

Schoolwide Morning Meeting Walking Survey

Find someone who knows something about an item below. In the square, note that person's name and the information you learn.

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| A basic need that Morning Meeting addresses | The four components of Morning Meeting, in order | A tip for managing school-wide Morning Meetings |
| A greeting for early in the year | A topic for sharing | A way to schedule taking turns for sharing |
| A group activity that isn't a game | One way to interact with the message during Morning Meeting | An academic skill to practice |
| A social skill to introduce | A social skill to practice | A topic for a schoolwide Morning Meeting |

Student-Led All-School Meetings Bring the School Community Together

by Sadie Fischesser

(www.responsiveclassroom.org/info-library)

In a school with over 500 students and more than eighty staff, it can be difficult to get to know one another. At K.T. Murphy Elementary School in Stamford, Connecticut, the staff and administrators addressed this by creating an all-school meeting format that uses the structure of Morning Meeting.

Every month, everyone in the school, including many family members, join for a meeting led by students. The different grades take turns leading from month to month. At one typical meeting in late winter, the first graders are leading. After a group of students welcomes everyone, one child takes the microphone to review the prearranged greeting for the day, in which each grade will represent a different insect. This greeting was chosen because the first graders are studying insects in science. Every class in the school has had a chance to practice the greeting before this gathering. “Good morning, fifth graders,” say the fourth graders this morning, as they all make big biting motions in the air to represent mosquitoes. Around the room there are other greetings accompanied by gestures of stinging and flying.

Next, children from another first grade class get up to lead the sharing, calling up each grade to talk about what they have learned in science. Groups from each grade explain posters and projects they’re working on, some sharing in both English and Spanish.

After the sharing, children from another first grade class step forward to lead the activity. Continuing with the insect theme, the activity is a variation of “head, shoulders, knees, and toes,” only the words are “head, thorax, abdomen.” Immediately the room erupts with children and adults singing, flapping their arms, and making antennae over their heads.

Finally, a set of first graders leads the reading of the morning message, using an overhead projector to show the message so everyone can read along.

Before the meeting ends, there’s a drawing to decide which grade will lead the next month’s meeting. “Kids can’t wait to see who’s next to lead,” says Kim Moore, a first grade teacher. With 500 children beating out a drum roll on the floor, the student leaders draw an envelope. When the new leaders are announced, the students pass a shield with each component of Morning Meeting represented on it.

The Whole School as a Community

Just like Morning Meeting, which happens in every classroom at K.T. Murphy every day, these all-school meetings allow students and teachers to build a sense of community. “Kids get to see other kids, teachers, staff, and families, and then people become familiar faces to them,” says third grade teacher and *Responsive Classroom* consulting teacher Toni D’Agostino. “It really makes the school a safer place.” Principal Kathy Pfister adds, “It helps us to know who we are and where we’re headed together.”

Careful Preparation

To enable the careful preparation required for these meetings to be successful, the grade level team is provided substitute coverage to meet and make initial plans. The teachers then meet with the students to finalize details and send out an agenda to other teachers before the meeting. If necessary, student leaders visit classrooms throughout the school to teach the greeting and the activity they’re planning for the all-school meeting.

“Read All About It” Bingo

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| Reads comic books | Gets books for gifts | Likes to read before bed |
| Sometimes “reads” the dictionary | Likes books with pictures best | Remembers a favorite book from years ago |
| Has a favorite author | Reads at least one new book a month | Likes mysteries |