

# Elementary schools strive for only best effort with early morning meetings

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**EDWARDSVILLE** - Morning meetings with a positive tone have become the norm for students in **Edwardsville Community Unit School District 7** elementary schools.

The meetings are held right the start of the day so not disrupt students once they move to class. The students are also involved in the meetings throughout the school year, from assisting with presentations, performing skits, making announcements and each day leading the student body in the Pledge of Allegiance, to reading the school motto.

The following Edwardsville schools each use the technique to start the day: Woodland Elementary, Worden Elementary, Columbus Elementary, Glen Carbon Elementary, Leclaire Elementary, Nelson Elementary, Goshen Elementary, Hamel and Midway Elementary and Cassens Elementary. The number of students who participate varies each day, but to some degree, they are always involved.

Discussion involves a wide array of things from upcoming events, expectations for students, celebrations of accomplishment awards, team building, making good decisions and being role models for other students. At Woodland School, on Fridays students vie for special chairs that one student from every grade level can earn.

Cassens Elementary Principal **Martha Richey** said the morning meetings in her school normally go from 9:05 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.

“We then get the kids together and head off to class at 9:15 a.m.,” Richey said. “It is nice to talk about positive observations we are seeing in the school. If we see poor sportsmanship on the playgrounds, we address it. This sets a positive tone for the day and keeps all the kids hearing the same message.”

“We cover any announcements or upcoming events,” Richey said. “We also give character and anti-bullying messages and do patriotic activities. We invite guests from the community to inspire the kids.”

One guest is the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville basketball team, which comes in and challenges the kids to read so many books by the end of the year, then they come back to see the progress, Richey added.

“Another example, the Goshen Rotary comes in and provides all the third graders with a dictionary,” she said.

“We give each student birthday recognition and also say the Pledge of Allegiance,”



Richey said.

Woodland Principal **Tara Fox** said after the students come off the playground in the morning, they come into the gym for the morning meeting.

“We do all the building information that students need so we don’t interrupt them in the classroom,” she said.

“We do reminders of procedures and sometimes take time for classrooms to show a skit, a dance or something that reminds the kids of being kind to each other. We use that time to settle down students to begin their classes.”

Fox said when a student assists her it gives him or her an opportunity to present in front of a large group of their peers without any pressure. Through the year, she attempts to work all the students into one role or another assisting her. Woodland focuses attention each day on students being good role models for others and making the right choices.

Richey said the key thing above all with the morning meetings is it keeps the school group “unified.”

“It also gives the kids a chance to get to know the principals at the elementary schools and makes us very visible with the kids.”