

Civic Memorial High School mentoring program off to a good start

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BETHALTO — It is easy for incoming high school freshmen to be overwhelmed and feel disconnected, but a new program at Civic Memorial High School pairs freshmen with upperclassmen mentors to help them assimilate into the school.

Sponsor Jerilyn Hawkins talked about the school's "FreshMentors" program discussed at Monday's school board meeting. The project came out of the "Conversations to a Brighter Future" program held last year at the Mannie Jackson Center in Edwardsville.

Twelve CM students from the Student Council and LifeSavers Club attended. Their concern was that many students seemed to feel "disconnected" to the school. Their solution was a mentoring program that would pair incoming freshmen with upperclassmen.

"When students are engaged and feel a sense of connectedness to their school, attendance rates increase, discipline referral decrease, grades go up, and participation in activities increases," according to the presentation.

The program started this year at freshman orientation. It will continue throughout the year, with at least three planned social activities and mentors and their freshmen attending at least one school event per semester together.

At the end of the year freshmen will be surveyed, and the results compared to a survey taken at the start of the year measuring their personal feeling of "connectedness and level of involvement at school."

Reach reporter Scott Cousins at 618-208-6447.