

Press Clippings 03/06/2019

---The Daily Herald---03/06/2019

Elgin club's youth of the year got 'endless amount of support'

By: Elena Ferrarin



- Damaryan Benton, 17, a senior at Elgin High School, was named "Youth of the Year" by the Boys and Girls Club of Elgin.

Life forced Damaryan Benton to grow up quickly after his father was gunned down in the streets of Chicago when Damaryan was 11 and his grandmother died a year later.

Damaryan, 17, a senior at Elgin High School, said he did his best to help his mother, who mostly had seasonal jobs and at times struggled to provide clothes and food. He started working at age 15 and sometimes held two jobs at a time, he said.

Through the years, the [Boys & Girls Club of Elgin](#) was a steadying force, providing him with material and emotional support and allowing him to feel like a kid, Damaryan said.

The club provided him with clothes, shoes and meals and got him free braces in middle school through a sponsoring dental office. It introduced him to new experiences like Six Flags Great America and opened his eyes to future possibilities with programs that connected him to business professionals, he said.

"There are so many things they did to help me," Damaryan said. "They gave me opportunities and endless amounts of support."

The Boys & Girls Club of Elgin, in turn, recognized Damaryan as its "Youth of the Year" last month for his commitment to attending the club for the past 11 years and his desire to help his peers, especially younger ones. Damaryan will compete for the statewide title April 9 and 10 in Springfield.

"He exemplifies a lot of the character traits that we try to instill into the youth," said Deborah Ficken, director of program services for the Elgin club. "He was very actively involved in leadership activities through the club and the regional programming we have done. He has always been willing to be an advocate of the club to members of the community."

"He's also very kind," Ficken said. "He will always make time to welcome new people to the club and listen to them."

Damaryan credits the club for introducing him to acting and public speaking. He is a member of his school's speech and debate team and was an Illinois High School Association state finalist two years in a row. He's also on the cheerleading and volleyball teams, did a student-volunteer internship for Elgin Area School District U-46 and helped run the first fair featuring historically black colleges and universities at Elgin Community College.

Damaryan, who works at Panera Bread in Elgin, plans to go to college -- he got one scholarship offer and is in talks for more -- and double-major in business administration and communications. He might work in nonprofit administration "to impact kids that have gone through my situation," he said.

The youth of the year selection is made by a panel of judges including community and club board members. The other finalists were: Abigail Dunn of Abbott Middle School and Eiyalin Tomassini of Ellis Middle School, both seventh-graders; Nathan Aquino of Larsen Middle School and Tanya Garcia-Robles of Kimball Middle School, both eighth-graders; Geovanny Lara and Logan Cox, both freshmen at Larkin High School; Jacqueline Perez, a sophomore at Larkin High School; and Gloria Mora, a senior at Elgin High School.

---The Courier-News---03/06/2019

U46 school board approves pay raise, new 5-year contract with CEO, ties future raises to 13 goals

By: Rafael Guerrero



- School District U46 CEO Tony Sanders received a pay raise and new five-year contract at Monday night's school board meeting, extending his employment with the district through 2024.

District U46 CEO Tony Sanders' new five-year contract includes a first-year base salary increase of \$7,039.20 and sets 13 goals upon which future raises will be based.

The deal was approved in a 6-1 school board vote Monday night, and extends Sanders' employment with the district through June 30, 2024. It goes into effect July 1.

"I can't wait to look back and say, 'Look what we've done in 17 years,'" Sanders said Monday. "Thank you for the opportunity."

Sanders was hired by the district in 2007 and took over as CEO in 2014. Under the new contract, Sanders' annual base salary increases from \$234,639.97 to \$241,679.17.

Future salary increases will be tied to how well Sanders meets contract goals, including improving kindergarten-through-6th-grade math proficiency, improving school safety and community perceptions of school safety, and adopting a district-wide equity plan.

“I think it’s a challenge (for Sanders) but a good contract for the district,” board member Sue Kerr said.

Future pay raises cannot exceed any caps that would result in the district having to pay pension penalties to the state, according to the contract.

Another contract stipulation is Sanders must attain his superintendent certification by spring 2022, although a state law passed in 2017 allows Sanders to helm U46 without a superintendent certification. The board can reimburse Sanders up to \$39,000 for the cost of tuition and coursework.

Board members, including Ward, lauded Sanders’ work as district CEO. Ward, however, said she wouldn’t vote in favor of the new contract unless it was for a shorter duration.

Board member John Devereux said the agreement reached with Sanders recognizes his accomplishments while acknowledging there is more work to be done.

“It’s an ever-changing environment,” board member Phil Costello said. “We’re fortunate enough to have a school district with a lot of great administrators. But we need progress, and we know that there is a lot of room to grow. I think that’s what this set of goals accomplishes.”

U46 hires group to help convert high schools

By: Rafael Guerrero

School District U46 has hired an outside firm to help convert its five high school academies into more rigorous magnet schools.

Magnet Schools of America will be paid \$45,000 over two years to assist the district in rewriting academy curriculum and course offerings under a deal approved last week by the District U46 board.

The contract calls for the nonprofit organization to conduct workshops, evaluate the existing academies, conduct site visits and provide assistance communicating with the public as the district makes the switch from a traditional high school structure to one in which students choose career pathways and attend academies based on their career goals. The district’s existing academies will become magnet schools.

“The intent of relooking at the academies is to make them magnets, that they truly have a unique curriculum that stands out just for that school and those students,” District U46 CEO Tony Sanders told the board.

Existing academies include one for gifted and talented students at Elgin High School; the visual and performing arts academy at Larkin High School; the science, engineering and technology academy at Bartlett High School; the world languages and international studies academy at Streamwood High School; and the BEACON academy of media and digital arts at South Elgin High School.

Kinasha Brown, district director of educational pathways, told the board the next career expo for eighth-grade students will be held Sept. 11 at the Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates. Parents will be invited to attend the same event on the night of Sept. 10 so they can learn what their children will be doing. A similar expo was held last year and featured about 90 exhibitors.

The district’s goal is to start implementing the new career pathways program in 2021.

---Chicago Tribune---03/06/2019

Illinois scraps controversial PARCC test in favor of shorter exam with new name

By: Kate Thayer



- Fourth-grader Derek Burian practices before taking the Illinois Assessment of Readiness test with teacher Selena Landa at Lakewood Falls Elementary School in Plainfield on Feb. 28, 2019. The Illinois Assessment of Readiness test replaces the controversial PARCC test.

Students in third through eighth grades across the state will begin taking a new standardized test this month, leaving behind the widely panned PARCC test.

Yet this year's new test, called the Illinois Assessment of Readiness or IAR, differs from PARCC only in length; it's about a third shorter, said Jackie Matthews, spokeswoman for the Illinois State Board of Education.

The new name, however, reflects more sweeping changes on the horizon, Matthews said, designed in part to address the many criticisms of PARCC, which stands for Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. The changes include a quicker turnaround on results, a computer adaptive test model customized to each student, more locally created questions and adjustments to how the test is translated for students whose native language is not English. Those changes will be rolled out starting next year through 2022, she said.

"The first year is the first phase of improvements," Matthews said, explaining that local administrators' criticisms were taken into account in designing the new test. "Having a new name allows us to reflect those values."

The PARCC test, designed to assess math and reading skills, launched in 2015 and was met with controversy. School administrators and parents alike complained that the test's long hours took away from instruction time and argued that the test was too difficult. This led to a record number of parents opting to keep their students from taking the test, which produced dismal scores for the state.

Chicago Public Schools threatened to pull out of PARCC testing but relented to avoid losing federal funds. While PARCC was eventually pulled from high schools in favor of an SAT college entrance exam paid for by the state, it remained at the elementary and middle school levels. In 2016, a group of suburban superintendents from North Shore districts wrote a letter urging the state to stop requiring the test in the lower levels.

Amid the pushback, ISBE officials announced last year that they would address the concerns about PARCC.

Local administrators say they're glad to hear of the forthcoming changes but remain guarded as they await them. And some also reserved judgment on whether the IAR will be a good measurement of state standards, known as Common Core, as well as a useful tool for districts and parents.

"We won't know until we see it," said Glenn Wood, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction in Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202. "We're hoping the test is more aligned to the standards than PARCC."



- Fourth-grade student Amy Mendez, center, practices before taking the Illinois Assessment of Readiness test at Lakewood Falls Elementary School in Plainfield on Feb. 28, 2019.

Most administrators welcome the shorter exam. This year's English Language Arts and Literacy portion of the test will be 2½ hours for third-graders this year, down from three hours and 45 minutes previously, and three hours for all other grades, down from 4½. The math portion will reduce to three hours for all grades, down from four to 4½ hours, according to ISBE. Students do not take the test all at once, and ISBE leaves it up to schools to decide how to break up the test.

"We certainly appreciate that it's shorter," said Paul Goldberg, assistant superintendent of district improvement in Schaumburg-based School District 54. "That's a step in the right direction."

Goldberg said he thought the test could even be shortened further, pointing out that "kids sit one time for the ACT to get into college."

As the state has changed its test over the years, and will continue to update IAR over the next three, it will be difficult for administrators to compare scores from year to year, said Wood in Plainfield. "We hope this IAR will stay around a little bit, so we can do that."

The first year the state administered PARCC, the results were lower than any state test since 2001. At the elementary level, only about a quarter to a third of elementary and middle school students met or exceeded expectations — the terminology used to indicate passing — on the math exams, and 33 to 38 percent passed the language arts portion. High school scores were even lower throughout the state, with even traditionally high-performing districts seeing less than half of their students with passing scores. While scores improved some over the years, school administrators and parents continued to complain the test wasn't measuring what was being taught in the Common Core curriculum.

One adjustment for students taking the upcoming IAR test could be the move — scheduled for 2021 — to a computer adaptive test, Wood said, which customizes the exam to each student. The test, taken on a computer, adjusts the difficulty of each

question to fit the student's progress. If a student answers correctly, the difficulty increases; if the student gives a wrong answer, an easier question follows.

More than 90 percent of schools already administer standardized tests on a computer, rather than the historical bubble fill-ins on paper, Matthews said, and several local administrators said their students also are used to a computer adaptive model for other tests they take throughout the year. To help prepare for the change, ISBE has set out to ensure all schools administer their test via computer by next year, Matthews said, ahead of the move to adaptive testing, and will offer grants to some schools to be able to do so.

Laura Hill, director of assessment and accountability in Elgin-based School District U-46, said the computer adaptive model will be "a better assessment for our students."

Hill also is looking forward to seeing results more quickly, which ISBE says it is working toward for next year's test.

"Everything has to be really timely for the teacher," she said. If scores lag, "we can't do anything with the results."

The Examiner of STREAMWOOD

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"IF I WERE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT A NEWSPAPER OR A NEWSPAPER WITHOUT A GOVERNMENT, I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO CHOOSE THE LATTER." THOMAS JEFFERSON

50 cents
March 6, 2019

Emergency funds
gain U-46 approval
See Page 2

Sabres boys hoops
season comes to end
See Page 5

U-46 Board approves 2019-20 calendar, fees

By Seth Hancock

The Board of Education in School District U-46 approved both the calendar and fees for the 2019-2020 school year at its meeting on Monday, Feb. 25.

The fees were approved by a 7-0 vote but the calendar received a 6-1 vote, board member Jeanette Ward voting no as she has consistently opposed the earlier start date.

The first day of classes will be Aug. 14, a week later on Aug. 21 for pre-school, which will be the seventh straight year for an earlier start date despite district surveys consistently showing public disapproval. The district did not do a survey this year.

High school graduation will be May 23 and the last day of classes, if no emergency days are used, will come after Memorial Day on May 27, or June 3 if all five emergency days are used.

Thanksgiving break will start on Wednesday, Nov. 27, Christmas break will start on Dec. 20 with classes resuming on Jan. 6 and the week of March 23 will be spring break.

There are 176 instructional days scheduled (up from 173 this year) and 184 teacher attendance days.

When a draft calendar was presented on Feb. 4, U-46 CEO Tony Sanders said the calendar had been delayed this year because of possible state legislation that would eliminate some recent flexibility given to school districts by the state. The district originally proposed to schedule several early release

dates through that flexibility.

Although the flexibility still remains from the state, Sanders said U-46 removed the early release dates from this calendar due to public concerns expressed via the Let's Talk! system.

The calendar designates the months of August, September, October and January as student progress monitoring month/meetings which board member Sue Kerr inquired about. Melanie Meidel, assistant superintendent for special projects, said in the past the district scheduled one day for parent-teacher conferences across the district but these months make it "flexible for the schools" to schedule those meetings.

"I appreciate that flexibility that you've built in for the schools," Ward said. "I think that's moving in a right direction where we give some control back to the local schools. I think that's a great thing to do."

However, Ward added: "As in the past few years, I don't think we should start that early in August and every time we've asked the public what they have thought nobody wants to start that early.... There was some debate among us whether they understood if we started later that we wouldn't finish the semester before winter break. I think the public understood that, and I would still like us to move to a later start date."

The earlier start date allows for the end of first semester before Christmas

break allowing for high school students to take finals before the break.

Board member Phil Costello, who asked the district to commit to doing a survey next year, said he wasn't sure just using Let's Talk! was a "proper way to go" to get public feedback. He said "there should be some middle ground" to show "some rationale as to what we're trying to accomplish" and the board should create "some kind of concrete measure" to get public feedback, something he's argued for in the past but has not been implemented.

"As we were looking at the responses from previous years, those responses hadn't changed based on what was presented to the board and the board gave us feedback about the calendar in previous approved calendars," said Meidel who said the district went to professional growth committees to get staff feedback this year.

Board member John Devereux said any future surveys should be detailed and include the pros and cons for the different options. He also said this calendar aligns with neighboring districts.

Sanders said "there's really no boundaries anymore" and that U-46 needs to align with its neighbors. He said he would want to look at how other school districts receive public feedback noting that St. Charles polled its citizens with two draft calendars.

"Mrs. Ward is right," Sanders said. "We do have a large group that say that they want the start after Labor Day, but they also say they want finals before winter break and they also say they want to be done before Memorial Day" but "you can't have it all."

Ward said: "I don't remember us asking the community about whether they wanted to finish finals before winter break. I don't think that was part of our survey."

Meidel claimed: "It was in our last survey.... We did put the questions out there for that survey."

However, based on a review of the Jan. 23, 2017 meeting when the last survey, which showed 73 percent opposition to the earlier start, was presented, Ward was correct. That year, the administration initially planned to follow the public input before the board's majority asked to continue with the early start as Kerr, Ward and former board member Cody Holt were in the minority.

Regarding finals, Sanders said in 2017 the district's data showed "it's not made a significant impact over these past few years academically" and "[students are] going to have that stress whether it's before winter break or after winter break."

At this year's meeting, Ward said if

See U-46 calendar/fees, pg. 3

Village approves bid for new surveillance system

By Kristin Carreno

At the Village Board meeting on Thursday, Feb. 21, trustees voted unanimously to accept the low bid and execute a contract for the installation, upgrading and servicing of a public safety video surveillance and access control system proposed by Griffon Systems, Inc, Elmhurst, at a cost of \$337,420.

According to Chief of Police Daryl Syre, in early 2018 the police department began looking at opportunities to upgrade its aging video surveillance and access control system. The current system was installed in 2007 and uses analog camera and video capture technology which is no longer easily serviced. The current system has exceeded its life expectancy.

"Advances in technology, new laws governing prisoner interviews and the ability to provide greater services to our residents has provided an impetus for this change," said Syre.

While reviewing the needs of the police department it was determined that the village could use this opportunity to address the video surveillance and access control needs of other village buildings, according to Syre. The addition of these buildings to the project could coincide with the upgrades currently scheduled at Village Hall and public works and address the entire public safety infrastructure of the village.

The proposal is to provide and install video and card access surveillance hardware and software to replace the existing systems in Village Hall and

the police department and to install new hardware in the public works facility and three fire stations, according to Syre. It also requires internet protocol cameras and open-platform scalable video management software to be installed to integrate with the access control hardware and allow for a forensic level of video capture that will meet the requirements of the future scale of the system.

Six proposals were received, according to Syre. Griffon Systems, Inc., submitted the lowest bid of initially \$288,840. A subsequent needs analysis brought the total project cost to \$337,420. The highest bid was from Pace Systems, Inc., at a cost of \$546,750.

"Not only was it the lowest bid but we thought that Griffon Systems met the needs of the village," Syre said. "

This village-wide solution will fully integrate access control with analytic and video capture across the public safety network, according to Syre. The three fire stations and the public works building will have the ability to be monitored independently with a video server being maintained and located at the public works building.

According to Syre, Village Hall surveillance cameras will continue to be monitored and recorded to the server stored at the police department. The addition of a more suitable viewing monitor at the police department will allow the records department personnel to monitor all cameras at Village Hall in real-time.



D.A.R.E.ing autograph

Police Chief Daryl Syre signed Christin Arroya's T-shirt at the D.A.R.E. bowling outing on Friday, March 1. For story and more photos see page 8.

(Examiner photo by Juli Schatz)

Emergency expenses among U-46 approvals

By Seth Hancock

The Board of Education in School District U-46 unanimously approved expenditure items totaling \$5.2 million among other items at its two regular meetings in February on Feb. 4 and Feb. 25.

Included were three emergency repairs that have already been completed but still needed board approval.

Board member Jeanette Ward asked about the logistics on such items and Sheila Downs, director of plant operations, said “typically we have a list of vendors” and there’s a “delicate balance” between price and speed of service “especially when there’s an emergency and there’s a direct impact to the staff and students.”

One emergency item for replacement of a pool circulation pump, volute and accompanying piping after a failure at Streamwood High School (\$34,647 with Thomas Pump Company, Inc.; operations and maintenance fund) was completed in early December and presented to the board on Feb. 4 with a vote on Feb. 25.

The two other emergency items, repair of building automation equipment at Streamwood’s Hanover Countryside Elementary School (\$46,783 with Trane U.S., Inc.; operations and maintenance) and repair of

pool sound system at Bartlett High School (\$25,072 with Sound Incorporated Integrated Technologies; operations and maintenance), were both presented and voted on at the same meeting on Feb. 25.

“Given the nature of these types of repairs that are already completed, we are suggesting that in the future we bring these forward to discussion/action for expediency,” said U-46 CEO Tony Sanders.

The repair at Hanover Countryside took place on Dec. 31, 2018 as the automation equipment “controls the heating and cooling system” at the school according to the proposal.

“We reached a point where we lost complete control of the heating and cooling system,” the proposal stated. “This resulted in the inability to control the building temperature. As a result, rooms began to overheat. Thus, spaces throughout the building were very uncomfortable for students and staff.”

The pool sound system repair at Bartlett took place over the Christmas break, and the proposal states: “This system is required by the State. Therefore, the absence of a working sound system is considered a code violation.”

Board member Sue Kerr asked if the problems associated with the emer-

gencies have been resolved which the administration said they were.

There were a pair of chiller replacements approved at Streamwood’s Tefft Middle School (\$1.5 million with Mechanical Concepts; operations and maintenance) and at South Elgin’s Kenyon Woods Middle School (\$849,597 with AMS Mechanical Systems Inc.; operations and maintenance). A proposal for chiller control panel replacements at Bartlett and Streamwood high schools (\$156,369 with Trane; operations and maintenance) was also approved.

Two proposals for Elgin High School projects were approved costing \$972,839 (operations and maintenance) with Northwest Contractors Inc. for a domestic water piping replacement project and \$867,000 (operations and maintenance and life safety funds) with Associated Electrical Contractors, LLC for main electrical service replacement.

An approved boiler replacement at South Elgin’s Clinton Elementary School costs \$479,597 (operations and maintenance and life safety funds) with AMS.

A three-year contract with Comcast costing \$150,480 (education fund) to provide SIP (Session Initiation Protocol)/VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) trunk services was approved.

A proposal with Snap-on Industrial (\$65,952 to be paid for by the nation’s taxpayers through federal grant funds) for precision manufacturing kits, a bid with Applied Communications Group (\$60,449; operations and maintenance) for wireless access point installation at U-46’s plant operations and distributions center and a two-

year contract with Magnet Schools of America (\$44,700; education fund) to seek magnet status at district high schools were all approved.

There were two curriculum proposals approved including for secondary arts for implementation in the 2020-2021 school year with current associated costs of \$11,800 initially, \$550 annually, as well as a Music Production course at the DREAM Academy starting in 2019-2020 costing \$28,675 initially, \$1,020 annually.

Itemized bills totaling \$14.5 million on Feb. 4 and \$8.8 million on Feb. 25 were approved. Included in the Feb. 25 bills was \$96,500 with Great Lakes Snow Systems, Inc. from the special education fund which board member Phil Costello asked if that was a normal expenditure or “related to the weather,” but the administration said it would have to get back to him on it.

The board approved of school improvement plans submitted by all U-46 schools. Board member John Devereux asked for clarification on “what exactly” they were voting on and Sanders said: “By law, you have to approve the school improvement plans.... By law, we can point that you voted on them.”

A tax abatement of \$9.6 million was approved. The stated effect by the district of the abatement is to keep property tax rates flat despite increasing the levy, but any relief created by it now will be paid for by property taxpayers in the future.

A charter for a U-46 Retirement Committee was expecting a vote on Feb. 4 but was pulled from the agenda by Sanders. No future date for a vote has been set.



Park Bench

...have a seat and we'll fill you in

Camp Spring Break Camp

Calling K to eighth grade spring-breakers! SEPR has fun planned for you! Camp will attend three field trips during the week, along with great indoor and outdoor activities. Lunch will be included daily. Please send your child with a snack and drink/water bottle daily. If the minimum number of participants is not met for one day, only that day will be cancelled. Spring Break Camp will be held Monday to Friday, March 25 to 29 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Municipal Annex. The cost is \$125 for residents or \$150 for non-residents for the week. The registration deadline is March 7. A \$20 late fee will be applied after that date. Field Trips are as follows: Tuesday – Funway; Wednesday – Cosley Zoo; and Thursday – Safari Land. A.m. care is available from 7 to 9 a.m. for \$5 per day and p.m. care is available from 4 to 6 p.m. for \$6 per day.

KFN - Klub Friday Night

Friday, March 15 from 7 to 9 p.m.

Register now for the final Klub Friday Night – St. Patrick’s Day Party!. Wear your green and come out to celebrate St. Paddy’s day with your friends. We will have music, games, activities and treats! KFN is held at Fox Meadow Elementary School. The cost is \$10 for residents and \$15 for non-residents. The registration deadline is March 8 and pre-registration is required.

Youth

Cookies and Canvas

Canvas painting is all the rage! If you are feeling artsy come out and paint the town purple, blue, red and green. Each date is a different seasonal or holiday design, so come to one or come to all. This class will be held Saturday, March 16 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Municipal Annex. The cost is \$17 for residents and \$22 for non-residents.

Have the Slime of Your Life with the Easter Bunny

Have the slime of your life this spring making slime with the Easter Bunny! The Easter Bunny will be on hand as

kids make slime that stretches, bubbles and smells like spring! Customize your slime in the concoction center to smell like Marshmallow Peeps, tulips, cotton candy and more spring scents. Then color it to be the magical colors known for Easter. Making themed, seasonal slime is so fun! All kids leave with a golden egg surprise and their slime to take home. This class will be held Saturday, March 16 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Municipal Annex. The cost is \$25 for residents and \$35 for non-residents.

Fitness

Free Trial Fitness Classes week of March 18

Come check out any of our Adult Fitness classes the week of March 18 at no charge. You can find the classes at www.southelgin.com/recreation - click on the brochure. The information is located on pg. 29.

Theatre


Spring Break Theatre Days

Explore the world of play by cultivating curiosity through musical theatre. Students will sing, dance, act, and create and art project. Join us for a fun-filled class where we use props, costumes and music to help us on our journey. Don’t forget to bring a peanut-free lunch. These classes will be held Monday, March 25 to Friday, March 29 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Eastside Recreation Center in Elgin. Each class is \$40 for residents and \$50 for non-residents. Here is the schedule: Monday is Incredibles 2; Tuesday is Beauty & The Beast; Wednesday is Peter Pan; Thursday is Trolls; and Friday is Lion King.

Preschool

Preschool Registration – Now Open

Preschool Registration for school year 2019-20 is now open. A \$35 non-refundable deposit is required at the time of registration along with a copy of your child’s birth certificate. We offer preschool for 2 and a half, 3 and 4 year olds during the day and an evening program for 3 to 5 year olds. Your child must be the appropriate age by Sept. 1. For more information or class availability, call 847-622-0003.



Gail Borden Public Library District

Fueled by the power of community

Read! Learn! Connect!

March into Health

March into Health the whole month of March with more than 30 community health programs for all ages to celebrate National Nutrition Month in March. Don’t miss the chance to get healthy, win prizes and have fun! For more information and a full list of the month-long programs, visit www.gailborden.info or the Activate Elgin Facebook page.

Take Flight

If you haven’t embarked on your next big adventure yet, don’t forget to visit Take Flight, an interactive exhibit from Science Works Hands-On Museum that explores the principles and forces that make flight possible, at the Main Library through March 14. This exhibit will help you soar into wonderful experiences such as making and launching paper airplanes, testing a hoverport and so much more. To see more information about the Take Flight exhibit visit www.gailborden.info/flight.

Take Flight Exhibit

There’s no need to upgrade your ticket to first class! Soar into the Main Library for the Take Flight Exhibit now through March 14 to discover the principles and forces that make flight possible for airplanes, helicopters and rockets. The interactive exhibit from Science Works Hands-On Museum will engage all ages and there is no registration required to attend.

Career and Technical School Fair

Are you graduating soon or thinking about a career change? At our Career and Technical School Fair at the Main Library from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, March 6, you will be able to explore different high-demand trades and chat with representatives from area colleges, trade and technical schools like Elgin Community Col-

lege, Tricoci University, Universal Technical Institute and more. There is no registration to attend.

Creativity Lab

Enjoy art, tinkering activities and more in our Creativity Lab at the South Elgin Branch from 4 to 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 7. Students in grades one to five are encouraged to drop by and for creative play. This week, we will be exploring shamrocks. No registration is required to attend.

Home Buying and Selling Workshop

Are you putting your house up for sale or planning on purchasing a new home soon? Join us for a Home Buying and Selling Workshop at the South Elgin Branch from 2 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, March 10. This workshop will cover the various steps in the home buying and selling process. Presenters will discuss their areas of expertise and be available for questions. No registration is required to attend.

The Lyrebird Ensemble

Relax and enjoy the innovative flute and harp duo—The Lyrebird Ensemble—at the Main Library from 2 to 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 10. This Chicago-based duo combines exciting virtuosity and variety in their performances. Free tickets will be available at any library location leading up to the concert. Meet the artists and enjoy refreshments afterwards.

Who Was...? Series

Bring history to life! Create portraits of inspiring and impactful icons highlighted in the Who Was...? Series at the Rakow Branch from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 12. This month, we will be exploring the lives of Malala Yousafzai and Mother Theresa. Students in grades four to six are asked to register in advance for this program by going to our website at www.gailborden.info/register.

U-46 presents timeline for 2020 budget process

By Seth Hancock

The Board of Education in School District U-46 was presented with the tentative timeline for the Fiscal Year 2020 budget at its meeting on Monday, Feb. 25.

The tentative budget is expected to be presented first on June 17 and again on Aug. 12 after board discussions, a public hearing is planned for Sept. 9 and a final board vote is currently set for Sept. 23.

On April 23 the administration plans to establish priorities and the board will discuss priorities. Board finance committee meetings are scheduled for May 20 and Aug. 12.

"This is similar to the timeline that we've used in the past to meet all of the requirements of the budget," said Dale Burnidge, director of financial

operations.

U-46 CEO Tony Sanders said another thing to remember that is not a part of the timeline is the annual reductions in force which he said "really drives a lot of our budget because if you don't do a reduction of force the same staff will be returning the following year. While it's not on here, our staffing really drives much of the budget that goes into this upcoming budget year."

According to the FY2019 budget's future projections the FY2020 budget is expected to set revenue at \$564.3 million (a \$3.2 million increase) and expenditures at \$559.1 million (a \$1 million increase). At the same time, it projects enrollment to drop by 1,329 students next year to 37,243.

This year's budget hiked spending 7.8 percent (\$40.2 million) to \$558.1

million and revenue by 10.2 percent (\$52 million) to \$561.1 million.

The budget hikes this year, which included the addition of 54 new positions, came despite the fourth year of enrollment declines as U-46 lost 633 students (39,205 to 38,572) according to the district's presentation in November. The district's numbers showed a loss of 1,915 total students since 40,487 in 2014.

According to the state board of education's data, spending has increased nearly \$100 million since 2014 which is over \$70 million faster than the rate of inflation according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator. Academic results have consistently lagged behind the state and been flat or declining in the district during that same time.

If the district's projections are realized from the FY2019 budget, there will have been a 13.1 percent drop in enrollment from 2012 to the 2021-2022 school year while costs are expected to rise by 36.3 percent over the same period.

On the same night the budget timeline was presented, the January financial report was presented to the board.

The report showed that the district has received \$288 million in total revenue, up from \$260.1 million the same month in the prior year, and has spent \$308.7 million, up from \$300 million the prior year.

Burnidge said the revenue increases from last year are largely due to payments from the state's so-called "evidence-based" funding formula, and spending increased largely due to the \$5.9 million spent on bus purchases.

The total fund balances at the end of January were \$275.4 million which Burnidge said was "a decrease of \$55.3 million from December." He said January is usually the worst month for cash flow as it represented 4 percent of this year's budgeted revenue but 16 percent of its expenditures, most from \$37 million in debt service payments.

Board member Sue Kerr noted an increase in federal funding from last year (\$17.4 million compared to \$13.1 million). Burnidge said that Title I funds were delayed last year and added: "We are a little bit ahead right now, but that'll even out in March."

Sanders noted: "It's not them paying ahead. It's still reimbursement only."

Pet of the Week



Hopping for a new home

Ready for a Holly Jolly life? Holly is a sweet, snuggly, ever-lovable rabbit that was found as a stray as a youngster. Holly grew up with a foster family and was adopted. Sadly, due to allergies (not hers), she has found herself back at DCAS in search of a forever family. Holly is 1 year old, spayed and ready to be someone's next best pal! For more information please call 407-2800 or email animalservices@dupageco.org.

(Photo courtesy of County Animal Control)



Connections

Poplar Creek Public Library

Note: The Main Library will be open 1 to 5 p.m. on Friday, March 8 due to Staff Training Day in the morning.

Feature Films at the Library
Sunday, March 3 at 1 p.m.
Meeting Room 1

Come to the library and watch a newly released feature film on our big screen! No one under 13 admitted without parent/guardian. Doors open 15 minutes prior, snacks and water provided. For specific movie information, please call 483-4626 or visit our website at www.pclib.org. No registration necessary!

Chair Yoga
Wednesday, March 6 at 1 p.m.
Meeting Room 3

Explore gentle postures, breath work, meditation, and deep relaxation with Karen Fotopoulos, certified yoga instructor from Discover Yoga with Karen. Register online or call 483-4910.

Small Business Counseling
Wednesday, March 6 from 1 to 4 p.m.
Meeting Room 2

Free one-on-one business counseling provided by a SCORE business professional to anyone operating a small business or thinking of starting one. Please register at bit.ly/PCPL-SCORE to schedule your free one hour session. By appointment only.

Mollie's War
Wednesday, March 13 at 7 p.m.
Meeting Room 1

Cyndee Schaffer will discuss the role of women in the military and in particular, her mother's experiences in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) in WWII. Schaffer and her mother co-authored the book, "Mollie's War," compiled from the letters her mother sent home while stationed overseas. Register online or call 483-4910. Walk-ins also welcome!

College Simulator
Monday, March 11 at 6 p.m.
Meeting Room 1

Ever wonder what college is like? Experience a year of college on fast forward in this fast paced hands on approach. Tennis shoes must be worn to this event as there will be a lot of running! Register online or call 483-4928.

Drop-in Craft
Tuesday, March 12 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Meeting Room 1

Everyone loves getting cards in the

mail. Come and create four to five different cards to send to those special people in your life. No Registration but sign-up at the door. Ages 18 and up. Supplies are limited.

Crafternoon-Handmade Cards
Wednesday, March 13, 2 to 3:30 p.m.
Meeting Room 1

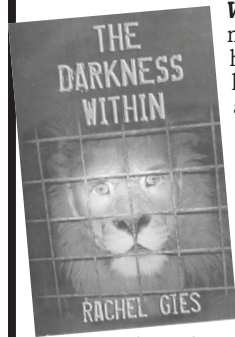
Adults come and enjoy a free craft here at the library. Sign up at the door up to 45 minutes early to ensure you get a spot, as supplies are limited. This is a repeat of the Drop-in Craft held on March 12.

Candidate Forum
Saturday, March 23
11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Feeling confused about who to vote for on April 2? Come to the library and hear those candidates who are running for contested elected offices. All the local taxing bodies have terms that have ended: Villages, park districts, community college districts, library districts and they all affect your property tax bill. Who will you vote for?

For a complete listing of scheduled programs at Poplar Creek Public Library, 1405 S. Park Ave., in Streamwood or Sonya Crawshaw Branch, 4300 Audrey Lane in Hanover Park, visit www.poplarcreeklibrary.org. Questions? Call 837-6800.

Rachel Gies surprises her readers with this suspenseful thriller. **The Darkness Within** is a murder mystery that is hot, hot, hot. Kate and her brother, Nick, are being terrorized. Someone is playing cat and mouse with them as they unveil illegal shipments and are in danger of becoming the beast's next victim as they get closer to the truth. The



list of suspects is constantly changing. Terror and suspense explode as it all comes to a terrifying shocking end. Previously self published books include **Captured Pearl** and **One Size Fits Most**.

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Police Reports

Continued from page 3

port of theft.
★ At 2:01 p.m., police responded to the 1200 block of Jenna for a report of theft.
★ At 2:31 p.m., police responded to Best Buy, 424 Randall Road, for a 911 investigation.
★ At 3:10 p.m., police responded to the 900 block of James in an attempt to

locate an unidentified subject.
★ At 5:48 p.m., police responded to Vault Design, 885 Schneider Drive, for a report of an activated alarm.
★ At 8:07 p.m., police responded to Ralph Tredup Park East, 1025 S. Lancaster Circle, for a report of a suspicious vehicle.
★ At 9:21 p.m., police responded to DK Nails, 454 Redington Drive, for a report of battery in progress.

Team manager provided special opportunity

By Seth Hancock
When Matthew Kennedy was born premature at 27 weeks and diagnosed with cerebral palsy, his family was told he may not eat, talk or walk. Fast forward to today as a freshman at Bartlett High School, Kennedy has defied that prognosis. A Special Olympics athlete and Little League baseball player with the Bartlett Challengers since the age of 4, Kennedy has been the manager this season for the Bartlett Hawks freshman boys basketball team and the team's head coach Dan Grieve and assistant coach Alan Walker surprised him by giving him a chance to play in the season finale against Glenbard East on Tuesday, Feb. 19. "It seemed to be the perfect ending to a great season for our team," Grieve said. "For coach Walker and I, it was a no-brainer to give Matthew a chance to play. We surprised him with a jersey last week at practice, and let him know he would be playing in this last game. Matthew was unbelievably excited, and it was really special for us coaches to see how excited the rest of the team was." Matthew's mother Lisa Kennedy said: "He was so excited. He was bouncing up and down, and it truly was a surprise. All of his teammates were happy as well, and the kids from Glenbard East showed great sportsmanship." As Matthew took to the court and whenever he scored for the Hawks, the crowd cheered him on which showed the sense of community Grieve believes in. "I'm a big believer in the quote: 'a community that excludes even one member is no community at all,'" Grieve said. "We want to create a strong sense of culture and family in our program, and Matthew was such a big part in that. Coach Walker and I work so well together because not only do we love teaching basketball,

but we understand that there's more than just basketball. There are a lot of life lessons you can teach through basketball, and the way our team embraced Matthew was a perfect example of that." For Lisa Kennedy, she admitted she had some worries when her son first started high school as a special needs student, but "everybody there has been fantastic from the principal (Mike Demovsky) to the coaches and students. We have such a great community." Managing the basketball team seemed like a good fit for Matthew as his mother said "he loves sports a lot" from competing in sports like baseball, hockey and swimming. He had the chance to play in the 2013 Little League World Series-Challenger Division. The Bartlett Challengers has been an important program from children with special needs according to Lisa Kennedy who said: "It's really good for both the children and the parents. It gives the kids a chance to make friends but also the parents a chance to meet other parents facing similar challenges." Along with teammates on Challenger teams, players from other Little League divisions "buddy" up with Challenger players to help when necessary. "These buddies help these special needs children play baseball and help them run bases if needed, catch balls and help bat when needed just as some examples," Lisa Kennedy said. "We are always looking for buddies to help. This is an excellent experience for our special needs children but also for the buddies." Lisa Kennedy said Matthew wants to get more involved as his high school career continues. He is involved with the Best Buddy organization which seeks to create friendships between kids with and without disabilities.

Friday, Feb. 22
★ At 7:44 a.m., police responded to Taco Bell, 490 Randall Road, for a report of an activated alarm.
★ At 9:11 a.m., police responded to the 1200 block of Angeline for a report of criminal damage to property.
★ At 10:23 a.m., police responded to the 600 block of Fieldcrest, for a report of a domestic in progress.
★ At 11:29 a.m., police responded to Family Hear Care, 460 Briargate Drive, for a report of an activated alarm.
★ At 4:09 p.m., police responded to Super Target, 530 Randall Road, for a report of a hit and run.
★ At 5:57 p.m., police responded to Super Target, 530 Randall Road, for a 911 investigation
★ At 6:03 p.m., police responded to the 0 block of Trenton for a report of a domestic in progress.
★ At 10:30 p.m., police responded to the 600 block of Franklin for a report of a domestic in progress.
★ At 11:11 p.m., police responded to the 200 block of Thornwood for a report of a suspicious incident.
★ At 11:22 p.m., police responded to the 600 block of Dean for a report of a suspicious vehicle.
Saturday, Feb. 23
★ At 7:22 a.m., police responded to Meineke Econolube Car Care Center, 376 Sundown Road, for a report of an activated alarm.
★ At 12:28 p.m., police responded to the 200 block of Nicole for a report of a safety or health hazard.
★ At 1:09 p.m., police responded to the 200 block of Ann for a report of a domestic.
★ At 2:32 p.m., police responded to

the 600 block of Glenwood for a report of an activated alarm.
★ At 2:56 p.m., police responded to Best Buy, 424 Randall Road, for a shoplifting complaint.
★ At 3:15 p.m., police responded to LaFarge Fox River Stone, 1300 Illinois Route 31, for a report of a domestic.
★ At 5:21 p.m., police responded to Kohl's, 350 Randall Road, for a report of theft.
★ At 6:07 p.m., police responded to the 300 block of Woodridge for a report of a neighbor dispute in progress.
★ At 6:41 p.m., police responded to Lumber Liquidators, 356 Randall Road, for a report of an activated alarm.
★ At 8:58 p.m., police responded to the 400 block of South Collins, for a report of a suspicious person.
★ At 9:20 p.m., police responded to the Springs at South Elgin, 350 Gyor, for a report of a suspicious vehicle.
★ At 9:29 p.m., police responded to the 7N900 block of Columbine for a request to assist fire department personnel.
★ At 10:30 p.m., police responded to the 1500 block of Birch for a report of an activated alarm.
Sunday, Feb. 24
★ At 2:06 a.m., police responded to the 900 block of Kane for a report of a disturbance.
★ At 3:56 a.m., police responded to the 1200 block of Deer Pointe for a report of an activated alarm.
★ At 4:44 a.m., police responded to the 300 block of Windsor for a request to assist fire department personnel.
★ At 6 a.m., police responded to Learning Experience, 171 S. McLean Blvd., for a report of an activated



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D.A.R.E. students rewarded with party



Albert Aguillar played a game in the arcade.



Kevin Lopez let his bowling ball fly.



Michael Armstrong and Isabella Manazynski watched a ball roll down the lane.

More than 200 fifth-grade Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) students from Hanover-Countryside, Heritage Lakes, Hilltop and Ridge Circle elementary schools got together for a bowling party at Streamwood Bowl on Friday, March 1. Boys and girls bowled, played arcade games and pool and had lunch hosted by D.A.R.E. officers Ed Poloski and Tom Sparks. Sparks will start his new D.A.R.E. duties this summer in preparation for the 2019-2020 school year.



Besides bowling, students were also invited to play pool.



From left, Leandra Gottschalk, Ayana Flores, Chayil Thomas and Andrea Valdez, volunteers from Streamwood High School, bowled with Ivan Gonzalez.



Village Manager Sharon Caddigan, left, and Village President Billie Roth framing D.A.R.E. mascot Daren.



Jessica Ruiz approaching the line.

(Examiner photos by Juli Schatz)

Press Clippings 03/06/2019

---The Daily Herald---03/06/2019

Elgin club's youth of the year got 'endless amount of support'

By: Elena Ferrarin



- Damaryan Benton, 17, a senior at Elgin High School, was named "Youth of the Year" by the Boys and Girls Club of Elgin.

Life forced Damaryan Benton to grow up quickly after his father was gunned down in the streets of Chicago when Damaryan was 11 and his grandmother died a year later.

Damaryan, 17, a senior at Elgin High School, said he did his best to help his mother, who mostly had seasonal jobs and at times struggled to provide clothes and food. He started working at age 15 and sometimes held two jobs at a time, he said.

Through the years, the [Boys & Girls Club of Elgin](#) was a steadying force, providing him with material and emotional support and allowing him to feel like a kid, Damaryan said.

The club provided him with clothes, shoes and meals and got him free braces in middle school through a sponsoring dental office. It introduced him to new experiences like Six Flags Great America and opened his eyes to future possibilities with programs that connected him to business professionals, he said.

"There are so many things they did to help me," Damaryan said. "They gave me opportunities and endless amounts of support."

The Boys & Girls Club of Elgin, in turn, recognized Damaryan as its "Youth of the Year" last month for his commitment to attending the club for the past 11 years and his desire to help his peers, especially younger ones. Damaryan will compete for the statewide title April 9 and 10 in Springfield.

"He exemplifies a lot of the character traits that we try to instill into the youth," said Deborah Ficken, director of program services for the Elgin club. "He was very actively involved in leadership activities through the club and the regional programming we have done. He has always been willing to be an advocate of the club to members of the community."

"He's also very kind," Ficken said. "He will always make time to welcome new people to the club and listen to them."

Damaryan credits the club for introducing him to acting and public speaking. He is a member of his school's speech and debate team and was an Illinois High School Association state finalist two years in a row. He's also on the cheerleading and volleyball teams, did a student-volunteer internship for Elgin Area School District U-46 and helped run the first fair featuring historically black colleges and universities at Elgin Community College.

Damaryan, who works at Panera Bread in Elgin, plans to go to college -- he got one scholarship offer and is in talks for more -- and double-major in business administration and communications. He might work in nonprofit administration "to impact kids that have gone through my situation," he said.

The youth of the year selection is made by a panel of judges including community and club board members. The other finalists were: Abigail Dunn of Abbott Middle School and Eiyalin Tomassini of Ellis Middle School, both seventh-graders; Nathan Aquino of Larsen Middle School and Tanya Garcia-Robles of Kimball Middle School, both eighth-graders; Geovanny Lara and Logan Cox, both freshmen at Larkin High School; Jacqueline Perez, a sophomore at Larkin High School; and Gloria Mora, a senior at Elgin High School.

---The Courier-News---03/06/2019

U46 CEO given new 5-year contract

Agreement begins with \$13,610 pay raise, sets goals for future boosts

By: Rafael Guerrero



- School District U46 CEO Tony Sanders received a \$13,610 pay raise and a new five-year contract at Monday night's school board meeting, extending his employment with the district through 2024.

School District U46 CEO Tony Sanders' new five-year contract includes a first-year base salary increase of \$7,039 and sets 13 goals upon which futures raises will be based.

The deal was approved in a 6-1 vote by the school board Monday night and extends Sanders' employment with the district through June 30, 2024. It goes into effect July 1.

"I can't wait to look back and say, 'Look what we've done in 17 years,' " Sanders said Monday. "Thank you for the opportunity."

Sanders was hired by the district in 2007 and took over as CEO in 2014. Under the new contract, Sanders' annual base salary increases from \$234,639 to \$241,679.

Future salary increases will be tied to how well Sanders meets contract goals, including improving math proficiency from kindergarten through sixth grade, improving school safety and community perceptions of school safety, and adopting a districtwide equity plan.

“I think it’s a challenge (for Sanders) but a good contract for the district,” board member Sue Kerr said.

Future pay raises cannot exceed any caps that would result in the district having to pay pension penalties to the state, according to the contract. Another contract stipulation is Sanders must attain his superintendent certification by spring 2022, although a state law passed in 2017 allows Sanders to helm U46 without a superintendent certification. The board can reimburse Sanders up to \$39,000 for the cost of tuition and coursework.

Board members, including Ward, lauded Sanders’ work as district CEO. Ward, however, said she wouldn’t vote in favor of the new contract unless it was for a shorter duration.

Board member John Devereux said the agreement reached with Sanders recognizes his accomplishments while acknowledging there is more work to be done.

“It’s an ever-changing environment,” board member Phil Costello said. “We’re fortunate enough to have a school district with a lot of great administrators. But we need progress, and we know that there is a lot of room to grow. I think that’s what this set of goals accomplishes.”

U46 hires group to help convert high schools

By: Rafael Guerrero

School District U46 has hired an outside firm to help convert its five high school academies into more rigorous magnet schools.

Magnet Schools of America will be paid \$45,000 over two years to assist the district in rewriting academy curriculum and course offerings under a deal approved last week by the District U46 board.

The contract calls for the nonprofit organization to conduct workshops, evaluate the existing academies, conduct site visits and provide assistance communicating with the public as the district makes the switch from a traditional high school structure to one in which students choose career pathways and attend academies based on their career goals. The district’s existing academies will become magnet schools.

“The intent of relooking at the academies is to make them magnets, that they truly have a unique curriculum that stands out just for that school and those students,” District U46 CEO Tony Sanders told the board.

Existing academies include one for gifted and talented students at Elgin High School; the visual and performing arts academy at Larkin High School; the science, engineering and technology academy at Bartlett High School; the world languages and international studies academy at Streamwood High School; and the BEACON academy of media and digital arts at South Elgin High School.

Kinasha Brown, district director of educational pathways, told the board the next career expo for eighth-grade students will be held Sept. 11 at the Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates. Parents will be invited to attend the same event on the night of Sept. 10 so they

can learn what their children will be doing. A similar expo was held last year and featured about 90 exhibitors.

The district's goal is to start implementing the new career pathways program in 2021.

---Chicago Tribune---03/06/2019

Illinois scraps controversial PARCC test in favor of shorter exam with new name

By: Kate Thayer



- Fourth-grader Derek Burian practices before taking the Illinois Assessment of Readiness test with teacher Selena Landa at Lakewood Falls Elementary School in Plainfield on Feb. 28, 2019. The Illinois Assessment of Readiness test replaces the controversial PARCC test.

Students in third through eighth grades across the state will begin taking a new standardized test this month, leaving behind the widely panned PARCC test.

Yet this year's new test, called the Illinois Assessment of Readiness or IAR, differs from PARCC only in length; it's about a third shorter, said Jackie Matthews, spokeswoman for the Illinois State Board of Education.

The new name, however, reflects more sweeping changes on the horizon, Matthews said, designed in part to address the many criticisms of PARCC, which stands for Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. The changes include a quicker turnaround on results, a computer adaptive test model customized to each student, more locally created questions and adjustments to how the test is translated for students whose native language is not English. Those changes will be rolled out starting next year through 2022, she said.

"The first year is the first phase of improvements," Matthews said, explaining that local administrators' criticisms were taken into account in designing the new test. "Having a new name allows us to reflect those values."

The PARCC test, designed to assess math and reading skills, launched in 2015 and was met with controversy. School administrators and parents alike complained that the test's long hours took away from instruction time and argued that the test was too difficult. This led to a record number of parents opting to keep their students from taking the test, which produced dismal scores for the state.

Chicago Public Schools threatened to pull out of PARCC testing but relented to avoid losing federal funds. While PARCC was eventually pulled from high schools in favor of an SAT college entrance exam paid for by the state, it remained at the elementary and

middle school levels. In 2016, a group of suburban superintendents from North Shore districts wrote a letter urging the state to stop requiring the test in the lower levels.

Amid the pushback, ISBE officials announced last year that they would address the concerns about PARCC.

Local administrators say they're glad to hear of the forthcoming changes but remain guarded as they await them. And some also reserved judgment on whether the IAR will be a good measurement of state standards, known as Common Core, as well as a useful tool for districts and parents.

"We won't know until we see it," said Glenn Wood, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction in Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202. "We're hoping the test is more aligned to the standards than PARCC."



- Fourth-grade student Amy Mendez, center, practices before taking the Illinois Assessment of Readiness test at Lakewood Falls Elementary School in Plainfield on Feb. 28, 2019.

Most administrators welcome the shorter exam. This year's English Language Arts and Literacy portion of the test will be 2½ hours for third-graders this year, down from three hours and 45 minutes previously, and three hours for all other grades, down from 4½. The math portion will reduce to three hours for all grades, down from four to 4½ hours, according to ISBE. Students do not take the test all at once, and ISBE leaves it up to schools to decide how to break up the test.

"We certainly appreciate that it's shorter," said Paul Goldberg, assistant superintendent of district improvement in Schaumburg-based School District 54. "That's a step in the right direction."

Goldberg said he thought the test could even be shortened further, pointing out that "kids sit one time for the ACT to get into college."

As the state has changed its test over the years, and will continue to update IAR over the next three, it will be difficult for administrators to compare scores from year to year, said Wood in Plainfield. "We hope this IAR will stay around a little bit, so we can do that."

The first year the state administered PARCC, the results were lower than any state test since 2001. At the elementary level, only about a quarter to a third of elementary and middle school students met or exceeded expectations — the terminology used to indicate passing — on the math exams, and 33 to 38 percent passed the language arts portion. High school scores were even lower throughout the state, with even traditionally high-performing districts seeing less than half of their students with passing scores. While scores improved some over the years, school administrators and parents continued to

complain the test wasn't measuring what was being taught in the Common Core curriculum.

One adjustment for students taking the upcoming IAR test could be the move — scheduled for 2021 — to a computer adaptive test, Wood said, which customizes the exam to each student. The test, taken on a computer, adjusts the difficulty of each question to fit the student's progress. If a student answers correctly, the difficulty increases; if the student gives a wrong answer, an easier question follows.

More than 90 percent of schools already administer standardized tests on a computer, rather than the historical bubble fill-ins on paper, Matthews said, and several local administrators said their students also are used to a computer adaptive model for other tests they take throughout the year. To help prepare for the change, ISBE has set out to ensure all schools administer their test via computer by next year, Matthews said, ahead of the move to adaptive testing, and will offer grants to some schools to be able to do so.

Laura Hill, director of assessment and accountability in Elgin-based School District U-46, said the computer adaptive model will be “a better assessment for our students.”

Hill also is looking forward to seeing results more quickly, which ISBE says it is working toward for next year's test.

“Everything has to be really timely for the teacher,” she said. If scores lag, “we can't do anything with the results.”

Hawks rally falls short in 73-65 loss to Hornets

By Seth Hancock

A second half rally fell short as the No. 20 Bartlett boys basketball team saw its season end in a 73-65 loss to No. 13 Hinsdale South in the Glenbard West Regional quarterfinal on Monday, Feb. 25.

A tough start saw the Hawks fall behind 17 after one quarter and 22 by halftime, their deficit reaching as high as 24 after the start of the second half. In that half, however, Bartlett clawed its way back to as close as six points.

The first quarter ultimately did in Bartlett as its defense allowed six of Hinsdale South's 12 three-pointers in falling behind 24-7.

"We've had a rough season," said Bartlett coach Jim Wolfsmith. "We unfortunately have had a bunch of games this season like this where we just have a

span of three, four minutes where we really struggle. That first quarter, we didn't defend the way we were supposed to."

After Hinsdale South made it 47-23 to start the third quarter, the Hawks began their comeback which was started by sophomore Clark Lewis (10 points) who scored seven points, including one of his two treys, during a 9-0 run to pull to 47-32. Still, Bartlett pulled no closer than 13 in the frame and trailed 60-43 entering the fourth.

In the final period senior Austin Gates (14 points, two threes) scored seven points, senior Jack Stuenkel (nine points) hit two of his three treys and senior Nick Mansk (11 points) tallied six points to help the Hawks rally to within single digits with nearly three minutes left to play.

Mansk and sophomore Hayden Angell hit buckets, Stuenkel a three and Gates finished a 9-0 run with a layup to make it 65-57 with 2:54 left to play. Gates added a bucket with 23.2 sec-

onds on the clock making it 71-65, the closet Bartlett came.

"Our heart and energy level has been like that all season long," Wolfsmith said. "We had a few chances to close that gap a little more but missed a few layups, but I'm proud of the way they rallied and made it a game."

Junior Liam Gallagher finished with seven points and senior Garrett Jurina six.

Gates finished his three-year varsity career with over 1,000 points and as the program's all-time leading blocker and in the top five for rebounds and assists. Wolfsmith called him in "a class by himself," but he added the Hawks (8-22 overall) will miss all of their seniors which also includes Nicholas Wolf and Mohamed Abdelhafez.

"I'm really proud of what all six seniors did this year," Wolfsmith said. "They gave a great effort all season long and tonight they could have hung their heads down by 22 at halftime but they kept fighting till the end."



Austin Gates firing off a jump shot for the Hawks over the Hornets' Robert Durkin.



Bartlett's Alec Pallela working along the baseline in an effort to get off a shot between Hinsdale South's James Ruzika, left, and Patrick Savage.



Bartlett's Hayden Angell having a drive on the Hinsdale South hoop disrupted by the Hornets' Daeshawn Amy.



After a scramble for the ball near mid court, the Hawks' Nick Mansk secured the basketball and began to dribble away from Hinsdale South's Billy Durkin.
(Examiner photos by Bruce Leighty)

Storm top Cary-Grove to win regional crown

By Seth Hancock

The South Elgin boys basketball team came through in the clutch twice to capture the program's first regional title since 2014, and it came on its home court after a 66-60 victory over top-seeded Cary-Grove in the South Elgin Regional finals on Friday, March 1.

The Storm, seeded third in their sub-sectional and now 24-8 overall, will seek the program's first sectional title starting with a fellow sub-sectional third seed Harlem (20-11) in the Rockford Sectional at Rock Valley College.

"It's the best feeling in the world," said Vincent Miskiewicz who tallied 18 points, six rebounds and four blocks. "From the hard work on Day 1 to the long nights of practice, we really wanted this. We just had to play defense, rebound and stick together and we did that."

Outside of a 7-0 deficit at the start, South Elgin led the rest of the night leading by as much as 12 points in the first half and 34-27 at the break.

Cary-Grove, who beat South Elgin 70-62 earlier this season, didn't go away quietly making several runs in the second half, but the Storm kept answering.

The Storm lead eventually closed to 51-50 when Drake Montgomery (27 points) hit a big three-pointer and drew a foul. After completing the four-

point play, the lead was 55-50 with 3:01 left to play.

"We just kept cool," Montgomery said. "We knew they would have their runs, but we kept our composure."

Lane McVicar (seven points) hit a big trey for a 58-53 lead moments later, and Miskiewicz had a huge dunk off a rebound from a teammate's missed free-throw for a 61-55 advantage with 1:39 left as South Elgin maintained its lead. Trace Ashby and Jace Warrick both had seven points in the game.

"We've always known how to fight back," said South Elgin coach Brett Johnson. "We did that in this game. The great players on this team stepped up when they had to, and we had younger guys make great plays down the stretch. When you do that, you're going to win games."

The regional semifinals against No. 5 Hampshire played out in much of the same way in a 53-41 South Elgin victory on Wednesday, Feb. 27.

Similarly, the Storm built a double-digit lead in the first half with a 22-11 lead at the break but saw it shrink to one, 29-28, with 2:11 left in the third quarter. South Elgin answered with a 16-3 run, Miskiewicz (19 points, 12 rebounds, five blocks, four assists) and Montgomery (15 points) each scoring six points, for a 45-31 lead with 3:30 left in the game.

"We knew we needed to make a run right there," Montgomery said. "We needed to step up."

The play of the Storm run came when Miskiewicz made a dive near mid-court to tip the ball up to Ashby (six points) under the basket who in turn

made it 43-31 with 4:29 on the clock.

"I love helping my team win whatever way I can," Miskiewicz said. "Whether it's a rebound, an assist, scoring anything to help my team."

McVicar added eight points in the effort.



Vince Miskiewicz slamming home two points for the Storm in converting a lob pass from a teammate against Hampshire.



The celebration was on as students, players and fans crowded onto the floor around the just earned regional championship plaque, won by the Storm moments earlier over Cary-Grove.



Doing what he did frequently during regional play, South Elgin's Drake Montgomery driving on the opponent's basket, here against Hampshire and the Whip-purs' Logan Thompson. Montgomery also posted a game-high 27 points for the Storm in their regional title-clinching win over Cary-Grove.



South Elgin's Lane McVicar waiting for air traffic to clear in the form of Hampshire's Logan Thompson before putting up a shot.



After driving the baseline, Jace Warrick attempted to score for the Storm against Cary-Grove. (Examiner photos by Bruce Leighty)

North Stars win three to take East Regional title



North's Billy Durocher directing a pass to a teammate in the corner past Elgin's Jeffery Lomax.



The North Stars' Tyler Czerniak releasing a jump shot over the Maroons' Cameron Muller.

By Seth Hancock

The boys basketball postseason represents a clean slate, and North proved that in capturing the East Regional title for the North Stars first since 2009.

Entering with a losing record and opening with a play-in game, the No. 6 North Stars won three straight culminating with a 48-39 victory over No. 7 Huntley in the finals on Friday, March 1.

The second quarter proved to be the key frame for the North Stars. After falling behind 10-2 early five minutes into the game, North outscored Huntley 26-4 the rest of the first half for a 28-14 lead at the break.

Down 12-9 entering the second quarter, North

scored the first 14 points of the frame to take the lead for good as Lucas Heflen (12 points, seven rebounds) hit three from behind the arc and Colin Nelson added a trey during the run.

"It was a huge catch-up," Heflen said. "We were down 10-2 to start, but everyone started hitting shots and the whole momentum just totally changed."

Huntley pulled no closer than eight points in the second half, and the North Stars led 37-26 entering the final period.

Luke Scheffers (11 points), Tyler Czerniak (10 points, four assists) and Connor Linke (16 rebounds, seven points, six blocks) all contributed as North improved to 14-17 overall to advance to the Rockford Sectional at Rock Valley College where it faces Rockford East (31-2), the top-seed in its sub-sectional.

"People doubted us all year," Czerniak said. "To be a team under .500 and to win the regional, we believed in ourselves."

"So many people doubted us," said North coach Tom Poulin. "They've had so many bumps in the road. Now, they can

call themselves champions."

In the quarterfinals, the North Stars bounced back from a 20-10 deficit after one quarter to defeat No. 11 Elgin 64-57 on Monday, Feb. 25. Heflen (20 points), Scheffers (10 points), Nelson (nine points, three treys), Linke (nine points), Christian Czerniak (seven points) and Tyler Czerniak (five points) led the effort.

In the semifinals, North upset No. 4 Dundee-Crown in a 42-30 victory on Wednesday, Feb. 27. Linke (14 points, seven rebounds), Heflen (12 points), Scheffers (nine points) and Thomas Kellen (seven rebounds) led the effort.

The North Stars trailed 12-10 after one quarter but buckled down on defense allowing seven, five and six points respectively in the final three periods. North led 22-19 at halftime and 29-24 entering the fourth.

"We felt like we could keep them under 40," Poulin said. "I thought we did a nice job. We tried to identify their players and how we needed to guard them. Everybody came out and tried to win the current possession on both ends."



North's Lucas Heflin firing off a shot during the North Stars Friday, March 1 regional title clinching win over Huntley.
(Examiner photos by Bruce Leighty)



Luke Scheffers of the North Stars driving along the baseline and on Elgin's Cameron Muller.

Cary-Grove tops Sabres in regional semifinals



Streamwood's Jakobi Strong working in close to the Cary-Grove basket in an effort to score for the Sabres.

By Seth Hancock

The No. 8 Streamwood boys basketball team saw its season ended in the South Elgin Regional semifinals after a 63-43 loss to No. 1 Cary-Grove on Tuesday, Feb. 26.

The Sabres saw the game slip away in the second quarter as a three-point deficit grew to 33-21 by halftime. Senior Keenon Cole, a Northern Illinois recruit, scored nine of his team-high 19 points in the third quarter and sophomore Jakobi Strong had a steal and layup as Streamwood rallied to 41-35 with just under three minutes left in the frame, but the Sabres came no closer.

Cary-Grove responded with a 10-0 run for a 51-35 lead less than a minute into the fourth quarter, and the Sabres trailed by double digits the rest of the night.

"They outplayed us and did whatever they wanted offensively," said Streamwood coach Kent Payne. "We just didn't play well tonight."

Senior Nikola Sinik added nine points, all from behind the arc, and Nick Droll eight for the Sabres.

Streamwood ends the season 13-19 overall and will also lose senior Brandon Christopher. The Sabres saw some potential from its youth as Payne pulled up several underclassmen midway through the season.

"We had some times where we were really good, really competitive against some solid teams," Payne said. "Those young kids are a joy to coach, and they really gave us a spark when we brought them up."

In the regional quarterfinals, the Sabres advanced with a 74-70 victory over No. 10 Jacobs on Monday, Feb. 25.

Cole (33 points, 10 rebounds) was consistent all night, sophomore Zach Marquez contributed 16 points and Sinik scored nine of his 15 points in the final period to help Streamwood hold on in the back and forth game. Strong had six points.

"I knew that if I scored inside, dominated inside, it would be a good game for us," Cole said.

"I didn't have that big of a first half," Sinik said. "I knew I needed to step up in the second half for us to win this game."



Zach Marquez driving through the paint for the Sabres against Cary-Grove.



Keenon Cole slamming down two points for the Sabres against Cary-Grove as the two teams battled in South Elgin Regional action on Tuesday, Feb. 26.



Streamwood's Nick Droll securing an offensive rebound in a battle with Cary-Grove's Addison West.

(Examiner photos by Bruce Leighty)