

Press Clippings 8/26/2018

---Courier News--- 8/26/18

Reaching children where they are

Local early educators eye laundries and other nontraditional venues for learning

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO



School District U46 CEO Tony Sanders speaks with a young boy at the first Language in the Laundromat site, which opened this spring at JetXpress Laundry on Dundee Avenue in Elgin. (School District U46)

State data that revealed three-fourths of kindergarten students in Illinois — 90 percent in **School District U46** — were not ready for school in fall 2017 has motivated local early childhood educators to consider unorthodox means to reach children who need help.

“This is our baseline year,” said Peggy Ondera, U46’s early learning director. “I think we start here and work on ways to improve.”

The key is reaching those families who may not know how to access prekindergarten programs or can’t afford them. And the solution could be as close as the neighborhood laundromat, grocery store or health clinic.

“Instead of bringing them to us, we need to bring our services to them,” Ondera said.

That means reaching out to parents in “nontraditional places,” where errands can be turned into “early learning experiences” and families can be reached when in-home visits don’t happen or invitations to schools don’t work, she said.

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning took its first step this spring at JetXpress Laundry on Dundee Avenue, where they launched a Language in the Laundromat program with the help of a grant from Elgin Township.

Reading materials are provided to families while they wash and dry their clothes, and posters are hung throughout the laundromat to provide tips on how to make the visit more educational — clothes can be counted, colors discussed, letters identified. Volunteers come in to read to children or talk to families about how to sign up for early childhood programs.

The partnership was founded earlier this decade to establish communitywide initiatives to assist in early learning readiness. Dozens of local institutions make up the group, including School District U46, Gail Borden Public Library and United Way of Elgin.

“The one thing we have to keep in mind is learning starts at birth,” said Amber Peters, the partnership’s executive director. By age 3, most of a child’s brain growth has already happened, she said.

That means there are about 2,000 days — or 5 1/2 years — when a child can be taught something before they ever step into a kindergarten class, Peters said.

With plans for a second Language in the Laundromat location to open soon in Elgin, Peters and Ondera said they are now discussing ways to bring similar initiatives into places such as health clinics, doctors’ offices and stores.

“We would love to get into a grocery store,” Peters said. “Every family goes to get groceries.”

And grocery stores are another ideal place where parents can quiz children on the colors of fruit or the shape of vegetables or the numeric value of money, she said.

“We cannot just depend on the schools and blame the schools, because education starts way before kindergarten,” Peters said.

U46 is set to expand its home-visit early learning program this school year, Ondera said. Educators provided home services to about 40 families last year, and will be able to expand that to 150 families thanks to grant money, she said.

The home visits focus on developmental screenings, parent education and interacting with very young children.

The district also provides preschool, where they’re able to work with about 200 4-year-olds in the full-day programs and another 1,200 in the half-day programs, Ondera said.

Despite these efforts, Ondera estimates they serve about only about one-third of the eligible preschool children in the district’s boundaries. The remaining children either attend private programs or receive no early learning at all, she said.

SPORTS SECTION

---Courier News--- 8/26/18

Big plays, turnovers help Blackhawks rout Royals

BY RICK ARMSTRONG



West Aurora's Zachary Jacobson runs an interception past Larkin's Angel Garcia (24) on Friday. (H. Rick Bamman/Beacon-News)

That didn't take long.

West Aurora, which has been gaining a reputation as a program on the rise, needed just 1:56 of the new season Friday night to take a 13-0 lead over Larkin at Elgin's Memorial Stadium.

Larkin, a program under first-year coach Jesus Gonzalez that wants to get where the Blackhawks are, struggled to get untracked on offense and came up on the short end of a 55-6 decision on a soggy night.

"Just mental mistakes," Gonzalez said. "We hurt ourselves with high snaps, key penalties and just little things we're not used to doing in practice.

"We lost our minds a little bit as we're still trying to mesh on offense."

The Royals turned over the ball four times in the first half, twice on lost fumbles and twice on interceptions of senior quarterback Jaxon Aubry, a transfer from Joliet West.

"We knew he was a talented kid," West Aurora coach Nate Eimer said. "We knew Aubry could throw the ball. We wanted to get in his face, pressure him and force him to make mistakes. And that's what we did."

Aubry connected with wide receiver Jahari Stubbs on a quick pass to open the game, but West Aurora defender JaQuan Buchanan ripped the ball away from Stubbs as he went to the ground for the first turnover.

Three plays later, West Aurora running back Hezekiah Salter bolted 20 yards for the first of his two touchdowns.

“One of the best defensive plays I’ve seen,” Eimer said of Buchanan’s effort. “He literally ripped the ball out of the kid’s hands. That’s the thing about ‘JB’ — he’s a competitor. He set the tone for the game.”

On Larkin’s second play of its second drive, West Aurora safety Zach Jacobson picked off Aubry’s pass and returned it 25 yards for a TD, and the Blackhawks were off and running.

It was the first of two picks by Jacobson that give him nine for his career, breaking the previous school record held by Mark Buschbacher.

“The linebackers did a great job of getting hands on and getting under (Aubry), which led to the picks,” Jacobson said.

Aubry finished with just 38 yards passing.

West Aurora’s Will Tammaru, who was also picked off twice, completed 6 of 9 passes for 100 yards.

He also threw a 26-yard TD pass to Buchanan.

West Aurora’s Trevon Tittle ran for 70 yards and one TD.

---Daily Herald--- 8/26/18

South Elgin sharp in shutout of West Chicago

BY JERRY FITZPATRICK



South Elgin's Davion Cherwin is brought down by West Chicago's Adam Hey Saturday during West Chicago at South Elgin football. *Brian Hill | Staff Photographer*

The South Elgin football team wore down visiting West Chicago play by play under the hot August sun in a 40-0 victory Saturday.

The Wildcats held their own for a quarter of the Upstate Eight Conference season opener, but South Elgin's superior depth became a factor in the second period as the first of several Wildcats fell victim to cramping.

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The Storm led 6-0 after a quarter, courtesy of junior Shiking Marshall's 6-yard sweep for a touchdown with 1:59 left.

They blew it open with a 20-point second quarter and added single touchdowns in the third and fourth to institute a running clock with 10:30 left. It was the first victory at South Elgin for new coach Dragan Teonic. The win was his 50th overall in a career that has included stints at Hersey, Harper College and Larkin.

"We played about four different running backs and six or seven slots and probably six other receivers and two quarterbacks, so that's a lot of kids to play," Teonic said. "And on defense it was a constant rotation, so I was happy with that. We were able to get out of here without a lot of cramps or injuries. We played pretty clean."

West Chicago dressed approximately 35 players, though new coach Jack Rustman said 10 more late arrivals will be eligible for next Friday's home opener against West Aurora.

"We had a lot of kids going both ways for us and cramping became an issue," said Rustman, who was recruited out of high school by Teonic when he was at Harper. "We see a lot of positives. It's a different program. It's a different mentality coming into games. These kids see it. We're in a positive place."

"We got glimmers," 6-foot-2 West Chicago wide receiver Mike Wagner said. We're only going to progress from here." Wagner made 3 catches for 15 yards, rushed once for 14 yards and threw a 21-yard completion on a double pass on the first play from scrimmage.

The Storm defense allowed little else. South Elgin limited the Wildcats to 126 total yards, 65 rushing in 23 attempts. Starting senior cornerback Azzavier Salinas was part of that effort, highlighted by his diving interception of a tipped pass that terminated West Chicago's first series.

The plan, according to Teonic, was for Salinas to split time at quarterback with fellow senior Jakob Johnson. Salinas ended up playing most of three quarters at quarterback after Johnson started but left with a bruised sternum.

Both quarterbacks played well. Johnson had 6 carries for 32 yards and a touchdown and completed 4-of-9 attempts for 62 yards without an interception. Salinas rushed for 33 yards and a touchdown on 3 carries, completed 6-of-8 tries for 118 yards and 2 touchdowns and was intercepted once.

The balanced Storm offense rushed for 179 yards and threw for 180. Salinas said the team had the right mindset entering the season opener.

"Coach Teonic wants us to play loose and I think that's the best way to play," he said. "He doesn't want us to think too much. He just wants us to play hard. I love playing for him."

Samuel Robles staked the Storm to a 20-0 lead midway through the second quarter with a 10-yard reception from Salinas that he turned into an 18-yard touchdown.

Marshall provided an early dagger just before halftime. He caught a short pass from Salinas, broke a tackle and raced 58 yards to increase the lead to 26-0 with 44.3 seconds left in the second quarter.

"It was a great block by my boy, Ricky Russo," Marshall said. "It was a whole-team touchdown, not just me."