

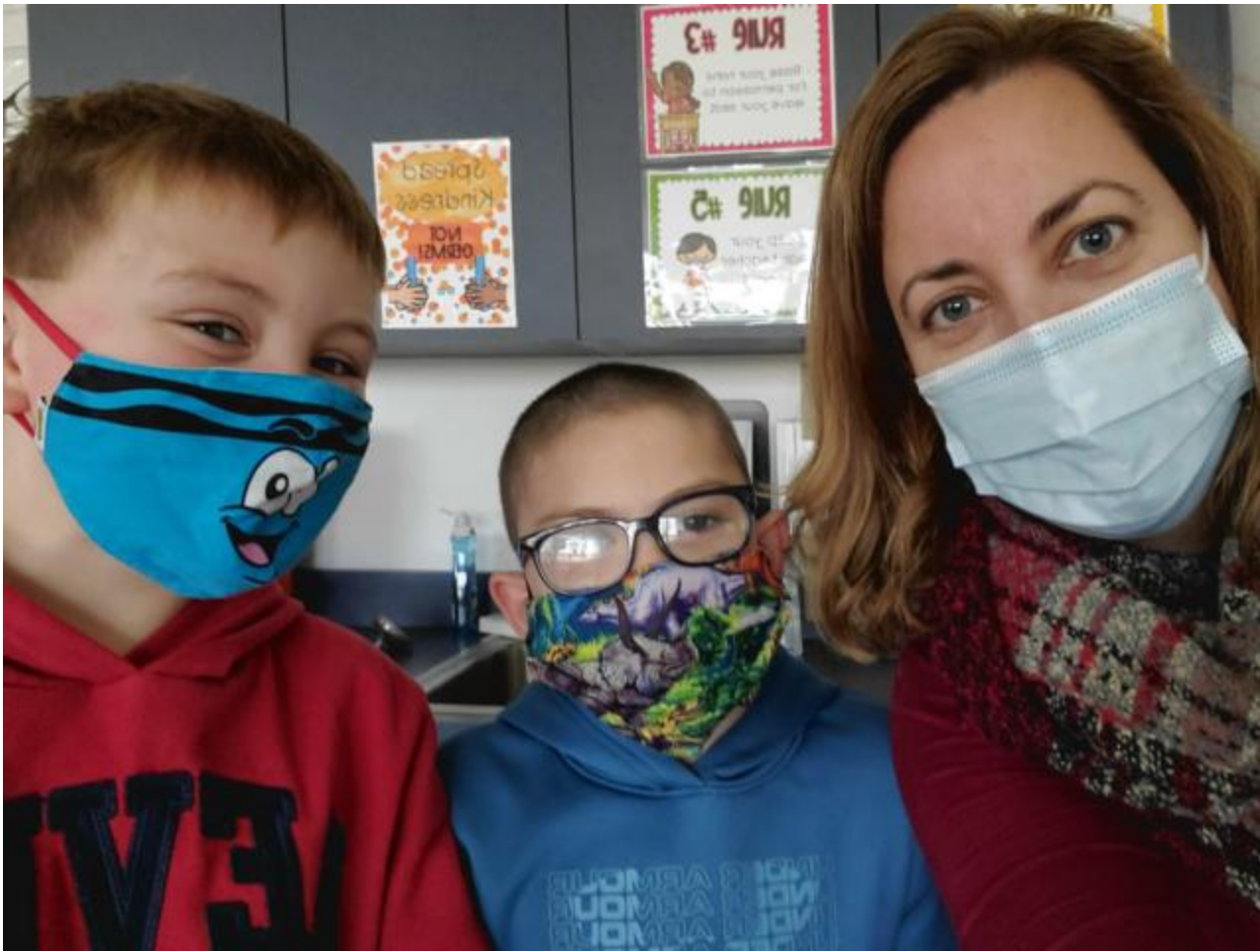
Meet The Principal: Mandy Robbins, Glen Carbon Elementary School

by Cathie Wright
January 20 2021 4:20 PM



Meet the Principal

This school year marks the largest turnover in administrative positions the Edwardsville School District has seen. Most of these changes were due to retirements with a few administrators making moves to other districts. These new positions yield a number of new faces with whom families may not be familiar. Now more than ever, with the change in the educational landscape to hybrid schedules and remote learning, it is important for a community to know the people leading their teachers and children. Riverbender.com and EdGlen Today.com will be hosting a series titled “Meet the Principal” to help readers become acquainted with these new faces.



Mandy Robbins, Principal Glen Carbon Elementary School

Typically, educators are classroom teachers first before heading back to university to earn a degree in Educational Administration. Mandy Robbins, Principal of Glen Carbon Elementary School, however, took a somewhat different path.

Ms. Robbins' journey to her position as principal of Glen Carbon Elementary School, a Kindergarten – Second-Grade Center, was a circuitous route. She began her career with the Edwardsville School District as a school social worker from 2008 – 2012 at the same school where she is now principal. After beginning her career at Glen Carbon Elementary, Mandy left the Edwardsville School District to take a position at Renfro Elementary School in Collinsville where she became professionally intrigued by the administrative side of education.

“I was fortunate enough to work with a great principal at Renfro who became an excellent mentor,” said Robbins, “Eventually, I completed my licensure and was able to secure a position as an Assistant Principal in that building.” During her tenure with Collinsville School District, she absorbed as much as possible about educational

leadership and when the principal position became available at Glen Carbon Elementary, she was well-prepared to return to the community she loved. Mandy is a seventeen-year resident of Glen Carbon.

When asked how her background as a school social worker influenced her new role as principal, Robbins shared that the skills she acquired as a social worker apply perfectly to the principal position. "Consensus-building, collaboration, listening and problem-solving are skills I use each day in my new position," said Ms. Robbins. "These are the same skills I used as a social worker. People want you to listen, they want to come to some type of understanding and they want their feelings validated."

Mandy feels honored to work with the caliber of educators that make up the staff at Glen Carbon Elementary. "I feel like we've already built a mutual respect because we were once peers," Ms. Robbins says about her staff. "They've witnessed my 'shared leadership strategies' and they know that I respect their classroom expertise."

Glen Carbon Elementary has always held a special place for Robbins. "Glen Carbon teachers are really top-notch in terms of openness and flexibility. The faculty is mindful of the developmental needs of students and the fact that this is, oftentimes, the first school experience for young children and their caregivers. The faculty takes care of each other and creates a familial vibe that extends to our interactions with our students, families and community."

But even though the principal role can sometimes be stressful, Mandy Robbins finds time to visit the cafeteria and playground for a quick game of "Rock, Paper, Scissors", "Four-Square", "I-Spy" and "Would you Rather?" with her young friends. Presenting Mighty Miner awards and having spontaneous dance parties to celebrate school successes is typical. "I don't know that I have one favorite Glen Carbon Elementary story at this time because I feel like I'm just starting to accumulate great memories of my time here at GCE and I hope to continue making them for years to come!"

