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News

U-46 students introduced to careers and academic paths at Explore 2024



Bartlett High School senior Manav Shah talks to eighth graders about his experiences at his school’s STEM magnet program on Thursday during Explore 2024 at the Now Arena in Hoffman Estates. *Rick West/rwest@dailyherald.com*

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Roughly 2,500 eighth graders had a chance to “Explore” their future educational and career opportunities during an expo on Thursday at the Now Arena in Hoffman Estates.

The Explore 2024 event introduces the students to various career paths and academic programs as they prepare for high school and beyond.

The Alignment Collaborative for Education, a local nonprofit organization that brings together community resources and initiatives to support district priorities, partnered with Elgin Area School District U-46 to organize the event.

“This is the first opportunity for students to see all the career and technical education programs offered in the high school as well as the businesses and community organizations where they could possibly have careers,” said Nancy Coleman, executive director of the Alignment Collaborative for Education.

Students from eight middle schools attended Explore in three shifts throughout the day. They visited exhibits from local businesses and organizations. They also learned more about U-46's career and technical education (CTE) programs and five high school magnet academies.

Manav Shah, a senior at Bartlett High School, talked to eighth graders about his experiences in his school's STEM magnet program, which he chose after visiting Explore as an eighth grader.

“It made me realize what my interests were and how I could pursue them,” Shah said of Explore. “I didn't know what I wanted to do. But this event helped me figure out what program to attend in high school.”

About 600 parents from the district attended a similar program Wednesday night.

U-46 Superintendent Suzanne Johnson said the event is important for the eighth graders who will soon apply for the magnet academies and schedule CTE classes.

“This event provides a one-stop shop to be able to learn a little bit about all the pathways that become options at the high schools,” Johnson said. “For so many of our students, it's that first introductory piece.”



Eighth graders from Eastview Middle School in Bartlett, including Daniela Kreekmur, center, learn more about the District 301 veterinary sciences program during Explore 2024 on Thursday. *Rick West/rwest@dailyherald.com*

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U-46's business, culinary, engineering, health care, automotive, welding, and precision manufacturing programs were represented, as well as the veterinary assistant program at Burlington Central Unit District 301, which is offered to U-46 students.

The district's magnet academies include the Science, Engineering and Technology Academy at Bartlett High School, the International Baccalaureate Academy at Elgin High School, the Visual and Performing Arts Academy at Larkin High School, the Beacon Academy of Media and Digital Arts at South Elgin High School, and the Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Action and Design Academy at Streamwood High School.

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