

Albert Cassens Elementary appears to break paper plane world record for highest launch

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Albert Cassens Elementary in Glen Carbon was filled with excitement on Tuesday as the students participated with Southwest Airlines pilots Scott Fitzgerald and Marvin Meng in breaking a Guinness Book of Records mark for highest paper plane launch.

Cassens students eyes were focused on the pilots as they prepared for the launch and glued to the sky once the inflated balloon left the ground into the air. The balloon officially climbed to 107,464 feet and landed in a farmer's backyard near Pocahontas.

The previous top world mark for a paper plane launch was 96,500 feet. Skies were clear and were light, making for a perfect launch and flight for the paper plane, made of cardboard. Fitzgerald, the lead on the project, was ecstatic at breaking the record and what the kids learned in the process.

“Things couldn't have gone better than they did today,” a beaming Fitzgerald said. “My hat is off to the kids, the teachers and the Principal, Mrs. Martha Richey. They seemed to be excited and engaged going over prediction software, geography atmosphere, weather and all this great stuff.”

Edwardsville Mayor Hal Patton was on hand and he said he had never witnessed a Guinness World Record, but he was excited for the kids. “These kids have such wonderful opportunities in the district,” he said. “I went to school here in the Edwardsville system and it has taken things to the next level to get the kids to whatever they want to do in life.”

Sarah Meng, the official student spokesperson for Cassens and pilot Marvin Meng's daughter, said she was excited about it and proud of her father for his help. “Everyone asked, ‘Is that your dad?’,” she said.

Marvin Meng said he was equally as proud of his daughter and the other students. “It is a great opportunity to have and it amazed me how all the kids have risen to the occasion,” he said. “The payoff was not immediate, but they stayed with things to the end and gave it their full attention.”

Richey was extremely pleased with how the launch went and the overall project. “It's a great opportunity for our students; we are always looking for ways for our students to be involved in STEM activities and it is exciting to think we could be part of a Guinness Record. Our students were so enthusiastic about the project brought to us by Scott Fitzgerald and Marvin Meng. I can't say enough about them.”

