



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Tara Burghart

Phone: 847-888-5000, ext. 5300

## **School District U-46 Welcomes Students on Aug. 15**

*Preschool students to return on Aug. 22*

**ELGIN** - Classes resume Tuesday, Aug. 15 for more than 35,000 kindergartners through 12th graders, as well as Transition students, across School District U-46. Following a successful bond proposal in the spring, District officials will work on plans and projects to replace or renovate some of U-46's older school buildings to provide equitable access to learning environments that support academic success for all.

For the first time in nearly a decade, U-46 will also have a new superintendent. Dr. Suzanne Johnson, a U-46 graduate and previously the Deputy Superintendent of Instruction, was selected by the Board of Education in May to lead the state's second-largest school district.

"We are excited to welcome our students back to our buildings and classrooms," Dr. Johnson said. "Our goal is to make sure each and every day is a great day to learn in School District U-46. That means our buildings are safe, welcoming, and all of our students and staff have a sense of belonging. We do those things so our students have access to and receive rigorous instruction — every student, every class period."

Dr. Johnson pointed out that preparations for the 2023-24 school year began even before the last school year ended.

"Many of our staff members have spent the summer preparing our buildings, classrooms, curriculum, and resources for a strong start to the school year. Others have engaged in professional development as they continue their

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own journey as lifelong learners,” she said. “Our educators and support staff are committed to supporting our students and their families.”

To watch a welcome video from Dr. Johnson, [click here](#).

Unite U-46 was the community engagement initiative that developed the recommendations to the Board of Education that led to the \$179 million zero-tax-rate-increase bond proposal. Unite U-46 will continue, with its next phase focused on keeping the U-46 community informed and engaged as the plan and projects are confirmed. Updates, including future meeting dates, will be shared at [u-46.org/uniteu46](https://u-46.org/uniteu46).

This winter, construction is scheduled to begin to transform Hawk Hollow, previously an elementary school in Bartlett, into a middle school serving the southeast corner of the District. That addition of another middle school is also part of the plan to transition U-46 to a true middle school model, where 6th graders, who currently are in elementary schools, attend middle school with 7th and 8th graders.

The school year will see the District continuing to update and enhance educational pathways, Magnet Academies, and other opportunities to ensure high school graduates are college and career ready.

In addition to pathways such as welding, automotive, precision manufacturing, and Certified Nursing Assistant, there will be a new sequence for computer science and game design starting in the 2024-25 school year. Students will be able to learn more about those courses, which could lead to certifications in programming languages, when high school course registration for the next school year begins in the fall.

The District's five specialized academies — with one theme-based academy located inside each of the District's five comprehensive high schools — are now all either nationally or internationally certified. Starting with this school year, the specialized academy at Elgin High School, which received accreditation as an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program last spring, will offer IB coursework.

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These opportunities will be showcased at Explore, the District's annual career expo designed to demonstrate for students the connection between academic curriculum and future careers. Eighth grade students will attend Explore on Thursday, Oct. 5 at the NOW Arena in Hoffman Estates. Families with 8th graders and freshmen will be invited to attend Explore on the evening of Wednesday, Oct. 4, to learn more about educational pathways and Magnet Academies.

The [Alignment Collaborative for Education](#), a non-profit local organization that brings together community resources and initiatives to support District priorities, is once again partnering with U-46 to organize the event. More information will be shared closer to the event at [u-46.org/exploreexpo](https://u-46.org/exploreexpo).

Through a partnership with Elgin Community College, U-46 continues to offer a full-time Dual Credit program; nearly 100 juniors and seniors are enrolled in the program for the 2023-24 school year. 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. Students in the program for two years will graduate with both a high school diploma and an ECC associate's degree in arts or science.

U-46 Rising, a system-wide intentional focus to improve core instruction, will continue to be a strategic focus. Ellis Middle School and Streamwood High School will join 14 other schools as "Schools for Rigor and Equity," where the entire school staff receives additional professional coaching, resources and support, as well as time to meet weekly to review student progress and work collaboratively to plan instruction. More information on U-46 Rising, including videos, can be found at [u-46.org/u46rising](https://u-46.org/u46rising).

The District's Dual Language program will serve more than 12,000 students during the 2023-24 school year. Dual language is a form of bilingual education in which students are taught literacy and academic content in two languages — English and, in the case of U-46, Spanish. The District is home to one of the largest such programs in the United States, and the students in the program are on their way to becoming bilingual and biliterate, better ready to build careers in a global society.

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Students enrolled in the District's preschool programs will have their first day of school on Tuesday, Aug. 22. U-46 has been able to increase the number of slots available in its preschool program to accommodate another 120 children, resulting in space for about 1,500 early learners in total. Laurel Hill Elementary School in Hanover Park will now have preschool classrooms, joining seven other elementary schools. Early learners are also served by the Illinois Park Center for Early Learning and Independence Center for Early Learning, and More at Four program.

As it has for several years, the U-46 Board of Education voted to waive instructional fees for U-46 students for the 2023-24 school year. In addition, the District is providing school supplies to elementary students, and school meals will be provided at no cost to students at all U-46 schools.

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*School District U-46 serves families in 11 communities: Bartlett, Elgin, Hanover Park, South Elgin, Streamwood and Wayne, as well as portions of Carol Stream, Hoffman Estates, St. Charles, Schaumburg, and West Chicago. In total, the District encompasses 90 square miles within the Fox River Valley, approximately 45 minutes west of downtown Chicago, and includes communities within Cook, DuPage and Kane counties. More than 35,000 pre-K through 12 graders attend the 55 District schools and programs. To learn more, visit the U-46 [website](#), or like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).*