



## Lincoln Elementary School Newsletter

### End of School Year     May 2021

From the Principal's Desk  
May 2021

It's unbelievable to reflect on what we as a school community have accomplished since August 11, 2020. It has been such an incredible school year. Back in August, we were asking ourselves how many weeks of in-person instruction would we have? Many of us thought if we could just get through Labor Day, we'd call it successful! But we continued on, and made it through the end of the first quarter. We missed out on our favorite Pumpkin Festival traditions, but as we moved into October, our confidence grew. We modified Parent Teacher Conferences and forged ahead into November and December. It seemed that with every additional month we were in school, we gained momentum and became more confident in our abilities to provide a safe, in-person learning environment for our students, teachers and staff members. Fast forward to May 2021, and we can proudly say that we made it! When other districts are still finishing the school year with modified schedules, shortened days and built in weekly remote learning days, we know that we did not let our students and families down. We were in session, all day, every day for 173 days to ensure the academic, mental and social well being, safety and growth of all of our Morton 709 students.

Each and everyone of you had a hand in that somehow. You helped us to achieve our goals, and for that, I will be forever grateful. Thank you seems so inadequate to say when trying to express how grateful I am for your continued support throughout the school year. Our students and families have been amazing this year. In spite of all of the obstacles-the masks, the quarantines, the contact tracing, the additional days home due to symptoms, the endless hand sanitizing and desk washing-we made it through the entire year!

I am always so proud to say that Lincoln Elementary is MY school and to tell people that I work at Lincoln. We could not have accomplished what we did this year without all of you! Thank you so much...from the bottom of my thankful heart!

To our sixth graders, we know that you will continue to shine at Morton Junior High School. You have your Lincoln Lion foundation...you are smarter than you realize; you are kind and caring and you know that after this year, you can do hard, challenging things! We have been so very proud of you this year especially, but also over the past seven years at Lincoln Elementary. We know that you will go on to do great things at MJHS next year!

We hope that you and your family have a safe and fun summer and have some wonderful adventures planned! Have the BEST summer ever! And then tell us all about it at 2021-2022 School Registration, which will be held on Thursday, July 29th from 7 am to 5 pm here at Lincoln. We look forward to seeing you then!

With Gratitude,

Julie Albers  
Principal

FROM THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL'S DESK:

Thank you doesn't seem like enough! I am forever grateful for your continued support throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Thank you for trusting us to meet your children's academic and social emotional needs in such uncertain times. We had an amazing year and accomplished so much with each and every student. I hope you and your family have a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,  
Michelle Peterson  
Assistant Principal



## **Mrs. Puetz Retires at End of the 2020-21 School Year**

The 2020-21 school year has come to a close. The end of the school year also marks the end of the professional school career of Mrs. Diane Puetz, special education teacher. Diane has dedicated 27 years to education; 20 of those years have been at Lincoln Elementary School.

Diane has worked in two school districts. She began her career in Nashville, IL, where she taught in a county program for students with behavior challenges, along with part of her day as a 7th/8th grade Language Arts teacher. She thought it was a great opportunity to teach in both special education and general education in the same day! She came to Lincoln next, where she spent the last 20 years.

She added that she will miss “teaching kids!” She added that “I absolutely love the smiles on their faces when they get it.” She has enjoyed the relationships that she has built with her students and their families and the amount of time invested in those relationships. What she won’t miss? Data Collection!

Her plans in retirement include volunteering with CASA as a court appointed advocate for children with special needs or for children in foster care. She will also be helping her daughter who is transitioning from a nursing job at OSF-St. Francis to a new nursing position at Lurie’s Children Hospital in downtown Chicago where she will be working on the Pediatric Cardiac Unit.

One last message from Mrs. Puetz:  
*“Love the kids you have each year. Don’t worry about next year! Love the kids as they are! You will make a difference!”*

Our best wishes to you, Mrs. Puetz! You are always welcome to come back to visit whenever you want to visit!



## **End of Year Notes from Nurse Jen**

It’s not too soon to be thinking and planning for next school year! Our school nurse, Nurse Jen Cook, has information to share regarding physicals and immunizations. Reminder...when making

your summer plans, don't forget to schedule your dental and physical exams. All incoming Kindergarten students and students entering an Illinois school for the first time will need a physical, dental and eye exam, along with updated immunizations. All incoming 2nd graders will need a dental exam. All incoming 6th graders will need a dental exam, physical exam and any immunization updates. The deadline for these exams is Friday, October 15th. Please note that the school district will no longer accept "appointment cards" for a future appointment for those students who are not in compliance on October 15th. Any student who is not in compliance after October 15th will be excluded from school and marked unexcused.



## Personnel Changes Ahead for 2021-2022 School Year

As we look ahead to the 2021-2022 school year, we already know that our teaching staff will look

a bit different at a couple of grade levels. Here are some of those changes in a nutshell:

- We extend our best wishes to three teachers who are leaving us at the end of the school year. **Mrs. Kelley Friedrich (3rd grade), Mrs. Olivia Gabbert (Literacy Coach) and Mrs. Jody Vernon (Kindergarten)** will be leaving at the end of the year. Mrs. Friedrich and Mrs. Gabbert will be joining the teaching staff at Grundy Elementary School here in Morton; Mrs. Vernon will be joining her husband in Reno, NV, where he has been transferred. We will miss all of these three wonderful teachers at Lincoln! With Mrs. Gabbert's move to Grundy, 6th grade ELA teacher **Mrs. Jenny Auxier** will now move into the Literacy Coach position. Jenny's literacy expertise and background as a professional development leader in her previous roles will make her a great fit for this new role!
- We are excited to welcome **Mrs. Tammy Anderson** to Lincoln as our new kindergarten teacher! Mrs. Anderson is a familiar face around Lincoln as she has been a regular substitute teacher and substitute aide for the past two years.

She also serves our Lincoln PTO as Vice President. Tammy is a graduate of Iowa State University with degrees in elementary education and special education. She previously taught kindergarten in the Delavan School District. We are thrilled to have Tammy join our K team!

- We are pleased to welcome **Miss Jacey Wharram**, who will be our new third grade teacher. Miss Wharram is a May 2021 graduate of Illinois State University and completed a year-long student teaching experience at Wilson Intermediate School in Pekin. Miss Wharram is a lifelong Morton resident (former Jefferson Patriot) and a graduate of MHS. She knows the meaning of hard work and dedication after playing basketball for four years as Morton Lady Potter under the leadership of Coach Bob Becker (and Lincoln PE teacher). Please join me in welcoming Jacey to Lincoln!
- **Ms. Pam Woods** will be joining us as the teacher of our new Social and Emotional Learning classroom. Ms. Woods brings a wide variety of experiences to our classroom which will help us to effectively meet our students' needs in this setting. Most recently, she worked as a teacher/therapist at Hammitt School in Bloomington. Prior to that, she was a special education teacher at Bloomington Junior High School, Parkside

Junior High School in Normal and the Menta Academy South in Chicago. Outside of school, Ms. Woods enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading books, yoga, bike rides and walking her dog. Welcome Pam!

- With Mrs. Auxier's move to the Literacy Coach position, we are thrilled to add **Mrs. Ruth Westbrook** to our sixth grade team as ELA teacher. For the past semester, Mrs. Westbrook has taught third grade at Jefferson School in Morton. Last fall, she completed a quarter-long substitute teaching position here at Lincoln in 3rd grade. However, the majority of Mrs. Westbrook's teaching experiences are at the middle school level in District 150 in Peoria where she taught before staying home to raise her children. Her positive attitude and energy make her a perfect fit for 6th grade. Welcome Ruth!!
- We will soon be conducting interviews for Mrs. Puetz's special education teaching position and hope to have a new teacher in place in time for the June School Board Meeting. We'll be keeping you updated on those plans!!



## AIDE OPENINGS FOR 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR

We are working to get a head start on the beginning of the school year hiring crunch by filling some of our known openings now. Mrs. Peterson has been conducting some interviews since school was out, and we are looking to add some additional staff members to our already amazing support staff. We have positions open in a variety of roles and grade levels and no teaching or previous aide experience is needed...just a lot of patience, a desire to be a part of an amazing team and a love for helping kids. If you want to apply for a position, please go to our website [morton709.org](http://morton709.org) and click

the employment link. You can also reach out to Mrs. Peterson at [michelle.peterson@mcusd709.org](mailto:michelle.peterson@mcusd709.org).



## LINCOLN SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS

Current summer office hours are M-F, 7:30 am to 3:30 pm. With Summer approaching, please remember that the Lincoln School office will close for the summer on Monday, June 7th. Mrs. Peterson, Mrs. Spinder and Mrs. Bakirdan will all be gone after that date. Ms. Albers has one more week to work after they leave, but the office will be closed at that time. Any phone messages left on the voicemail after June 7th will not be responded to until July 26th. Ms. Albers returns to school on Wednesday, July 21st and the school office re-opens on Monday, July 26th. Mrs. Peterson returns to work on Wednesday, July 28th.

If you need immediate assistance with something school related this summer (ie: we're moving; my new neighbors need to register, etc.), you can contact the MCUSD District 709 office at 263-2581. Ms. Albers will be periodically checking her email throughout the summer as well ([julie.albers@mcusd709.org](mailto:julie.albers@mcusd709.org)).



## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT LINCOLN THIS SUMMER?

A better question might be what's NOT happening at Lincoln this summer!! There will be a lot of work and activity going on here this summer. Be sure to check out the progress as you drive by throughout the summer!

-Parking Lot: A portion of the circle drive/parking area in front of the school will be dug up and resurfaced this summer. In addition, some additional outside lighting will be added to the parking lot. We will also be installing a new outdoor electronic sign (full color!) where our current sign is (on top of the brick work). Electricity will be run to the new sign while the parking lot work is being done. The current sign will be moved closer to the gym and parking lot entrance and will be updated each week by the sixth graders there. (So you

have something to read while waiting in line at morning drop off!)

-Roof Replacement: A large portion of the roof on the east wing of the building (including above the office) will be replaced with a new roof sometime during the summer. (Hopefully this happens AFTER the office staff is gone for the summer since the rooftop AC units have to be temporarily removed for this project...which will mean no AC in the office!)

-Plumbing Work Near First Grade Classrooms: There will be some plumbing work completed in the hallway near the first grade classrooms which will require the tile and concrete in the hallway to be dug up. This repair work will help to end the plumbing issues that we have been having in that end of the building!

-Extended School Year and SOAR: These summer programs for students in grades 1st-6th will be ongoing at Lincoln during this work. Summer School runs for three weeks (6/8-6/24) and again for another three weeks (7/6-7/22) on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. While our front parking is not accessible, cars and buses will be directed to use the cafeteria and back lot parking areas.



Whew...that's a lot going on for one school this summer!

## **IMPORTANT** **dates to remember**

### Important Summer/Back to School Dates:

**Mon., 6/7:** Lincoln School office closes for the summer

**Mon., 7/26:** Lincoln School office opens for the summer

**Thurs., 7/29:** 2021-22 School Year Registration at Lincoln 7 am to 5 pm

**Thurs., 7/29:** Kindergarten-2nd Grade Back to School Pool Party at Morton Pool from 7-8:30 pm (K-2 students only due to capacity limits at the pool)

**Tues., 8/3:** New Student School Assignments announced (including incoming K students)

**Thurs., 8/5:** Kindergarten Round Up for all incoming Kindergarten students (Time to be determined)

**Thurs., 8/5:** 3rd-6th Grade Back to School Pool Party at Morton Pool 7-8:30 pm (3rd-6th students only due to capacity limits at the pool).

**Mon., 8/9:** 2021-22 Student Class Assignments available in PowerSchool at 4 pm.

**Wed., 8/11:** Unpack Your Backpack Night 4-5 pm (students bring school supplies to school, meet teachers, see classrooms prior to the start of school)

**Thurs., 8/12:** First Day of School; Early Dismissal at 11:55 am

**Fri., 8/13:** First Full Day of School; School Day is 8:20-2:40 pm

**Mon., 8/16:** Step it Up Fundraiser Kick Off Assembly (time to be determined)

**Mon., 8/16:** Lincoln PTO Meeting at 7 pm

**Mon., 8/23:** Lincoln Meet the Teacher Night 6-7:30 pm