

Press Clippings 8/15/2018

---Daily Herald--- 8/15/18

U-46 students return today

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY



Parent Agnes Wojtach helps create a "Welcome Back" message in chalk at the front entrance to Centennial Elementary School in Bartlett on Tuesday evening. Students begin classes Wednesday. *Joe Lewnard | Staff Photographer*

More than 39,000 **Elgin Area School District U-46** students are gearing up for the start of the school year Wednesday.

Among them are students, families, teachers and employees of Centennial Elementary School in Bartlett who finished chalking the front entrance and sidewalks of the school Tuesday with inspirational and welcoming quotes and pictures. The artwork is tied to the school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and Kindness Campaign. The school also is installing buddy benches in its playground as part of that campaign.

Local artist Michelle Fitzsimmons, owner of ArtBar 39, and her fellow artists also volunteered their time to paint quotes about kindness and positive self-esteem in every bathroom of the school.

This year, the district is adding guidance counselors at its eight middle schools, and an upgraded mathematics curriculum and expansion of the dual language program to its five high schools.

Officials will distribute more than 13,000 Chromebooks to middle and high school students. Students in ninth through 12th grades will be issued a dedicated Chromebook to use throughout the school year. Middle school students enrolled in an Algebra 1, Algebra 2, or Geometry courses will be issued a Chromebook as part of the updated math curriculum and move to an online platform.

The dual language program, which expanded to eighth grade last year, will be available to high school freshmen this year. Officials plan to expand the program by adding a grade each of the following years. More than 10,000 U-46 students will be taught in dual language classrooms districtwide this school year.

Middle and high school students also will have access to Naviance, a web-based college and career readiness platform, to explore their strengths and interests and create a plan for future careers.

U-46 again will offer a free career expo for eighth-graders this year. For the first time, it will be on a weekday -- Wednesday, Sept. 12 at the Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates.

---Daily Herald--- 8/15/18

New administrators, principals take the helm in U-46

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

Elgin Area School District U-46 has hired several new administrators and promoted employees from within to leadership roles for this school year.

Those appointed are filling vacancies due to retirements, resignations or other opportunities within the district.

Among them is Josh Carpenter, who joined the district as assistant superintendent for teaching and learning in February. Carpenter was executive director of student growth and accountability for Elk Grove Township District 59 where he served as director of the math and talent development program. He previously was principal and assistant principal in Palatine Township District 15 and Lincolnshire-Prairie View School District 103, respectively. He began his career as a junior high language arts and history teacher in District 15.

Lela Majstorovic is U-46's new assistant superintendent for secondary schools instruction and equity. She previously served as a network chief of schools for Chicago Public Schools overseeing 44 schools and principals, more than 2,600 teachers and more than 34,000 students. She also worked as a CPS instructional leader, assistant deputy chief of schools, and assistant principal at William Rainey Harper High School in Chicago. She began her career as an English teacher at Englewood Technical Preparatory Academy.

Kinasha Brown is U-46's new director of educational pathways after serving since 2014 as the district's coordinator of career and technical education.

Elena Hildreth is the new director of food and nutrition services. She has led and managed the federal school breakfast and lunch programs through contractors working with K-12 school districts for more than 25 years. She previously served as a district manager for Lombard-based Quest Food Management Services where she oversaw more than 20 school district contracts.

U-46 also welcomes three new principals -- Krystal Bush at the Dream Academy alternative school, Dustin Covarrubias at Willard Elementary School in South Elgin, and John Signatur at Bartlett Elementary School.

Bush previously worked as associate principal of South Elgin High School, assistant principal at Liberty Elementary School in Bartlett, and dean of students at Streamwood High School. Covarrubias served as assistant principal of Huff Elementary School in Elgin, and was an instructor for 10 years at Tefft Middle School in Streamwood, where

he taught social studies, Project Lead the Way, health and physical education. Signatur was principal of Hodgkins Elementary School in District 105 in Hodgkins, where he previously was an elementary teacher.

---Courier News--- 8/15/18

District U46 starts year with 4 new administrator

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO

School District U46 is opening the school year with new faces in four administrative posts.

Josh Carpenter begins his first full school year at U46 as the district's assistant superintendent of teaching and learning, a district news release said.

Carpenter assumed the position in February, having previously worked as the executive director of student growth and accountability for Community Consolidated School District 59, a K-8 district based in Arlington Heights.

Carpenter also has been a principal and assistant principal at Palatine-based Community Consolidated School District 15 and Lincolnshire-Prairie View School District 103.

He began his career as a junior high language arts and history teacher in Palatine, the release said.

Lela Majstorovic, a former Chicago Public Schools administrator, is the district's new assistant superintendent for secondary schools instruction and equity.

Majstorovic served as Chicago's network chief of schools last school year and was the deputy chief of schools for CPS from 2015 to 2017, the release said.

She's also been an instructional leader, an assistant deputy chief of schools and an assistant principal at William Rainey Harper High School in Chicago. She began her career as an English teacher in 2006 at Englewood Technical Preparatory Academy, the release said.

Kinasha Brown, U46's career and technical education coordinator since 2014, will be the new director of educational pathways, the release said.

She also served as a leader for the Northern Kane County Regional Vocational System, working closely with neighboring districts — School District 300, Central District 301 and St. Charles District 303 — to maintain funding and meeting regional labor market demands, the release said.

From 2006 to 2014, Brown was an associate professor and health professions program director at South Suburban College in south suburban South Holland.

Elena Hildreth will take over as U46's food and nutrition services director, the release said.

She comes from Lombard-based Quest Food Management Services, where she oversaw operations for more than 20 school district lunch contracts as its district manager.

According to the district, Hildreth has more than 25 years of experience leading and managing federal breakfast and lunch programs.

Three U46 schools will also have new leaders beginning this school year.

Krystal Bush is the new principal at the DREAM Academy in Elgin; Dustin Covarrubias takes over as the principal of Willard Elementary School in Elgin; and John Signatur is the new principal of Bartlett Elementary.

The new school year begins Wednesday.

---Courier News--- 8/15/18

Five things to know about new charter

Elgin Math and Science Academy to open Wednesday

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO

After years of uncertainty, planning and organization, the new Elgin Math and Science Academy makes its debut Wednesday.

The school's 208 students will meet their classmates, be introduced to their teachers and learn their way around at the Neil Building, the onetime centerpiece of the former Fox River Country Day School that's home to Elgin's new charter school on Route 25.

"The excitement, the buying into this new school, it's something I've never experienced before," EMSA third-grade teacher Chad Foor said.

Here are five things to know about the school as it begins its first year of operations.

1. First day caps yearslong effort

In 2014, the original proposal for EMSA was denied by the School District U46 board and the Illinois State Charter School Commission.

Elgin Charter School Initiative organizers revived the effort in early 2017, submitting a new proposal to the **U46 board** and winning initial approval in a 6-1 vote.

However, when the two sides could not come to a consensus on a contract hammering out the details, the board rejected the deal and rescinded the initial approval in a 4-3 vote. Board members said they were concerned about the financial plans, transportation issues and where the school would be located.

The group appealed to the State Charter School Commission, which reversed the U46 board decision but also reduced the project in both size and scope. The enrollment was limited to about 200 students in kindergarten through third grade, all of whom would be housed in one building.

U46 is providing 100 percent per-pupil funding for EMSA, about \$10,370 per student.

2. Getting ready for the day-to-day

The chief concern about EMSA was its use of the Neil Building, which closed in 2011 when Fox River Country Day shut down and was being maintained by the city of Elgin, which owned it.

The heat and electricity never had been shut off, city officials said, and its only significant problem had been a burst water pipe several years before charter school officials expressed an interest in it.

With 2,900 square feet, the building has 13 classrooms, two administrative offices, a conference room, an assistant's room and common space. Some State Charter School Commission members loved the building when they toured it last year, and city and school officials said it required only cosmetic repair to open for the 2018-19 school year.

School President Kerry Kelly said repair costs came in below the \$200,000 target, and the only thing still needing completion is the kitchen. That work should be finished next week and won't affect school meals, Kelly said.

3. How students and teaching staff break down

Of the 208 students, 37 percent are Hispanic/Latino, 20 percent are African-American and the rest are either Caucasian or fall into smaller racial groups, according to a survey completed by almost all of the students' families.

That is not the same as the breakdown in U46, where about half of the students are Hispanic/Latino and 6 percent are African-American.

Students will be coming from most of the communities served by U46, including Elgin, South Elgin, Bartlett and Streamwood, Kelly said.

The school will have 24 teachers and administrators; each class will have 26 students, a teacher and a teacher's assistant. Of the teachers hired, 45 percent are white, 30 percent are Hispanic/Latino, 15 percent are African-American, 5 percent are mixed race and 5 percent are Asian, Principal Lezlie Fuhr said. Seventy-five percent are first-generation college graduates, Fuhr said.

About half of the families submitted applications for free and reduced-price lunches, an indication of the students' economic status, Kelly said.

4. School's 'forest' setting reflects its philosophy

Because the school is in an unincorporated area, it is surrounded by nature and animals — something teachers will be taking advantage of, officials said. That's a lure for some parents as well.

"The first time we came here in the spring, we saw three deer here," said Rachel Lance, of Elgin.

Lance said she enrolled her two children at EMSA because of the expeditionary learning philosophy that educators said they would pursue. The approach promotes more hands-on learning, incorporating lessons with real-world scenarios and exploring the outdoors.

The Neil Building's location will allow for near-daily excursions into the surrounding wilderness, third-grade teacher Sarah Hyzy said.

"I am excited and motivated to teach the way I'm supposed to," said Hyzy, who graduated from U46 in 2014.

5. School year slightly longer than at other schools

EMSA's first day of school aligns with that of U46. Neighboring School District 300 started Tuesday.

School days run from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., with the last day of class June 6, about two weeks after U46 ends its 2018-19 year. Kelly said EMSA students will get about 100 more instructional hours than their U46 counterparts.

Students will get 90 minutes every Friday for field training sessions, during which local members of the arts and conservation communities will come in to work with classes.

The Boys and Girls Club of Elgin will provide after-school care on-site during school days. The program will run from the end of the school day to 6:30 p.m. and will cost families \$25 annually.

SPORTS SECTION

---Courier News--- 8/15/18

Boys Basketball: Cole joins NIU's pack

Streamwood senior forward excited about receiving Division I scholarship

BY PAUL JOHNSON



Cole, a 6-foot-7 forward, averaged 16.6 points and 8.3 rebounds in a breakout junior year. (Brian 'Mahoney/Courier-News)

Colleges were gaining interest in **Streamwood** senior Keenon Cole as the summer went along.

Every time he turned around while playing with his AAU team, one school seemed to be there.

That school was Northern Illinois. Cole, a 6-foot-7 forward, gave his verbal commitment to the Huskies over the weekend.

"They were recruiting me the entire summer," Cole said. "They came to all of my AAU games. When I went on my visit there, I scrimmaged with the team, and they were great to me.

"I felt like they can make me be the great college basketball player I know I can be. It's a great fit. I think they'll develop my game."

Any college commitment is exciting for the school and the program. One as improbable as Cole's brings the excitement to another level.

Cole didn't play basketball until he was in eighth grade. He missed his entire freshman season with an injury. He's essentially had two varsity seasons and his AAU work over those summers to develop into a Division I prospect.

"It's amazing to me that he was able to progress that quickly for schools to put him on their radar," former Streamwood coach Paul Kowalyszyn said. "I'm proud of him."

Even Cole is surprised he's making a decision like this heading into his senior year.

“I never thought I’d be in this position, getting a Division I scholarship,” Cole said. “For us, it’s really big. I’m the first in my family to have a scholarship and be able to go to college for sports.”

Cole’s breakout junior year started to get him attention in recruiting circles. Cole averaged 16.6 points and 8.3 rebounds for the Sabres, emerging as one of the Elgin area’s best players seemingly out of nowhere.

Once he realized he could compete at the national level in AAU, he thought he belonged among the elite players in Illinois.

“I know that’s been instrumental in his development,” Kowalyszyn said of Cole playing travel basketball. “Him going around and seeing he can compete with those guys, that boosted his confidence. He can get better and better.”

Proximity to home was nice for Cole, but he said it wasn’t the determining factor in picking NIU.

“It’s a big thing for my family,” Cole said. “They wanted me to stay close.

“But for me, it didn’t matter. It was about the fit and what I was comfortable with.”

Kowalyszyn said he thinks Cole made the right call.

“People know who he is, but he’s not on the national scene as far as the rankings,” Kowalyszyn said. “It’s good for a local school to get a local guy. The family can go watch him.

“Good for Northern. They got a steal with him.”

Many times after athletes announce their commitment, they can relax going into their senior year. Cole looks at it differently.

“Now it’s more pressure,” Cole said. “I’m committed to NIU. People are going to be coming at me. People are going to wonder if I’m really a D-I player. I’m going to have to show everyone.”