

Press Clippings 02/05/2019

---Daily Herald---02/05/2019

U-46 board questions why state tax relief grants didn't come

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy

Elgin schools officials say they are disappointed unit districts that applied for a portion of \$50 million in property tax relief grants from the state this year were sidelined due to the criteria used for calculating eligibility.

Elgin Area School District U-46 sought roughly \$43 million -- the maximum for which it was eligible -- for fiscal year 2019.

Tax relief grants are a provision of the state's new evidence-based school funding law. A school district's eligibility is based on whether it has the highest unit equivalent tax rate compared to all the districts that applied. Approved districts must agree to abate a portion of taxes in the coming tax year.

"The way the state evaluated which districts were eligible really favored high school districts," school board member Sue Kerr said during Monday night's school board meeting. "Not a single unit district in the state received any property tax relief, and I believe 75 percent of the schools that got it were high school districts. It's a problem."

The Illinois State Board of Education last month approved grants for 28 eligible school districts out of 373 districts that applied for tax relief. Those districts collectively may provide roughly \$56.9 million in total property tax relief in exchange for the \$50 million in state funding.

Of the 28 recipients, 20 were high school districts. Among them are Antioch Community High School District 117, Grayslake Community High School District 127, Leyden Community High School District 212 and Palatine-Schaumburg High School District 211.

U-46 CEO Tony Sanders said the problem lies with the way the law was written.

"It really eliminates the ability for unit districts to ever have access to those dollars," said Sanders adding these tax relief grants become part of the recipient districts' base funding going forward. "It flies in the face of the conversations around wealth versus poverty. A significant number of the districts that got it are already being funded over 100 percent of their adequacy target. It is problematic the way the law was written and I think we need to collectively encourage a change in the General Assembly."

Sanders said it forces "more poverty-stricken districts" to rely on raising funds locally to meet students' educational needs.

Board member Melissa Owens said unit districts didn't stand a chance under the criteria used to determine which districts would receive grants.

"The intent of evidence-based funding is to address the vast inequity that is occurring in the state over school funding," Owens said. "The grants or the rebates that the districts will get ... is going to now be put into their base funding from here on out. So not only did this not address inequity, it is exacerbating inequity. It is building inequity into perpetuity."

Board member Jeanette Ward said U-46 could have granted tax relief to district residents by reducing property taxes without relying on state funding.

Suburban teachers named Golden Apple finalists

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Scott Wetendorf



Sara Blair Winter- Rosenberg



Judith Tyler

Several suburban high school teachers are finalists for the 2019 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching to be awarded this spring.

Among 32 finalists out of more than 550 teachers nominated statewide are:

- Judith Tyler, science teacher, gifted coordinator and instructional coach at Maine East High School in Park Ridge.
- Scott Wetendorf, mathematics teacher at Bartlett High School.
- Sara Blair Winter-Rosenberg, Spanish for heritage learners teacher at Mundelein High School.

Finalists were nominated by fellow educators, students, parents and community members. They will be honored Feb. 23 at the Golden Apple Celebration of Excellence at the Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Drive, Tinley Park. For event details and tickets, visit goldenapple.org/celebration.

Award recipients will be chosen by a selection committee of educators who viewed videos of finalists' instruction techniques and will observe their teaching methods in-person during classroom visits. Committee members also will interview finalists' co-workers, school leaders, students, parents and community members. Recipients will be notified this spring through surprise school visits.

Selected award recipients will be featured on a one-hour PBS program livestreamed on Golden Apple's Facebook page May 18 and aired on PBS at future dates.

Winners will receive a Spring Sabbatical at Northwestern University, a Golden Apple partner for more than 30 years, and a \$5,000 cash award each. Award recipients also become Fellows of the Golden Apple Academy of Educators, sharing their expertise and mentoring Golden Apple Scholars who are aspiring teachers.

Finalists for the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Leadership, in honor of founding Golden Apple board member Stanley C. Golder, will be announced Thursday.

---The Courier-News---02/05/2019

Free screening rescheduled for Tuesday on documentary profiling U46 kindergarten

By: Rafael Guerrero

School District U46 has rescheduled a free documentary screening that was canceled last month.

The documentary, "Kindergarten: Where Play and Learning Can Meet," is a 30-minute film on the topic of play-based kindergarten. A classroom at Lincoln Elementary School in Hoffman Estates was one of the subjects of the documentary.

The screening is scheduled for Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Streamwood High School, 701 W. Schaumburg Road. Last month's screening at Elgin High School was canceled due to bad weather. Those wishing to attend Tuesday's screening are asked to RSVP at relnmidwestscreeningfeb5.eventbrite.com.

Kindergarten teacher Kristin Bayer, U46 Early Learners Initiatives Director Peggy Ondera, and kindergarten teacher leader Colleen Pecucci will take questions from the audience during a panel discussion after the screening. The three were interviewed for the documentary when the filmmakers visited Lincoln Elementary in October.

The documentary was produced by the Midwest Early Childhood Education Research Alliance at Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest in collaboration with WTTW Channel 11, according to U46.

Play-based kindergarten teaches students through playing with real-world materials and scenarios. The objective is for students to develop their math and literacy skills while interacting with their classmates and teachers in play time, further developing their social and emotional skills. U46 schools adopted play-based kindergarten in 2016 as the district transitioned into all-day kindergarten.

District U46 to review 2019-20 school year calendar

By: Rafael Guerrero

School board members at School District U46 will get an update regarding next school year's calendar.

The topic is one of several items up for discussion at Monday's U46 school board meeting. The meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. at the district's board chambers. No vote on the calendar is scheduled at the meeting.

The calendar's adoption has been delayed later than usual as district administrators grapple with new state requirements on the length of the school year. The state is requiring the next school year have a minimum of 176 instructional days, two more days than the current school year. The requirements do allow school districts greater flexibility in the length of the school day because the state is no longer requiring students to be in a classroom for a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.

Last month, CEO Tony Sanders outlined the reasons for the delay in a letter. The start date for the new school year is likely to be in mid-August as in previous years, he said.

"Imagine the opportunities for students to engage in learning guided by a teacher, but not necessarily sitting inside a school building," he wrote. "However, we are working with our employee groups to determine how to add those two additional 'instructional days' and if we can take advantage of this increased flexibility in the school day as soon as next year."



- The School District U46 central offices in Elgin, Ill., on July 23, 2018

SPORTS

---Daily Hearld---02/05/2019

Glenbard South's Bair racks up big numbers in final home game

By: Orrin Schwarz



- Maggie Bair

As farewell games go, it would be hard to beat Maggie Bair's last time playing in the Glenbard South gym.

Probably the best girls basketball player in Raiders history, Bair nearly notched a triple-double in limited minutes in a 53-18 victory against visiting Larkin.

"It's gone by really fast, and I've played with some really good people in this gym and it's like sad that I'll never play here again," the senior Drake University recruit said. "But it was a nice way to go out. It was a nice way to end, with a win."

"That was hard," added Raiders coach Morgan Kasperek. "She came off the court and the hug, it's hard, you know? We've got one more regular-season game and then any one can be our last. She's been with me for four years, as long as I've been here, so it will be rough. And she's more than a great basketball player, she's a great kid."

Bair ended up with 22 points, 17 rebounds, 8 blocked shots and 3 assists in a game the Raiders led from start to finish. The Raiders finish the regular season at West Chicago on Wednesday, then head to the Class 3A Plano regional next week.

Sophomore guard Lauren Cohen added 11 points for the Raiders (20-7, 14-3), and Iman Sellers scored 9.

"Defensively, I thought we brought the intensity," Kasperek said. "We started off a little rough offensively. Missed way too many bunnies, inside shots. And then we cleaned it up in the second half. We pushed the ball well, which was nice to see. I don't think we've done that enough this year. And we took away the middle, which is a focus of ours. Some good things, some things we still need to work on, but overall it was a good game."

Glenbard South jumped out to an 11-1 lead after one quarter, 24-9 at halftime. The Raiders hit another gear in the third quarter, outscoring the Royals 23-6.

Junior Brianna Young led the Royals (12-17, 7-10) with 8 points.

"She played hard, she played hard," Larkin coach Steve Knapp said of Young. "I think as a team collectively we just didn't play well. I thought the first half defensively we actually played really well. We just couldn't shoot the ball. We couldn't get any offense running. We weren't moving."

"Credit Glenbard South. They play good man-to-man defense. We couldn't get by them. Had a little spark there. I think we cut it to 11, 20-9. Then the floodgates kind of opened up there in the third quarter."