

## Press Clippings 8/10/2018

---Daily Herald--- 8/10/18

### **New school year opens Aug. 15 for Elgin Area School District U-46**

SUBMITTED BY ELGIN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT U-46



Elgin Area School District U-46, home to one of the largest dual language programs in the U.S., begins its new school year on Wednesday, Aug. 15. *Daily Herald File Photo*

Classes resume Wednesday, Aug. 15, for more than 39,000 kindergartners through 12th-graders across Elgin Area School District U-46.

The school year promises continued innovation and excellence, including the district's universal play-based full-day kindergarten program, the addition of guidance counselors to middle school, and, at the high school level, an upgraded math curriculum and the expansion of its award-winning Dual Language program.

"Staff members across the district have spent the summer preparing our buildings, classrooms, curriculum, and resources for the 2018-19 school year," said U-46 CEO Tony Sanders. "We are excited to welcome back our students on Aug. 15 for another year of learning and growth."

The district will distribute more than 13,000 Chromebooks to middle and high school students in August. This board-approved technology purchase will bring our high schools to 1:1 as each ninth through twelfth grader will be issued a dedicated Chromebook to use throughout the school year. In addition, all middle school students enrolled in an Algebra 1, Algebra 2, or Geometry course will be issued a Chromebook to support their learning as part of the district's updated math curriculum and move to an online platform in fall 2018.

The district's Dual Language program, which moved up to eighth grade last year, will now be available to freshmen at all of the district's five comprehensive high schools. The plan is to add a grade in each of the subsequent years, maintaining U-46 as home to one of the largest Dual Language programs in the United States. More than 10,000 U-46 students are on their way to becoming bilingual and biliterate, better ready to build careers in a global society.

U-46 also will continue its partnership with Elgin Community College to offer a full-time dual credit program for seniors. These students, who must demonstrate certain college

readiness benchmark scores for acceptance, take all of their courses at ECC. They earn both high school and college credit for each class. In May, 42 graduating seniors were honored for their participation in this valuable program.

For the first time since the national fiscal crisis-fueled cuts of 2009, the district is restoring middle school guidance counselors to each of the eight middle schools. Additionally, the district will give middle and high school students access to Naviance, a web-based college and career readiness platform, to help them explore their strengths and interests and create a plan for the future.

New this year, students who qualify for bus services will find their bus pickup times and locations posted on the Parent Portal under the "Transportation" tab starting Aug. 10. Families with questions about busing can call the Transportation Department's special "back to school" call center beginning Monday, Aug. 13, at (847) 888-5095.

For the fourth year, U-46 will offer a free career expo for students, but for the first time, it will be offered on a weekday, and eighth-grade students will ride buses with their teachers to the event. "Explore 2018: A Community, Curriculum and Career Expo" is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 12 at a new location, the Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates. It is specifically aimed at educating students about the connection between U-46 middle and high school classes and opportunities that best prepare them for further education and careers following high school graduation.

With the support of Alignment Collaborative for Education and the Citizens' Advisory Council, "Explore 2018" gathers local business and industry leaders to showcase career options, demonstrate skills used in those fields and explain what courses will prepare students to work in a particular area.

As part of the #U46FirstDayReady campaign, U-46 has been urging parents to use the last weeks of summer break to ensure their children meet health-related requirements, including having up-to-date physicals and immunization records. Students starting preschool, kindergarten, sixth, ninth, and 12th grades must show proof of meeting specific health requirements by the first day of school. The policy aims to ensure a healthy environment for all students. The requirements and necessary forms can be found here and within the menu of the Health Services page on the district website at [www.u-46.org](http://www.u-46.org).

The district also strongly urged families to register their children for the new school year via the online "Parent Portal." But for parents and guardians who needed help, U-46 scheduled a variety of walk-in events over the summer at the Educational Services Center, individual school buildings, and for the first time, at the Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin. Families who still need help registering are encouraged to call the school their child will be attending to set up an appointment.

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## **Elgin YMCA preschool to host open house Aug. 11**

SUBMITTED BY DAVE BURISEK

To help nurture and inspire kids to discover their potential, the Taylor Family YMCA is opening a preschool in partnership with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at its former school site at 1111 Van St. in Elgin.

The YMCA's Early Learning Center (Preschool) will offer a full-day program for children, ages 3 and 4, with the school day running from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays to accommodate working parents.

The YMCA is currently in the process of becoming licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

The preschool on Van Street is one half-mile away from the Taylor Family YMCA on McLean Boulevard. It will accommodate up to 60 3- and 4-year olds, and employ about 15 staff members including full-and part time positions.

According to Adia Walker, preschool director for the YMCA's Early Learning Center, "Less than 2,000 of the 6,000 children ages 3 and 4 within the **U-46 boundaries** are being served by public or private preschool classes, so the sooner we can educate and get children learning and developing reading skills, the better off they will be at the higher grade levels."

Registration is currently open for the preschool, with several open house dates available to tour the facility and talk with Walker about the school curriculum.

The remaining open house dates are: 6 to 8 p.m. Thursdays, June 14 and 28 and July 19; 10 a.m. to noon Saturdays, June 23, July 14 and 28, and Aug. 11; 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, July 31; and 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 8.

The week of Aug. 13 children and parents can come see their classroom and drop off their school supplies.

Parents and students are able to meet their teacher on Aug. 15, with the first day of school being Aug. 20. The school year runs until May 31, 2019.

For more information about the Taylor Family YMCA's Early Learning Center, please contact Adia Walker, YMCA's Early Learning Center Director, at [adiaw@gcfymca.org](mailto:adiaw@gcfymca.org) or call (224) 760-7008. Visit [www.taylorymca.org](http://www.taylorymca.org).

### About the Y

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 22 million men, women and children -- regardless of age, income or background -- to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change.

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## **New school year projects U46 enrollment at 39,000**

Chromebooks, dual-language expansion among the changes planned for 2018-19

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO

Take-home notebook computers, new hires, and dual-language and dual-credit expansions await School District U46 educators and families when classes resume next week.

This week, district officials reported last-minute preparations before the first day of school Wednesday. It is projected that enrollment at the state's second-largest school district will be more than 39,000 students.

Among the biggest changes will be the new devices available to a sizable group of students. The district will distribute more than 13,000 Chromebook computers to middle school and high school students this school year. According to a U46 news release, the distribution of Chromebooks will make U46 a one-device-per-student district at the high school grade levels. One-device-per-student initiatives have grown in popularity over the years both locally and beyond. Neighboring School District 300 completed its Chromebook rollout to all students in first through 12th grades last fall.

All middle school students enrolled in an Algebra 1, Algebra 2 or geometry course will be issued a Chromebook this school year as U46's middle school math curriculum shifts more coursework online.

Both Chromebook purchases were approved by U46 board members earlier in this year. Each Chromebook costs about \$340, the district said.

District human resources officials said as of Monday there were still 42 teaching positions to be filled. Melanie Meidel, U46's assistant superintendent of human resources, said the vacancies were in general education, bilingual education and special education. The number of vacancies is down from the 102 reported at the start of the summer break and is expected to drop with pending job offers in place for some of the 42 positions, she added.

Josh Carpenter, the district's assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, told board members Monday that the district already welcomed more than 150 new staff members at a recent new teacher orientation.

Bus drivers are needed at U46, with help-wanted signs still posted on the fencing at the U46 bus depot.

The district's dual-language program expands into the high schools this fall for the first time. The expansion will begin in freshman-year classes and will continue to expand into the higher grade levels over the next few years. The program is already in use at the U46 elementary and middle schools.

Elgin Community College and U46 will continue a dual-credit partnership that was piloted last school year. This spring, 42 U46 graduating students received recognition for being the district's first high schoolers to complete the yearlong program, which

allowed them to complete their high school graduation requirements while earning college credits simultaneously by taking ECC courses.

U46 officials have previously said they plan to keep the number of students in the program level with last school year.

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## **After restoring bids, U46 hires Advanced Disposal**

Five-year contract for waste, recycling worth just under \$1.2 million

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO



Advanced Disposal Services will replace Waste Management as the trash and recycling removal company for School District U46. (Advanced Disposal)

School District U46 will have a provider of waste and recycling services in place for the first day of school.

Late last month, U46 board members directed administrators to rescore the bidding process among three finalists after discrepancies were found. The decision prompted officials to quickly rescore the bids in order to have a provider by the start of the school year.

Board members on Monday unanimously approved Advanced Disposal Services to replace Waste Management as the district's provider of waste and recycling services. The five-year contract is worth just under \$1.2 million, or about \$234,000 annually.

The rescoring placed Advanced Disposal ahead of Groot Industries Inc., whose bid was for about \$245,000 annually. The original proposal presented in July was for Groot to receive the contract after the bids were evaluated. However, board members and others noted the scoring unfairly hurt Advanced Disposal's proposal. They noted Advanced Disposal was able to have more of its references submit evaluations to U46 than Groot, but Groot's score was higher from its references.

Contract bids were evaluated on a basis of cost, reference feedback and customer service, according to the rubric used by district officials.

Waste Management was among the three finalists, but it ranked third in the ranking system the district used. U46 officials last month said they had not been satisfied with the company's work when it came to billing and pickup issues.

## SPORTS SECTION

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### Coming up

Joliet West's loss is Larkin's gain with dad coaching, son set to start at quarterback

BY PAUL JOHNSON



Jaxon Aubry gets flushed out of the pocket by Lincoln-Way East's Devin O'Rourke while playing for Joliet West last season. (Allen Cunningham/Daily Southtown )

It was a chance meeting in March at a physical education conference.

Little did Jesus Gonzalez know he would wind up being the new head coach at **Larkin**.

Little did Jason Aubry — the head coach at Joliet West since 2010, when Joliet Township split into separate athletic programs — know he would end up being Gonzalez's offensive coordinator. And that Aubry would coach his son Jaxon, a senior.

But that's how it played out as practice for the 2018 season started Monday across the state.

"That was kind of a crazy situation," Jason Aubry said. "We're just hanging out at a PE convention. We get introduced by a mutual friend (South Elgin coach Dragan Teonic). We just hung out and talked ball all day. It was a great day.

"When (Gonzalez) had the opportunity to get the head job here, he knew I was around. He gave me a call the next day and said he'd like to try to get things going here. It all just kind of happened."

After Aubry resigned at Joliet West, his family sold its house and was staying at his in-law's house in Dwight. The dream of coaching Jaxon all four years of high school was in limbo.

That all changed when Gonzalez called. Jason Aubry accepted the position as offensive coordinator before he even had a teaching job. That fell into place next, and the Aubry family had a new destination.

"I knew I was going to coach up here," Aubry said. "I wanted to coach with 'Zeus.' This is a great opportunity.

“We just moved up here and said, ‘Listen, this is what we’re going to do.’ We were able to get the kids registered and get up here for the last week of summer camp. At least (Jaxon) was able to build some relationships and talk to the guys.”

Jaxon Aubry, a three-year starter at Joliet West, has had a crash course in getting to know his new team. The downtime between summer camp and Monday’s start of practice was crucial as he took the reins of the offense.

“I built a lot of fast relationships with a lot of the players already,” Jaxon Aubry said. “The main thing I have as an advantage over a lot of people is I’ve started on varsity since I was a freshman.

“I can use that and show people how varsity football is, especially the young guys coming up.”

Gonzalez, who was promoted to the top job last month, said the transition of taking over as head coach with Jason Aubry installing his offense has gone smoothly.

“He’s been a huge asset, not only for his knowledge, but he gets along really well with the kids,” Gonzalez said of Jason Aubry. “Jason has bought in. He’s all-in for this team right now. He’s all-in for Larkin football. It’s great.”

Jason Aubry said he didn’t coach Jaxon in Little League baseball or Pop Warner football. He had his eyes set on coaching him in high school.

Thanks to this opportunity, he gets to finish off that dream.

“It’s what we’ve wanted to do,” Jason Aubry said. “Whenever you raise your kids and you’re a coach, it’s a dream to be able to coach them. Being able to do this and ‘Zeus’ giving me this opportunity, it’s incredible.

“We’re very blessed, and we’re very excited about being here.”