Hearing and Vision

If you are concerned about your child's development and believe that there is a potential or significant delay in the areas listed above:

Please call 309-263-0522 to make an appointment before Feb. 5, 2020.

Sponsored by Morton School District 709 - Special Education Department

Morton students shine in Penguin Project production

"Being true to yourself never goes out of style." That was one of the lessons from "Legally Blonde The Musical, Jr.," which was recently performed by The Penguin Project Peoria. Several Morton District 709 students played a part in the production.

The timeless message of loving who you are is an important one for the young artists and mentors involved in the organization.

The Penguin Project began in Peoria in 2003 and has since expanded nationally. It exists to:

- ▶ Provide an opportunity for children with special needs to develop creative skills related to the theater arts.
- ▶ Provide an opportunity for children with special needs to participate in a community theater experience.
- ▶ Facilitate interaction between children with special needs and their age-level peers through joint participation in a community theater experience.

District 709 congratulates all the students for all their hard work leading up to the show and a terrific performance.



Photo credit: RuthAnn Petrov

These Morton District 709 students participated in the 2020 Penguin Project Peoria production of "Legally Blonde the Musical Jr." Front row: (left to right) Maya G., artist, 1st year; Kyra W., mentor, 1st year; Joshua S., artist, 1st year; Grace P., mentor, 1st year; Jocelynn M., artist, 3rd year. Back row: (left to right) Jordan B., artist, 10th year; Julie W., mentor, 5th year; Hayden S., artist, 3rd year; Max P., artist, 6th year; Adam S., mentor, 6th year.

GAME ON eSports Club hits start at Morton High School

eSports has gained quite the popularity in the United States with nearly 100 million viewers of the League of Legends video game world championship in 2018. Colleges and high schools across America have taken notice as the event had nearly the same number of viewers as the Super Bowl.

At Morton High School, 83 students have shown interest in joining the eSports team. At the Aug. 20 board meeting, a few students stood at the podium asking the Morton School Board members to consider the students' request for Morton High School to have an eSports club. The students gave their insight as to how the club would benefit the high school students and to further strengthen their case, the students cited sources from their research.

In addition, Craig Anderson, the Executive Director of the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) and Morton resident, gave his insight on the gaining popularity and the future of the eSports groups within Illinois high schools. "One of the things we (IHSA) have to do is make sure that 10 percent of our membership has an eSports team in order to have a state series," said Anderson.

"Last year, 70 schools reported they did have a team. We are definitely near or right at that threshold of 10 percent where our (IHSA) board could approve that state series. It is something we are trying to consider at a committee level where we will bring a recommendation to our board in the future. Possibly at the end of this school year with the anticipation of implementing a state series in the 2020-2021 school year," said Anderson.



Morton High School students play to make the team at the eSports Club try-outs.

"I am very proud of the students for their efforts in discussing this topic with the school board. I am thankful for a board that listens to our students and works with them to identify opportunities to get more students engaged in structured activities."

Patrick Mainieri, Director of Student Activities and Engagement

With the IHSA still in the process of laying the foundation of eSports as a state series, the board still had a number of unanswered questions. The board expressed their concerns about the content of the games the club would play and the amount of screen time for the individuals. Thus, the board unanimously decided to table the decision until they

had more information.

However, at the Sept. 3 board meeting, the MHS students once again approached the Morton Board of Education with more solutions. The students addressed the board's concern of playing League of Legends and other game content with the idea to allow the group to play only E-rated games. The students also

proposed aligning more team building exercises as part of the program to decrease screen time.

Superintendent Dr. Jeff Hill commended the students for their professionalism. "I want to thank you guys for being willing to generate some solutions as opposed to complaining about results," said Dr. Hill. With the students' proposed solutions, the board unanimously approved MHS to have a pilot eSports group.

Patrick Mainieri, Director of Student Activities and Engagement, expressed, "I am very proud of the students for their efforts in discussing this topic with the school board. I am thankful for a board that listens to our students and works with them to identify opportunities to get more students engaged in structured activities. Especially, when the activity could offer numerous college scholarships, while engaging the students in aspects of teamwork, programming and computer design."

eSports Club held its tryouts in early December and as expected, this will be the first school activity for the majority of the students. Mr. Brandon Parrott, who is the club coach, shared his excitement for the 18 students who made the team; "It has been great to see the students engaged in the game while embracing the team concept. The eSports group will be an opportunity for the students to learn many of the team building skills that will carry them far in the classroom and further in life."

eSports Club will begin their season playing against different Illinois High Schools in February as members of the Illinois High School eSports Association.

Students solve problems with Lego bricks

Morton School District creates Robotics Teams throughout District 709

Over the past two years, through the Morton Moving Forward initiative, Morton District 709 has made a concerted effort to get all students involved in at least one extracurricular activity. Research shows that extracurricular involvement has many benefits for students, and under the leadership of Director of Student Activities and Engagement Mr. Patrick Mainieri, District 709 has increased opportunities for students to be involved. One such area for increased involvement has been the area of Robotics.

Morton School District strives to engage their students in STEM based education. Through the play of Legos and the core values practiced in the FIRST Lego League (FLL) program, the students gain confidence, build leadership skills, and develop problem solving proficiencies that will take them far in a competitive workforce.

Morton School District formed their own FLL club in the spring of 2018. Mrs. Samantha McKee, Lincoln Elementary School 5th grade teacher, is one of the four coaches. She reported that all four of Morton School District's elementary schools and the Morton Junior High participate in the league. Right now, the 5th and 6th graders compete in the league, and in the spring of 2020, the registered 4th graders will have the opportunity to join an exploratory



FIRST Lego League Coach Mrs. McKee monitors the students engaged in programming the Lego Robotic to run through an obstacle course.

session.

The FLL is an alliance between FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) and the Lego Group. According to the league's website, www.firstinspires.org, "the Lego League is a guided global robotics competition designed around theme-based challenges." Schools form their own club and compete against other schools creating solutions for the challenges, with Lego bricks, of course.

Like all big projects, the FLL club requires leaders and sponsors to ensure the success of the program. Morton School District is honored to have Caterpillar, Inc. on board as the club's sponsor. Caterpillar provides funds to purchase robots, supplies for the robotic teams, registration fees, and team t-shirts for the coaches and students. In addition, one of the program's four coaches, Mr. David Boecker, is a Caterpillar employee.

While watching the Morton

teams at practice, it appeared the students were just playing Legos with their friends. Upon closer examination, the students were coding, problem solving, creating ideas, and working together as a team. "The students are currently working on robotic design, programming, and basic maneuvering skills as well as building their FLL core values, which are; discovery, innovation, impact, teamwork, inclusion, and fun," said Mrs. McKee.

"For the students, the buy-in is the Legos and the programming. However, the project and accepting differences is a little bit harder. For instance, there are different jobs that the students must complete, and they get different points for completing each task. Their job is to figure out which tasks would get the most points for the team and then decide which ones they can complete in a given time frame," Mrs. McKee added.

As mentioned previously, each STEM-based group is given a real-world problem by the FLL to solve as their yearly project. This year's challenge is called "City Shaper" where the students must identify a problem in their community and offer their solution to the problem.

One team's project is to come up with a solution for the infamous four-way stop in Morton. Mrs. McKee added, "The students are interested in this particular intersection because they would like

it to be safer for the students and pedestrians to cross." Mrs. McKee noted that the team will share their solution(s) with the Village of Morton upon completion of the project.

Another team's project is to inspire people to use recycled plastic in road construction. Coach Boecker commented, "People are going to be skeptical of changing the material for road construction. To prove that it will work, we talked with the Morton Park District about using the plastic roads in their paving of parking lots, paths and trails."

The FLL core values instill a life skills-based education. Many refer to them as soft skills. The skills are the building blocks that help the students use the knowledge they receive in the program and apply them to real-world problems. They provide students the ability to think abstractly and approach problems from multiple angles to find practical solutions, and the skills to communicate clearly and effectively. The skills are just as important as technical knowledge in a particular field or academic subject.

Superintendent Dr. Jeff Hill added, "We are excited about this first big step into Robotics and the work of our students, coaches, and our coordinator Mrs. McKee!"



'See something, say something'

District encourages students, community to report suspicious activity

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has developed the "See Something, Say Something" campaign to call people to take action to help protect their community, and the Morton School District is asking the Morton community, students, staff, and parents to join in.

The safety of the Morton School District students and staff, as well as our community, is of the utmost importance. We know that prevention is always better than the need to react to a potentially tragic event. By being alert and reporting suspicious activity, you can protect your family, neighbors, and our community. To that end, we would like to clarify the process for students and parents regarding how to notify school personnel when a threat or something concerning is seen or heard.

What should I do if I see or hear about something that concerns me about school or student safety?

If you see or hear something suspicious or concerning, please contact the proper authorities immediately. During the school day, Morton District 709 parents and students can report things to a teacher, school administrator, school resource officer, or any other trusted member of the school staff. Outside of school hours, a concern should be reported immediately to the Morton Police Department (266-6666).

If you are uncomfortable making personal contact in these ways, you can report the information by filling out the "Hotline" form located under the student tab on each of the schools' websites or under the parent tab of the Morton709 website. The form will

soon be available on all District 709 homepages in the red bar that holds the Powerschool icon at the bottom of the screen.

What should I say when I am reporting a concern?

Regardless of the reporting method that you use, it is important to communicate the "the 5 W's":

- ▶ When the activity took place
- ▶ Where the activity took place
- ▶ Who was involved or at the scene
- ▶ What was heard or what occurred
- ▶ Why you feel the activity is suspicious

What happens after I report a concern?

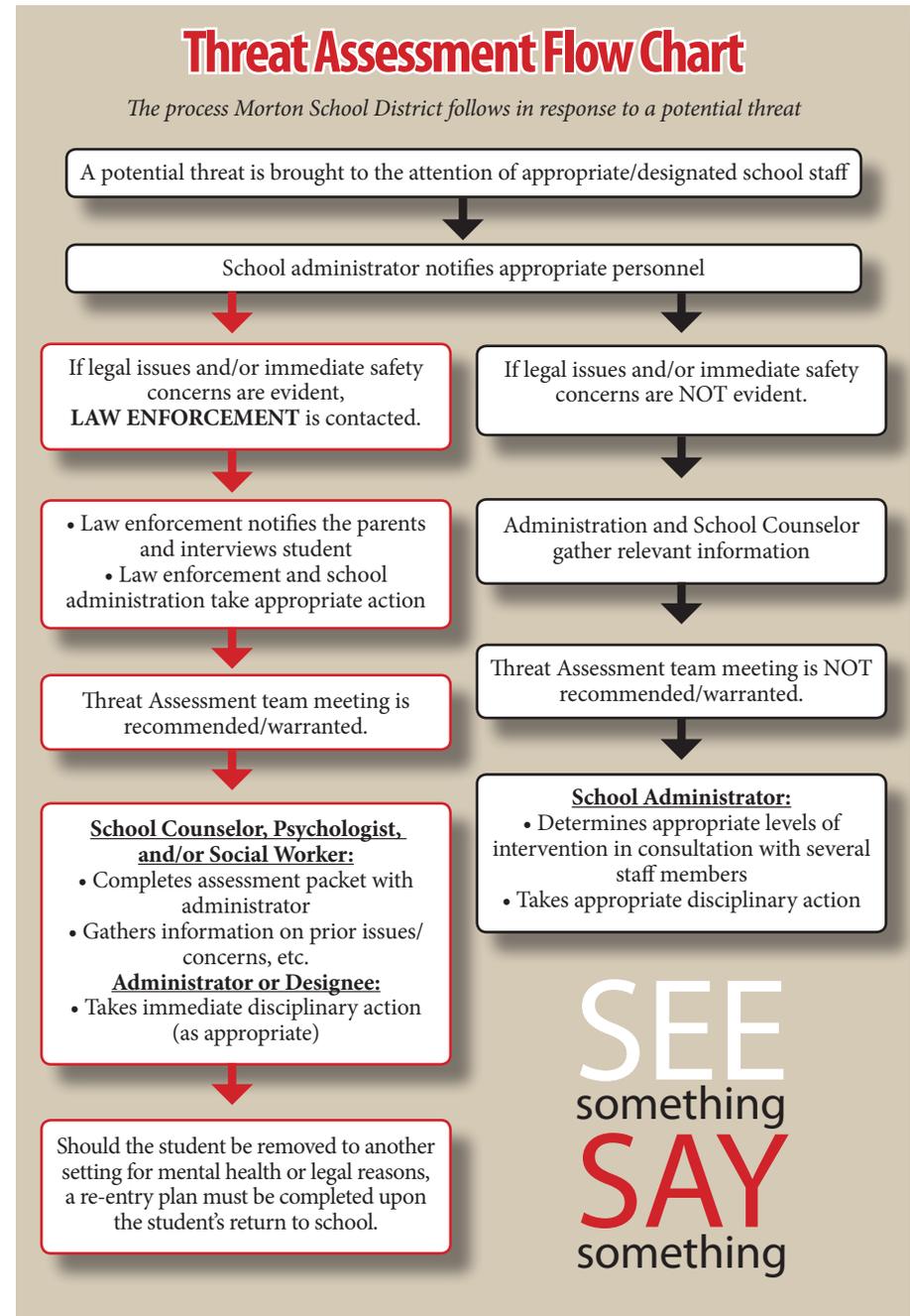
After you provide the very important information to the police or school district, you may be contacted to get more information about what you saw or heard that may help with an investigation. The school district and police will use your information to begin a process to assess the threat so that we can take quick and deliberate action to prevent it. (See the flow chart.) However, due to potential security concerns and student confidentiality issues, you may not always hear about the specifics of the resolution or how the threat was neutralized.

We know that many school threats have been thwarted and tragedies have been prevented due to students, parents, and community members reporting concerns as soon as they become aware of them. Morton District 709 appreciates your willingness to do your part to keep our school community as safe as possible.

So, when you see something, say something.

Threat Assessment Flow Chart

The process Morton School District follows in response to a potential threat



SEE
something
SAY
something

What is social and emotional learning & why is it important in our schools?

By Dr. Dan Ebbert

School Psychologist at Jefferson and Lettie Brown Elementary Schools

Social and emotional learning, or SEL for short, is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2009).

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was formed in 1994 with the goal of establishing evidence-based SEL as an essential part of preschool through high school education. Both CASEL and the term “social and emotional learning” emerged from a meeting in 1994 hosted by the Fetzer Institute. Meeting attendees included researchers, educators, and child advocates involved in various education-based efforts to promote positive development in children.

These SEL pioneers came together to address a concern about school programming and a lack of coordination among programs at the school level. At that time, schools were being inundated with a slew of positive youth development programs such as drug prevention, violence prevention, sex education, civic education, and moral education, to name a few. SEL was introduced as a framework that addresses the needs of young people and helps to align and coordinate school programs and programming.

Specifically, SEL focus on five main core competencies. These



include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Here is a breakdown of what each of these core competencies entails.

► Self-Awareness

Self-awareness includes the ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. It also involves the ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.” When students have a well-developed sense of self-awareness, they are able to more accurately identify emotions, have an accurate self-perception, recognize personal strengths, have good self-confidence, and a high level of self-efficacy.

► Self-management

Self-management is the ability

to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations and effectively manage stress, control impulses, motivate oneself, and set and work toward personal and academic goals. Students with strong self-management skills are able to demonstrate good impulse control, manage stress effectively, show self-discipline, have good self-motivation, set appropriate goals, and show good organizational skills.

► Social Awareness

Social awareness involves the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. It also includes the ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports. When students have good social awareness, they have the ability to demonstrate

perspective-taking, show empathy, appreciate diversity, and show respect for others.

► Relationship Skills

Relationship skills involves the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This also includes the ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed. Students with well-developed relationship skills show good communication skills, have good social engagement, are able to build strong relationships, and show teamwork when needed.

► Responsible Decision-Making

Responsible decision-making involves the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical

standards, safety concerns, and social norms. It also includes the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others. Students with good responsible decision-making skills are able to accurately identify problems, analyze situations, solve problems, and reflect on their decisions.

Research consistently shows that academic and social/emotional skills are intimately related and jointly contribute to children's learning in school (e.g., Shriver & Weissberg, 2005). SEL lowers the risk of problems like school violence and youthful drug and alcohol use. When SEL improves there is also typically improvement in attitudes (motivation and commitment), behavior (participation and study habits), and school performance (grades and subject mastery). One of the most important aspects of SEL is that it has also been strongly shown to help facilitate academic learning.

Recognizing this critical link, beginning in 2004, the Illinois State Board of Education developed Social and Emotional Learning Standards for early childhood through twelfth grade, and schools including those in Morton, have since been working to address these standards through screening, integration in the core curriculum, character education, and SEL Response to Intervention skill-building groups.

If you have further questions about SEL, feel free to consult your child's teacher, your school building's social worker, or your building's school psychologist for further assistance.

PTOs support District 709 schools

PTO Meeting Dates

Morton High School

All PTO meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 1 p.m. in the MHS Conference Room. Check in at the main office on Illinois Street. Upcoming meetings are 2/11, 3/10, 4/15, and 5/11. The last meeting will be held May 11 in the Bertha Frank lobby with a potluck lunch at noon followed by a meeting at 1 pm.

Grundy

Upcoming meetings are 1/27, 2/24, 3/23, 4/27, and 5/18. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Library.

Jefferson

Upcoming meetings are 1/27, 3/23, and 4/27. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Teacher Work Room.

Morton Junior High Red and White Club

Upcoming meetings are 1/16, 2/20, 3/19, and 4/16. Meetings begin at 7 p.m. in the Library and Media Center.

Lettie Brown

PTO meetings are held the last Monday of every month and start at 7 p.m. in the Music Room. Upcoming meetings are 1/27, 2/24, 3/23, and 4/27.

Lincoln

Upcoming meetings are 2/03, 3/02, 3/30, and 5/4. Meetings begin at 7 p.m. in the vestibule outside of the gym.



The Grundy PTO was able to purchase a new slide for the Grundy Gator playground thanks to everyone who purchased Fannie May candy.

Morton Potter Cards

The PTO at Morton High School has partnered with local businesses to offer the Morton Potter Card.

The Potter Card is sold for \$10 and offers discounts at local Morton businesses. All proceeds go to MHS PTO for the benefit of the high school students, teachers, and staff.

The Potter Card may be used only once per day, per business, per customer, and not in conjunction with any other discounts. The Potter Card can be used over and over throughout 2020.

The Potter Card is valid Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 31, 2020, and can be purchased at the Morton High School Main Office, Morton School District Office, Lettie Brown Elementary School, Morton Chamber of Commerce, J & J Cleaners, Lulu's On Main, So Chic Boutique of Morton, Morton Leaves 'N Beans, Miller Paint Shop, and Rudy's Hair Salon.

All proceeds benefit the Morton High School PTO. For questions contact Jane Hoffmire or Cindy Honegger.

Thank you to the following businesses for their ongoing support! The businesses below are on the 2020 Potter Card:

Basta's Italian Kitchen -10% off carry-out only

The Confectionery, Inc. -10% off of all purchases

Culver's of Morton-\$1 off value basket

Dunkin Donuts in Morton -Buy 1 dozen donuts at regular price, get 6 free

Elevate Trampoline Park Peoria-Buy 1 hour of jump, get 2nd hour free, 1 per person per day

Eli's Coffee Shop -Buy 1 drink, get 1 of equal or lesser value 25% off. 1 per visit

Em.bel.ish Hair Design -20% off your choice of spa service of \$75 or more

Firehouse Pizza of Morton-\$2 off lunch buffet, \$4 off pickup or delivery order (\$20 minimum)

First Ascent Climbing and Fitness (Peoria) - Free rental package with purchase of a day pass

FJT Office Supplies-\$2 off H-P ink cartridges

Floral Designs, Ltd. -\$5 off a dozen roses

Four30 Scones - 10% off in shop purchase, excludes catering or special orders

Garner's Pizza and Wings -Buy 1XL pizza, get 1 small appetizer free

Great American Popcorn Co. of Morton -10% off purchase, with \$10 minimum purchase

Great Harvest Bread Co. -Buy a medium coffee, get 1/2 off a sweet

Grimm's Inc. -10% off one original priced item, in stock only

J & J Cleaners -10% off services, 20% off drop off laundry (5 lb. minimum)

Jacque Austin Photography - \$50.00 off photo session or print order

La Fiesta Mexican Restaurant - Buy 1 make your own combo at full price, get 2nd make your own combo of equal or lesser value for half price

La Gondola of Morton - 10% off purchase

Leaves 'N Beans -10% off purchase
Lulu's on Main -25% off one regular priced item. Excludes Blue Dot, gift cards & consignment pieces

Miller Paint Shop -10% off regular priced item

Morton Cinemas -\$1 off any size drink or popcorn. Limit 2 per visit

Morton Dairy Queen -\$2 off DQ Bakes dessert item

Nena Ace Hardware of Morton - 10% off bird seed and feeders, 10% off equipment rental, 10% off ice melt

The Nook at Nena Ace Hardware of Morton - 15% off one regularly priced item

Pegasus Pizza -\$3 off any 16" pizza or pizza pair, \$2 off any 12" pizza or pizza pair. Pick up only
Pizza Ranch -10% off any purchase

Potter's Alley - One free 16 ounce fountain drink with purchase of 2 games open bowling at regular price (Limit one use per day)

Rudy's Hair Salon -\$5 off one spray tan. 50% off eyebrow wax. One person per card

Schooners -10% off total bill. Dine in only. Excludes weekends, banquets and alcohol

Seasons Gastropub -10% off carry out Tues./Wed. only. Half price kids menus on Wed. (dinner dine in only) 1 child per adult purchase

So Chic Boutique of Morton -10% off entire boutique purchase, May not be combined with other offers.

Stress Busters Massage and Float Suite - 10% off any single full price service. Cannot be used to purchase gift cards or used with other offers.

Sucré Sweets & Socials -Buy 1 cotton candy, get 1 cotton candy free. Limit 1 per card.

Threads Boutique -15% off 1 original priced item

Upscale Resale - Buy 1 item, get 1/2 off 2nd item of equal or lesser price

School Fundraisers

Thank you MCUSD 709 community and companies for your support!

Morton Junior High

The Morton Junior High held their annual Help-A-Thon fundraiser. The money will be used to support the academic, athletic, and music programs, as well as student field trips.

The Junior Potters are thankful for the generous contributions from their PTO, the community, and the following companies.

- ▶ 360 Communications
- ▶ Casey's General Store
- ▶ Grimm's Inc
- ▶ J. J Braker
- ▶ Leman Management Properties
- ▶ Lighthouse Automotive
- ▶ Morton Fury
- ▶ Staker and Sons Construction
- ▶ Stephens Auto Glass
- ▶ Tanner Farms
- ▶ Unland Companies

Grundy

Grundy Elementary School sold Fannie May candies for their annual fundraiser. The money raised will go towards the purchase of books, classroom supplies, PE equipment, field trips, and playground improvements.

The Grundy Gators would like to thank their PTO and the community for their generous support.

Lettie Brown



Photo Credit: Angel Fisher

The Lettie Brown Bears express their gratitude for those who contributed to the school's Walk-A-Thon fundraiser.

Lettie Brown Elementary School held their annual Walk-A-Thon fundraiser. The funds will be used to support various school events and to purchase supplies for Popcorn Fridays, books for the library, classroom books, a book for each student's birthday, supplies for the Artistic Adventures program, to fund the One School One Book reading program, and much more.

The Lettie Brown Bears would like to thank the community and the

following companies for their generous contributions.

- ▶ A Perfect Promotion
- ▶ Bob Grimm Chevrolet
- ▶ CEFCU
- ▶ FJT Office Supply
- ▶ Grethey Rose Construction and Restoration
- ▶ Lighthouse Buick GMC
- ▶ Lovell Orthodontics
- ▶ Mc Donald's
- ▶ Mike Murphy Ford
- ▶ Potter's Alley

Lincoln

Lincoln Elementary School held their annual Walk-A-Thon fundraiser. The funds raised will go towards new student lockers for 3rd and 4th grade, an artist-in-residence to collaborate with students in the creation of a Lion Mosaic School Mural, and the savings for a walking track around the perimeter of the grassy area of the playground. In addition, the funds will provide transportation for the 6th grade field trip to Chicago, Artistic Adventure program supplies, Mystery Science program supplies, classroom budgets for each Lincoln teacher, and much more.

The Lincoln Lions would like to thank their PTO, the awesome families, the community, and the following companies for their generous donations.

- ▶ Carl's Bakery
- ▶ Center Stage Academy of Dance
- ▶ Central Illinois Insulation
- ▶ Clayton Financial Group
- ▶ Core Construction Services of IL
- ▶ Floral Designs
- ▶ Friends of Lincoln PTO
- ▶ Gosteli Technology Solutions
- ▶ Illinois Civil Contractors Inc.
- ▶ Lighthouse GMC Automotive
- ▶ Michael Yordy Excavating
- ▶ Morton Audiology & Hearing Aid Ctr.
- ▶ Morton Collision
- ▶ Preckshot Professional Pharmacy
- ▶ Renewal by Andersen
- ▶ Schooners of Morton
- ▶ Schelkopf Farms
- ▶ Sucre
- ▶ Sum Fun Stable
- ▶ Tony & Sons
- ▶ Xcell Mechanicaland

Morton High School

The Morton High School and PTO sold The Morton Potter Cards for their annual fundraiser. The money will be used to fund grants for the teachers who need additional supplies for classroom projects, a teacher appreciation dinner, and the Junior ACT breakfast.

The Potters would like to thank their PTO, the community, the MHS parents, and the following companies for their support in the sales of the 2018 Morton Potter Card.

- ▶ Basta's Italian Kitchen
- ▶ Carius Dairy Queen
- ▶ The Confectionery, Inc.
- ▶ Culver's of Morton
- ▶ Dunkin Donuts/Baskin Robbins
- ▶ Eli's Coffee Shop
- ▶ Em.bel.ish Hair Design
- ▶ Elevate Trampoline Park Peoria
- ▶ Firehouse Pizza in Morton

- ▶ FJT Office Supplies
- ▶ Floral Designs, Ltd.
- ▶ Garner's Pizza and Wings
- ▶ Great American Popcorn Co. of Morton
- ▶ Great Harvest Bread Co.
- ▶ Grimm's Inc.
- ▶ Hacienda Fuentes
- ▶ J & J Cleaners
- ▶ Johnson's Floral
- ▶ La Gondola of Morton
- ▶ La Fiesta Mexican Restaurant
- ▶ Leaves 'N Beans of Morton
- ▶ Lulu's on Main
- ▶ Miller Paint Shop
- ▶ Morton Cinemas
- ▶ Papa Murphy's Pizza
- ▶ Pegasus Pizza
- ▶ Pizza Ranch of Morton
- ▶ Rudy's Hair Salon
- ▶ Safari Bowl, Inc.
- ▶ Schooners
- ▶ Seasons Gastropub
- ▶ So Chic Boutique of Morton
- ▶ Sucré Sweets & Socials
- ▶ Threads Boutique

Jefferson

Jefferson Elementary School held their annual Read-A-Thon fundraiser. We appreciate the numerous business sponsors for this year's Read-A-Thon. The money raised will be used to support various school events and purchase teacher supplies. The Jefferson Patriots are very thankful for the donations of other local businesses and individuals within our community who have made generous donations of supplies, coats, and money for lunch balances.

The Jefferson Patriots are very thankful for the contributions of their PTO and the community.

- ▶ Casey's — Morton
- ▶ CEFCU – Morton
- ▶ Chalk & Chestnut
- ▶ Dimensional Health
- ▶ Farmers Insurance - Brett

Bisping

- ▶ Lighthouse Automotive
- ▶ Matcor Metal Fab
- ▶ Merit Reporters
- ▶ Meyer and Sons Plumbing
- ▶ Morton Community Bank
- ▶ Morton Financial Services
- ▶ New Castle Realty - Tricia Yordy
- ▶ O'Donnell Custom Builders
- ▶ Paw Pad Doodles
- ▶ S & V Construction
- ▶ Sew Sassy Stitchery
- ▶ SIMFORMATION
- ▶ SMART Local Union No. 1
- ▶ Staker and Sons Construction
- ▶ Stephens Striping & Signs
- ▶ Sweet Pea & Sunshine Studios
- ▶ Thr3ads Boutique

Morton holds a special place for Dave Snell

Dave Snell is no stranger to the Peoria area. Many may remember him as a sports journalist for 22 years at WMBD news. He is currently the Assistant Director of Communications for the Bradley University Athletic Department and has served as the voice of the Bradley Braves for 18 years. He has been working in radio and television for 41 years.

However, people may not know that his play-by-play career at Bradley came about by covering the Morton Potters basketball games at WTAZ radio. The radio station was located half-way between Morton and Washington. Dave was covering both Morton and Washington high school sports.

His most memorable season was the Morton Potters 1978-79 basketball season. The team was coached by Coach Reiser. "They were outstanding. The team had Kevin Bontemps, Mike McCafferty, Mike Majeski, Andy Kaufman, and Steve Waibel," said Snell.

He gave all the players nicknames. Andy Kaufman was nicknamed "The Surgeon" because he would cut through the lane all the time and scored. Kevin Bontemps, who ended up going to the University of Illinois, and was an All-State player, was called "The Governor" because he was the top player. Steve Waibel was nicknamed "Mr. Clean" because he looked like the tough guy. Mike McCafferty was called "Big Mac."



DAVE SNELL

The team was undefeated until they played in the sectional championship game against Peoria Central and lost. Prior to the loss, the Potters played Chicago Westinghouse and Rockford Auburn. Mr. Snell commented, "They played all these terrific teams. They played Division One basketball teams and won."

"Because I did the play-by-play for them and they were exciting and they were good, a lot of people would listen; including the general manager at WMBD," he said. Snell got a call from a high school friend who had shared the news that Mick Hubert was resigning from his assistant sports director position at WMBD. Snell applied for the job on Monday and was offered the position the next day.

"Had I not covered the Morton basketball games, I may have still gotten the job, but I may not have been offered the job as quickly as I did," said Snell. The 1978-79 basketball season was the second and last season he covered Morton Potters basketball, but he remembers that high school team was the best high school team he covered.

"I met so many wonderful people during that season and many of them are still friends of mine to this day. Morton has a very, very special place in my memory and my heart because of the two years I covered the Morton Potters."



A championship banner for the 1978-79 Morton Potters hangs in Morton High School.

"I met so many wonderful people during that season and many of them are still friends of mine to this day. Morton has a very, very special place in my memory and my heart..."

Dave Snell, Assistant Director of Communications,
Bradley University Athletic Dept.

LIFE in Stitches teaching students job skills

One of Morton High School's goals is to ensure all students are prepared for life after high school. The LIFE Academy program supports students with disabilities by offering a curriculum that teaches them the skills to live independently. The LIFE in Stitches course is an inclusive portion of LIFE Academy.

In the program, students are given the opportunity to learn all the facets of a service-based business dependent upon their abilities. The students not only learn how to embroider and applique items, they take the customers' orders, create designs, perform billing tasks, and package the end product.

Olivia, who is a LIFE in Stitches student, is excited to be a part of the program. The 2019-2020 school year has been her third year in the program. She has learned how to create embroidery designs as well as cut stabilizer, create and print invoices, pick out colors for designs, and insert and remove frames from the embroidery machine.

All of the students in the program take pride in their work and are eager to showcase the work they helped create. Going through the classroom right before Christmas, the classroom was filled with various gift ideas.

After graduating high school, students can participate in the Heart of Morton program that was started in 2010 under the direction of Dana Ashby, who was the Special Education Director for the Morton School District. According to Earl Loring, the Heart of Morton Director, the non-for-profit business began as a way of helping the graduated young adults to have a continuation of friendships beyond their family. "The young adults with cognitive disabilities will see a decline in or cease to have a continuation of friendship after high school," said Loring. "We wanted to be sure that every week there was a social context as a group to further encourage and strengthen friendships."

As a continuation of support, the Heart of Morton sought out to carry



The LIFE In Stitches students and staff. INSET: LIFE In Stitches student displays one of the messenger bags with the MHS logo on it that can be purchased for \$28.00 through Alison Eckart.

Order embroidery

Morton community members can order embroidery services from the MHS LIFE in Stitches program. The cost is \$7 for less than 12,000 stitches and \$8 for more than 12,000 stitches.

To purchase items already prepared or to have an item embroidered or appliqued, email Alison Eckart at alison.eckart@mcusd709.org.



over the embroidery aspect of the LIFE in Stitches program for further on-the-job training.

"We have always seen the embroidery aspect of the program as a job incubator," said Loring. "The young

adults learn how to show up to work on time, how to complete a project, how to fill out a timecard, how to take directions, among other job-related tasks."

The Morton High School LIFE in Stitches program offers their embroidery services to all Morton community members. The cost is \$7 for less than 12,000 stitches and \$8 for more than 12,000 stitches.

To purchase items already prepared or to have an item embroidered or appliqued, email Alison Eckart at alison.eckart@mcusd709.org.

The money collected from the fees is used to maintain the machines and purchase materials and tools needed to perform the tasks.

MHS Class of 2020 Illinois State Scholars

Morton High School is honored to announce the Class of 2020 Illinois State Scholars. Since 1958, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) has been recognizing the top Illinois students for their academic achievement with the Illinois State Scholar designation.

According to ISAC, "the 2020-2021 Illinois State Scholars represent approximately the top ten percent of high school seniors from 726 high schools across the state. The Illinois State Scholars are chosen based on a combination of exemplary ACT or SAT test scores and sixth semester class rank."

Becoming an Illinois State Scholar demonstrates a culmination of years of dedication and hard work.

Morton High School Principal Deidre Ripka expressed her pride in the students' achievement, "These students are a great representation of the high standards of our school and district as well as the supportive school, home, and community environment.

"We are so proud of this accomplishment and can't wait to see what their future holds."



Class of 2020

*Illinois State
Scholars*

Elodie Baumgartner
Morgan Behnke
Ethan Boley
Kristen Canopy
Alexandra Cigelnik
Noah Ciocca
Alexis Cole
Cade Coon
Adam Darlington
Kyle Davis
Clara DeWeese
Isaiah Gudeman
Casey Hoffmire
Kaitlyn Johnson
Ava Kaufman
Kyra Killion
Sara Lagacy
Samuel Lange
Tori Larrabee
Lily Laughlin

Lexi Loudermilk
Lauren Miller
Chloe Mishler-Trerice
Andrew Osing
Tristan Parker
Jacqueline Pfeifer
Kayci Riddle
Taylor Rogers
Ashley Sauder
Kelly Schaffnit
Evan Schick
Cole Stevens
Elaina Teater
Aaron Tresenriter
Zoe Troxell
Alexander Weber
Keaton Weber
Marlaina Weeks
Joseph Yoder

District's school designations set by Illinois State Board of Education

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) released the school designations for each school in Illinois, in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Under ESSA, the state assigns school designations of Exemplary, Commendable, Under Performing, and Lowest Performing.

The Morton School District is pleased to note that in the past two years, three of the Morton District schools have received the

Exemplary designation. In the 2018-2019 school year, Lincoln Elementary School earned the Exemplary designation.

This school year, both Morton High School and Morton Junior High School received the top designation of Exemplary and four out of six schools received the designation of Commendable.

School designations are based on a data set consisting of 2019 PARCC, SAT, and DLM-AA proficiency scores,

growth (grades 4-8), English language progress to proficiency (grades 1-12), chronic absenteeism (grades 1-12), and ninth grade on track and graduation rates (for high schools only).

"Morton District 709 continues to provide high-quality education thanks to the support of our community, the hard work of our students, and the expertise of our teachers and staff," said Superintendent Jeff Hill.

2019 ISBE SCHOOL DESIGNATIONS



MORTON HIGH SCHOOL - EXEMPLARY
MORTON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL - EXEMPLARY
LINCOLN SCHOOL - COMMENDABLE
JEFFERSON SCHOOL - COMMENDABLE
WARD GRUNDY SCHOOL - COMMENDABLE
LETTIE BROWN SCHOOL - COMMENDABLE



2020 Fine Arts Calendar

The following are the Fine Arts events for the school district for first semester of the 2019-2020 school year. Note: All dates, times, and locations subject to change. Check the specific school calendar for the most up-to-date information. All events, school district and community events, which are scheduled for the Bertha Frank Performing Arts Center at Morton High School are available at www.berthafrank.org. You can also follow Morton 709 Fine Arts on Facebook @ Morton CUSD709 Fine Arts.

January

31 JH Musical Performance at

Bertha Frank

February

1 - 2 JH Musical Performances at Bertha Frank
 1 HS All-State Music Concerts at IL Music Educator Association All-State Music Festival, Peoria Civic Center
 4 District Spelling Bee at Bertha Frank
 7 Mid-Illini Jazz Concert at Canton High School
 9 In Their Own Write at Bertha Frank
 10 Mid-Illini Choir Concert at Dunlap High School
 11 Lettie Brown 4th and 6th Grade Program at Bertha Frank
 15 HS Symphonic Strings at University of Illinois Orchestra Festival

at Krannert Hall, Champaign
 20 HS Band Concert at Bertha Frank
 21 ROE 53 Regional Spelling Bee at Bertha Frank
 25 JH/HS Jazz Bands at Bradley Jazz Festival at Bradley University
 25 Lincoln 4th and 5th Grade Program at Bertha Frank
 28 Choir Festival at Bertha Frank
 29 Orchestra Festival at Bertha Frank

March

2 HS Orchestra Concert at Bertha Frank
 6 JH Solo and Ensemble at Junior High School
 7 IHS Solo and Ensemble at Normal Community
 10 Lettie Brown 5th Grade Musical at Bertha Frank

April

18 JH Honor Band and Jazz Band at Heritage Festival in St. Louis, MO
 23 - 26 HS Musical Performances at Bertha Frank
 24 - 25 HS Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Winds at ISU Concert Festival at Illinois State University

May

1 JH Band at Dunlap Music Festival

1 HS Art Show - Flight! - at Bertha Frank Lobby
 5 MEC and JH Music Ensembles at Spring Celebration at Peoria Courthouse Square
 5 HS Awards Orchestra Concert at Idlewood Park (Rain Site: Bertha Frank)
 7 MJHS Awards Orchestra Concert at Junior High Gym
 7 HS Band Awards Concert at HS West Gym
 8 or 9 HS Wind Ensemble at University of Illinois SuperState Festival at Krannert Hall, Champaign
 11 JH Band Awards Concert at Junior High Gym
 12 HS Choir Awards Concert at Bertha Frank
 14 JH / MEC Choir Concert at Grace Church

2020 MHS Winter Athletics Calendar

*Dates and times are subject to change. Please check MHS Sports Schedules by going to MHS.Morton709.org. Click on the "Schedules" tab and select "School, Sports, and Activities Calendar to find more information and to see the spring sports schedules.

January 2020 Wednesday, 22

6 p.m. - BOYS Freshmen Basketball at Normal Community High School

Friday, 24

5:30 p.m. - GIRLS Sophomore Basketball at East Peoria High School
 6 p.m. - BOYS Sophomore Basketball VS Lincoln High School at Home
 7 p.m. - GIRLS Varsity Basketball at East Peoria High School
 7:30 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Basketball VS Lincoln High School at Home

Saturday, 25

8:30 a.m. - Scholastic Bowl at East Peoria High School
 9 a.m. - BOYS Varsity Wrestling MIC Meet at East Peoria High School
 9:30 a.m. - BOYS Freshmen Basketball at Dunlap High School
 9:30 a.m. - GIRLS Freshmen Basketball VS Dunlap High School at Home
 5 p.m. - GIRLS Sophomore Basketball VS Rock Island at Home
 6:30 p.m. - GIRLS Varsity Basketball VS Rock Island at Home

Monday, 27

4:30 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Swimming VS La Salle-Peru Twp High School at Five

Points-Washington
 6 p.m. - BOYS Freshmen Basketball VS Canton High School at Home
 6 p.m. - GIRLS Freshmen Basketball at Canton High School

Tuesday, 28

5:30 p.m. - GIRLS Sophomore Basketball VS Washington High School at Home
 7 p.m. - GIRLS Varsity Basketball VS Washington High School at Home

Wednesday, 29

4:30 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Swimming at Richwoods High School
 6 p.m. - GIRLS Freshmen Basketball VS Olympia High School at Home

Thursday, 30

4:30 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Swimming VS Macomb High School at Five Points-Washington
 6 p.m. - Redwings Game at Home - West Gym
 6 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Wrestling at Olympia High School

Friday, 31

5:30 p.m. - BOYS Sophomore Basketball VS Canton High School at Home
 7 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Basketball VS Canton High School at Home

February 2020

Saturday, 1

8 a.m. - Chess Sectionals at Washington High School
 9 a.m. - BOYS Fresh./Soph. Wrestling MIC Meet at Metamora High School
 9:30 a.m. - GIRLS Freshmen Basketball at East Peoria High School
 1:30 p.m. - BOYS Sophomore Basketball at Peoria High School

3 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Basketball at Peoria Manual High School
 5 p.m. - GIRLS Sophomore Basketball at Metamora High School
 6:30 p.m. - GIRLS Varsity Basketball at Metamora High School

Monday, 3

6 p.m. - BOYS Freshmen Basketball at Pekin High School
 6 p.m. - GIRLS Freshmen Basketball VS Pekin High School at Home

Tuesday, 4

4 p.m. - Scholastic Bowl at Limestone High School
 4:30 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Swimming VS Dunlap High School at Five Points - Washington
 5:30 p.m. - GIRLS Sophomore Basketball VS Canton High School at Home

7 p.m. - GIRLS Varsity Basketball VS Canton High School at Home

Wednesday, 5

6 p.m. - GIRLS Freshmen Basketball at Washington High School

Thursday, 6

6 p.m. - GIRLS Freshmen Basketball VS Normal Community High School at Home

Friday, 7

5:30 p.m. - GIRLS Sophomore Basketball VS Pekin High School at Home
 5:30 p.m. - BOYS Sophomore Basketball at Pekin High School
 7 p.m. - GIRLS Varsity Basketball VS Pekin High School at Home
 7 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Basketball at Pekin High School

Saturday, 8

8:30 a.m. - Scholastic Bowl at Pekin

High School
 9:30 a.m. - BOYS Freshmen Basketball VS Washington High School at Home
 10 a.m. - BOYS Varsity Swimming Mid-Illini Meet at Pekin High School
 5 p.m. - BOYS Sophomore Basketball VS Washington High School at Home
 6:30 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Basketball VS Washington High School at Home

Monday, 10

6 p.m. - BOYS Freshmen Basketball at Metamora High School
 6 p.m. - GIRLS Freshmen Basketball VS Metamora High School at Home

Tuesday, 11

5:30 p.m. - GIRLS Sophomore Basketball VS Limestone High School at Home

7 p.m. - GIRLS Varsity Basketball VS Limestone High School at Home

Wednesday, 12

6 p.m. - BOYS Freshmen Basketball at Limestone High School

Friday, 14

9 a.m. - Chess State Tournament at Peoria Civic Center
 5:30 p.m. - GIRLS Sophomore Basketball VS Dunlap High School at Home
 7 p.m. - GIRLS Varsity Basketball VS Dunlap High School at Home

Saturday, 15

9 a.m. - Chess State Tournament at Peoria Civic Center
 5 p.m. - BOYS Sophomore Basketball at Metamora High School
 6:30 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Basketball at Metamora High School

Monday, 17

6 p.m. - BOYS Freshmen Basketball VS

East Peoria High School at Home

Tuesday, 18

4 p.m. - Scholastic Bowl - PAL Tournament at East Peoria High School

Wednesday, 19

6 p.m. - BOYS Freshmen Basketball at Lincoln High School

Thursday, 20

4 p.m. - Morton Gameball Run - The Run at Carper Field *Weather Permitting

Friday, 21

5:30 p.m. - BOYS Sophomore Basketball VS East Peoria High School at Home
 7 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Basketball VS East Peoria High School - Game Ball Run Ceremony Game at Home

Saturday, 22

5 p.m. - BOYS Sophomore Basketball at Limestone High School

6:30 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Basketball at Limestone High School

Monday, 24

6 p.m. - BOYS Freshmen Basketball at Limestone High School

Thursday, 27

6 p.m. - BOYS Freshmen Basketball VS Dunlap High School at Home

Friday, 28

5:30 p.m. - BOYS Sophomore Basketball VS Dunlap High School at Home

7 p.m. - BOYS Varsity Basketball VS Dunlap High School at Home

Saturday, 29

9:30 a.m. - BOYS Sophomore Basketball - Sophomore Tourney at Metamora High School

GAMEBALL RUN 2020

Join our team to make a difference!

Mission

Gameball Run: A community event to raise money and awareness for Children's Hospital of Illinois.

- ▶ Involve all schools, all students and our community.
- ▶ An opportunity for our boys basketball team to serve in a philanthropic role.
- ▶ The chance to give back to an organization that has served multiple families and students in the Morton schools.

Gameball Run - The Run

Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020

At 4 p.m., the Gameball Run Opening Ceremony starts at Morton High School, with the run immediately following. The run will be on the Morton High School Athletic Facility track (weather dependent).

- ▶ The run will include the MHS boys basketball teams, District 709 administration and faculty members, our Miracle Families, and any student willing to donate \$25 to participate! Participants must be registered prior to Feb. 1.
- ▶ There will be music, fun, and concessions for our guests to cheer on the runners and families.

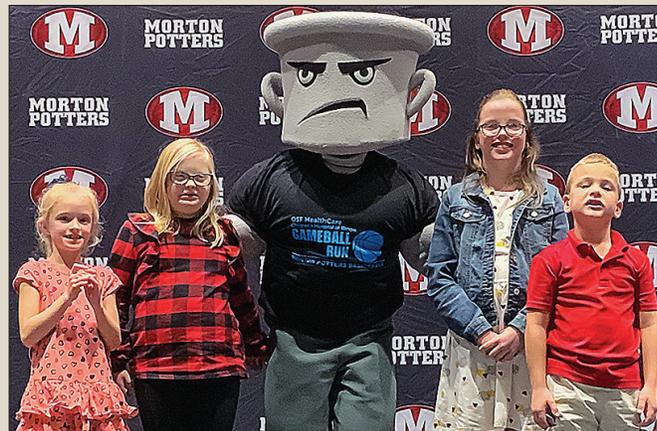
Gameball Run Ceremony and Game

Friday, Feb. 21, 2020

Come out to the Potterdome on Friday night at 6:30 p.m. as the Potters take on East Peoria. Prior to tipoff, we will celebrate the success of this year's Gameball Run by honoring our Miracle Families, sponsors, and Morton 709 schools, as well as presenting a check to the Children's Hospital of Illinois in a special ceremony. Show your support by wearing your 2020 Gameball Run t-shirt. Your Gameball Run t-shirt will serve as admittance into the game.

T-shirts

Gameball Run t-shirts will serve as admittance into the game on Feb. 21. Shirts will be \$10 each and will be sold at home boys basketball games, Bethel Lutheran School and at District 709 schools.



Each elementary school in District 709 selects a Miracle Family for Gameball Run. These children have received services at Children's Hospital of Illinois. Pictured above, left to right, are the 2020 Gameball Run Miracle Kids – Annabelle Lundy, Maggie Getz, Ella Bradford, and Elijah Smith. Not pictured: Luke and Abram Yoder

2020 Miracle Families

Each elementary school in District 709 selected a Miracle Family. District 709 is honored to have Bethel Lutheran School join them for the first time this year. These families have received or continue to use the services at Children's Hospital of Illinois. There are five Miracle Kids this year.

Bethel Lutheran School – The Yoder Family – Luke and Abram Yoder
Grundy School – The Lundy Family – Annabelle Lundy
Jefferson – The Smith Family – Elijah Smith
Lettie Brown – The Bradford Family – Ella Bradford
Lincoln – The Getz Family – Maggie Getz

For More Information

For more information about Gameball Run, this year's miracle families, and how you can donate to the cause, please visit our website www.MortonGameballRun.org.

Honors/Awards

Morton Gameball Run has been recognized in several ways. Room 603 at Children's Hospital was named "Morton Gameball Run" in April of 2015. The team was presented the 2015 Joey Stowell Youth award during the 2015 Children's Hospital of Illinois Telethon. The team was also recognized by the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Central Illinois Chapter, in November of 2015 by receiving the Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy Award. The playground at Almost Home Kids was named in honor of Morton Gameball Run.

Our Sponsors

A special thanks to our sponsors at the Presenting, Gameball Run and Potterdome levels!

Presenting Sponsors - \$3,500:

- Howard & Howard Attorneys PLLC
- Morton District 709
- Friends of Morton Basketball MP
- Fort Transfer

Gameball Run Sponsors - \$2,500:

- KSA Lighting & Controls
- Maui Jim

Potterdome Sponsors - \$1,250:

- A Perfect Promotion
- American Pest Control
- ANJ Electric
- Better Banks
- Central Illinois Insulation
- Edward Jones/Adam Spangler
- Eigsti Construction
- Heartland Bank & Trust Company
- Hilltop Wealth Management - Raymond James
- Home Instead Senior Care
- J.J. Braker & Sons, Inc.
- Keach Architectural Design
- L&F Electric
- Lovell Orthodontics
- Morton Community Bank
- Morton Dental Center
- Morton Natural Gas
- Pumpkin Place
- Rotary Club of Morton, Inc.
- Springer Construction, LLC
- Sue Neihouser - Remax/Traders
- Unland Companies

- Waibel Builders

Gameball Runner or Team of Runner Sponsor - \$500:

- Leman Property Management Co.
- Dan & Sarah Mulconrey
- Mike Murphy Ford
- NCI Business Systems Inc.
- Ray Dennison Chevrolet
- Renewal by Andersen
- Tada Cognitive Solutions
- Threads Boutique

MHS Basketball Player Sponsor - \$250:

- 360 Speed & Performance
- Alltrust Financial
- Dr. & Mrs. Shad Beaty
- Culver's
- Focus on Eyes
- Industrial Transfer Corp. Inc.
- Jeff & Kelli Hill
- J-tec Industries
- Jerry & Amy Jackson
- Knapp-Johnson Funeral Home and Cremation Center
- The Krupa Family
- LS Building Products
- Lighthouse Automotive
- SA Moreland Landscaping
- Synergy HealthCare and Sports Facility
- The Parlor Hair Salon
- Betsy & Matt Yarcho

Total Raised

Since 2013, the Gameball Run event has raised \$472,995 for the Children's Hospital of Illinois.

Last year's fundraising dollars (\$113,715) went to the Children's Hospital of Illinois' John & Annette Heller Learning for Living Center. The 2020 Morton Gameball Run funds will go towards OSF HealthCare Foundation's Heller Center for Kids with Cancer. The center provides the child with cancer, as well as the whole family, with the mental and emotional health services needed to face the obstacles and the trauma a cancer diagnosis produces. In addition, each family is assigned a patient family educator to help guide the families throughout, and even after, the journey.