

## Press Clippings 12/7/2017

---Daily Herald--- 12/7/17

### **U-46 students discuss how to improve school culture**

**BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY**



Elgin Area School District U-46 CEO Tony Sanders talks to roughly 200 high school students Wednesday during the second districtwide Student Summit at Elgin Community College. *Brian Hill | Staff Photographer*

Roughly 200 high school students from Elgin Area School District U-46 shared ideas Wednesday about improving school culture during the second districtwide Student Summit at Elgin Community College.

Forty students from each of five high schools and 10 students from the alternative DREAM Academy discussed various topics and how the outside world influences school life, extracurricular activities and school culture.

The summit offers students a platform to be heard and have honest communications with peers, said Casey Pearce, a Bartlett High School senior who organized the summit and serves as student adviser for the U-46 school board

"It gives them a voice," she said. "(Administrators) are looking for our opinions. They want to hear us."

Ideas students shared during last year's summit, such as having more assemblies, playing music over the public address system in hallways between class periods to elevate the mood, and promoting extracurricular activities and participation in clubs through incentives, are being implemented more widely this year.

"There's a lot of things that we learned," said Pearce, adding, she hopes having the conversation earlier in the school year will allow ideas to be implemented this spring. "This year we are focusing very heavily on relationships." That includes peer-to-peer interactions, as well as relationships among students, teachers, administrators and parents, she added.

"We are generally trying to create a better environment for people and relationships are a huge part of that," she said. "We are trying to make school a more fun place, just more

enjoyable ... it would get kids more motivated to be a part of their education. There is a lot of pressure here."

At one table, students discussed how they could earn "hero points" for being on time for classes, good attendance, grades and participation in exchange for perks such as parking passes, prom tickets, and leaving campus at lunchtime. It's an underutilized benefit, said Emily Renteria, a senior at Larkin High School in Elgin.

Renteria said the summit opened her eyes to how other schools deal with issues. She learned how Bartlett High's principal reaches out to students and parents to improve communication. "The perspective others have of (our) schools is shifting to something more positive."

She said Larkin has implemented an initiative borrowed from Streamwood High School after learning about it during last year's summit. Student council members started a buddy system to interact with students with disabilities to promoting inclusiveness.

Following Wednesday's summit, district administrators will review students' notes. Principals will regroup with their students to discuss what can be implemented at their schools.

"They are really talking about how can we improve school culture," U-46 CEO Tony Sanders said. "This is the power of student leadership at its best."

---Daily Herald--- 12/7/17

## U-46 launches new website, talk tool

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY



**Elgin Area School District U-46 has launched a new website at [u-46.org](http://u-46.org).** *Courtesy of elgin area school district u-46*

Elgin Area School District U-46 has launched a new [website](http://u-46.org) for the district and individual schools with a customer service tool to better engage with audiences across multiple devices.

Sporting a sleek, modern design, the website features more multimedia elements, easier navigation, and a responsive design allowing pages to display better on smaller screens such as smartphones or tablets.

"A school's website is one of the primary ways parents and families stay connected to their child's school," U-46 CEO Tony Sanders said. "In the mobile age, U-46 had to have a website that works and looks just as good on a cellular phone as on a desktop."

School and district pages include global icons allowing schools to spotlight in-demand information.

Icons can be used to view lunch menus, access the Infinite Campus parent portal, and get information on bus routes and suggestions on how to get more involved.

The district also has launched ["Let's Talk!"](#) an online customer service tool the school board approved in June. It is available for several departments: Human Resources, Business Services, School and Community Relations, Food and Nutrition Services, Student Registration, and School Safety and Culture.

Anyone can submit questions and comments, which will be routed to appropriate team members who will receive automatic notifications and reminders.

"Let's Talk!" provides a dashboard and reporting options to allow the district to measure the timeliness and satisfaction of staff responses from each department.

Next spring, the district will add remaining instructional and operational departments to "Let's Talk!" and extend the customer service tool to all schools during the 2018-19 school year.

Officials said the website and talk tool will help gather feedback about critical issues, provide increased accountability and build stronger relationships with the district's 11 communities.

"We have long aimed to be responsive and transparent, but this customer service tool really helps us track and improve on those efforts," Sanders said. "We're excited to see how 'Let's Talk!' can help us improve our relationships with our employees, parents, students and community members."

---Courier News--- 12/7/17

## **U46 approves \$273M tax levy, small tax increase for most homeowners**

**BY RAFAEL GUERRERO**

School District U46 board members have approved a 2017 tax levy that's about 3 percent higher than last year and will result in a small tax increase for most property owners.

The \$272.8 million levy was approved at Monday's school board meeting, and will provide more than half of the money needed for the district's operating budget of more than \$500 million.

According to the tax levy certificate, close to \$164 million collected from property taxes will be allocated for educational purposes, more than \$34 million for operations and maintenance, about \$33 million for special education, and \$17 million for transportation purposes, among others.

For the owner of an average home on the Kane County side of Elgin, the U46 portion of their property tax bill will increase about \$45, according to a district analysis. The district also includes portions of Cook and DuPage counties.

Board members said they were not happy about increasing the levy, but as member Sue Kerr noted, the district is still trying to restore programs and initiatives that had been lost in previous budget cuts needed a decade ago.

Board member Melissa Owens went further, saying the district was still playing catch up back to early 2000s cuts. She recalled how her stepson was able to play football in middle school and kindergarten students once had art and music programs.

"Our families and students are asking us for services that we should be giving," Owens said.

U46 still lags behind the state average in per-student spending, some board members notes. According to state report card data, U46 spent about \$1,000 less per student in instruction than the state average in 2016.

Board members Jeanette Ward and Phil Costello voted against the tax levy increase.

Costello said he doubted that the increase would balance the budget given that the district plans for about \$518 million in expenditures but will take in only \$509 million in revenue.

Ward said she believes tax increases are part of the reason for declining enrollment in U46.

"As I've said previously, in light of forecasted enrollment declines of two percent per year over the next three years, I disagree with increasing total spending, on which this levy relies," she said.

Owens countered Ward's argument. "So we shouldn't fight for the people who are actually moving in?"

The board must file the levy with Cook, Kane and DuPage counties by the last Tuesday in December.

---Kane County Connects---12/7/17

## Is your daughters/son an Illinois State Scholar? Here's the list of students from Kane County



The **Illinois Student Assistance Commission** has announced the names of the 2018-19 Illinois State Scholars — and more than 1,300 students from Kane County have made the list.

These outstanding honorees represent some of Illinois' best and brightest, and join the other top Illinois high school students honored with the prestigious designation since it was introduced in 1958.

The 2018-19 Illinois State Scholars rank in approximately the top 10 percent of high school seniors from 737 high schools across the state. Honorees are chosen based on a combination of exemplary ACT or SAT test scores and sixth semester class rank.

"On behalf of ISAC, I congratulate all of this year's State Scholars for their exceptional work and wish them much success in their future endeavors," said Eric Zarnikow, ISAC executive director.

"Thank you also to the teachers, parents, coaches and other mentors who support our students, inspire them, and help them navigate a path to college. You make a tremendous difference not only in our students' lives, but in improving economic prosperity and building a bright future for our state."

While the State Scholar recognition does not include a monetary award, honorees will receive a congratulatory letter from ISAC and personalized Certificates of Achievement.

This year, State Scholars can also receive a digital Illinois State Scholar badge, which can be displayed on their online profiles and social media accounts, and shared with high school counselors, prospective colleges, employers, family members and others. Current State Scholars are also listed on the ISAC website.

All students, including State Scholars, who plan to be enrolled in college next fall are urged to complete their 2018-19 **Free Application for Federal Student Aid** as soon as possible in order to determine eligibility for federal and state financial aid. ISAC offers **free financial aid and college access events** to assist students and families with the college-going process.

Students can also visit the **ISAC Student Portal** for college planning, financial aid and financial literacy information and free tools, as well as information on how to contact the **ISACorps**, a group of recent college graduates who act as near-peer mentors, for one-on-one assistance and mentoring.

Students can also get answers to their college-going and financial aid questions sent directly to their phones by signing up for **ISAC College Q&A**, ISAC's free text messaging service. Visit the ISAC Student Portal for more information at [www.isac.org/studentportal](http://www.isac.org/studentportal).

**Want to See To See Who Made The List From Your Hometown?**

**Congratulations 2018-19  
State Scholars!**



**Celebrate your honor by  
claiming your digital  
badge.**

## Kane County State Scholars 2018-19

<b>Elgin High School</b>	<b>Cont. Elgin High School</b>	<b>South Elgin High School</b>	<b>Cont. South Elgin High School</b>
Aquino, Mikaela Ayala, Nicolas Basa, Reave Benshoof, Kyle Brock, Ava Campagna, Antonio D'Souza, Danielle Dang, Minh-Thu Desai, Simran Dimas, Andres Downing, Makenna Du, Christina Ducay, Rebecca Fortmann, John Garcia, Heber Graves, Kylie Guerrero, Valeria Guizar, Pedro Henderson, Lauren Ireland, Katherine Jaimes, Yasely Johnson, Michael Kalariya, Dhruvi Kandasamy, Madhumitha Kasi, Lakshmi Khan, Ayesha Kinsey, Christian Kittila, Meri Levandowski, Nicole Morales, Maria Nato, Christine Nazaruk, Oliwia Nunez, Veronica Patel, Roshan Pettineo, Matthew Pierre-Louis, Gabrielle Pinsel, Benjamin Podlasinska, Aleksandra Powers, Lauren Prodanovich, Riley Ramirez, Joseph Reutenauer, Sierra	Ridings, Tia Schaefer, Madeline Sentowski, Roman Smithberg, Rex Turner, Sarah Untalan, Raechel Wisniewski, Devin Wong, Kyle Worts, Madison  <b>Larkin High School</b>  Ave, Justin Ariel Bennett, Nicole Cano, Itzel Cardenas, Claudia Castillo- Tristani, Yenashi Desko, Cecilia Frazer, Rebecca Herrera, Kevin Montoya, Bryan Moreno, Samantha Nigliaccio, Emily Rossen, Rebecca Ruiz, Michelle Sommer, Elizabeth Vandyke, Jessica Zamora, Celeste  <b>Streamwood High School</b>  Ayala, Patricia Benitez, America Combs, Derrick Dyskie, Andrew Edemni, Emilio Jose Enno, Sam Exline, Madeline Hurtado, Angel Inchan, Artistaya Marton, Brendon Patel, Harsh Patel, Jheel Patel, Neil Patel, Sunny Perez, Alyssa Reutenauer, Marina Silva, Jose Torralva, Angel Traznik, Kevin Venegas, Yuritzzy	Acharya, Jeevan Baqai, Sameet Bozic, Teodora Brahmabhatt, Kishan Bukantis, Jon Peter Cabaj, Olivia Camacho, Cristian Chan, Patrick Cole, Kyle Coleman, Liam Cowley, Sarah Culver, Ethan Davila, Sarah Do, Brittany Do, Justin Donat, Jake Dux, Madelyn Felker, Anna Formeller, Joseph Gallagher, Emily Gerovac, Mary Haas, Jacob Hartwig, Kimberly Hoppe, Jessica Inorio, Sekiu Karis, Laurel Kenney, Brooke Keough, Cameron Kirby, Sean Kozyra, Patrick Krongauz, Benjamin	Lotta, Marie Lusco, Sydney Markel, Jared Mastrangeli, Kaitlyn Matustik, Nicole Michels, Kylyn Miller, Emma Montalbano, Julie Nguyen, Serena Nguyen, Vivian Niziolek, Frank Peskuski, Jacob Portugal, Alexa Pray, Taylor Ramasharma, Kavya Reeser, Lucas Romanowski, Alan Ruhlin, Elizabeth Rundio, Carl Rzeppa, Cadie Schill, Kristen Schultz, Matthew Sigler, Allison Smith, Emily Swanson, Rileigh Tolva, Brady Valencia, Miguel Vo, Kathy Wehrwein, William Wells, Jaron Winters, Emily Ziemba, Emily

## **SPORTS SECTION**

---Daily Herald--- 12/7/17

### **St. Charles North gets past Bartlett**

BY SCOTT MILLER

St. Charles North boys basketball coach Tom Poulin will be the first to admit his team didn't do a lot of things particularly well on Wednesday night.

However, good teams find a way to win even when they are having an off night. That's exactly what the North Stars managed to do as they did some things just well enough to pull out a 49-45 victory at Bartlett in Upstate Eight Conference crossover action.

Kyle King and Cade Callaghan each had 13 points to lead North.

"I wasn't real happy with the way we played," Poulin said. "We didn't execute our plays very well. Our shooting was off and on defense we let them into the lane too many times. But we still gutted out a gritty win at a tough place to play."

The game see-sawed back and forth with 5 lead changes and 3 ties. It was tied 34-34 with 4:10 left to play when Lucas Heflen drained a 3-pointer to put North on top for good 37-34. Heflen usually comes off the bench, but made the most out of a starting opportunity.

"Every time he's in the game he makes a positive impact in multiple ways," Poulin said. "He's just a true teammate that's going to do whatever it takes to help the team win. That was a big shot for us."

Callaghan and Erik Larson followed with baskets and the North Stars made 8 of 13 free throws down the stretch to help maintain the lead.

"We've been in some close games already this season," Poulin said. "So they know what they need to do in tight situations. We made a couple shots down the stretch and couple a couple defensive stops when we needed them."

Callaghan scored 7 of his points in the fourth quarter, including a bucket in the post and 3 clutch free throws down in the final minutes to help the North Stars (4-2) seal the deal.

"We knew we were going to be in a battle all night," Callaghan said. "But we continue to battle through and respond in those situations."

Bartlett was without its top scorer Ben Tompson, who is nursing an ankle injury.

The Hawks (2-5) came out strong with a 9-2 run to start the game. However, the Hawks shot just 2 of 14 from the field the rest of the first half and fell behind 20-15 by halftime. They briefly recovered at the start of the third to regain a 21-20 advantage on a transition layup by Byron Price and again led for the last time 23-22 with 3:50 left in the third quarter on a jumper by Austin Gates.



After relinquishing the lead the Hawks played catch up the rest of the way, managing to pull even at 30 and 34. A Gates 3 with 14 seconds left had the Hawks within 47-45. After a North free throw the Hawks had a chance to tie, but turned the ball over.

"It came down to some sloppy play in the first half that cost us a chance to build on our fast start," Bartlett coach Jim Wolfsmith said. " Then in the fourth quarter the difference was they were able to hold the lead or at least not give it up. We'd keep coming back and every time they had an answer."

Gates had 15 points to lead Bartlett in scoring. Tomas Vikonis added 12 points and Price finished with 11.