



School District U-46

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Dr. Suzanne Johnson, Superintendent

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Class of 2025 to Step Into Spotlight at Graduation Ceremonies

U-46 to host five commencement ceremonies on May 24

ELGIN - More than 2,800 students will mark the end of their high school careers on Saturday, May 24, as School District U-46 conducts five high school graduation ceremonies at the NOW Arena in Hoffman Estates.

The U-46 Board of Education, Superintendent Dr. Suzanne Johnson, Deputy Superintendent of Instruction Lela Majstorovic, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Dr. Annette Acevedo, and many other District administrators and principals will join families and friends in recognizing the Class of 2025.

"We look forward to celebrating this milestone with the family, friends, and employees who have supported the students throughout their years in U-46," said Dr. Johnson. "These graduates leave high school well-equipped to create bright futures for themselves and contribute meaningfully to their communities and the world."

The graduation schedule for Saturday, May 24, is as follows:

- Elgin High School - 8 a.m.
- Bartlett High School - 11 a.m.
- Larkin High School - 2 p.m.
- Streamwood High School - 5 p.m.
- South Elgin High School - 8 p.m.

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In order to continue to run five smooth and efficient high school graduation ceremonies, School District U-46 is requesting students and families ride together in the fewest possible number of vehicles to the NOW Arena, 5333 Prairie Stone Parkway in Hoffman Estates. Graduates, families, and guests are also asked to arrive 45 minutes prior to their graduating ceremony. More details about the graduation ceremonies can be found at u-46.org/classof2025.

Dual Credit offered in partnership with ECC

The District will continue its tradition of honoring seniors who enrolled in the full-time Dual Credit program, during which they take all their classes on the campus of Elgin Community College (ECC). These students must demonstrate certain college readiness benchmark scores for acceptance and take all of their courses at ECC. They earn both high school and college credits for each class in the program.

A group of 46 Dual Credit students will graduate with the equivalent of an associate's degree in addition to their high school diploma. Another 15 will graduate from high school with at least a year's worth of college credits. For graduation, they will wear special stoles.

South Elgin High School's Ayush Patel will take two years of college credit with him when he heads to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) to study computer engineering. He said his main motivation for joining the Dual Credit program was that it would allow him to finish college earlier and "therefore significantly decrease the cost.

"The best part about the Dual Credit program was that once I got accustomed to the college life and system, I ended up having a lot more free time than I would have expected," he said. "At the same time, however, it did take a while for me to get acquainted with the system, and that was definitely the hardest part."

Danielle Sotto, of Streamwood High School, is also graduating Saturday with about two years' worth of college credits. Danielle, who plans to study civil engineering at UIUC, said she was drawn to Dual Credit because she was looking for an academic challenge.

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"I liked the overall environment where I had more independence and freedom compared to in high school," said Danielle, adding she also learned to advocate for herself.

Students learn to communicate globally

U-46 will also issue a special honor to 247 graduates who have earned the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy, showing that they've demonstrated proficiency in one or more languages besides English. Another 199 students earned the Commendation, given to students who have demonstrated significant progress toward achieving a high level of proficiency. Languages for which U-46 students earned the Seal include Spanish, Polish, Japanese, Tagalog, Urdu, Lithuanian, Chinese, Punjabi, Russian, French, Hindi, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Punjabi, Bosnian, Turkish and Gujarati.

Students who earn the Seal can qualify for two years of foreign language credit at any Illinois public university; which translates to a combined total of \$487,770.66 in tuition savings for this year's Seal recipients, using the credit hour cost at ECC for calculation purposes.

Larkin High School's Lucy Akemann said earning the Seal in Spanish is one of her proudest accomplishments in high school, along with being an Illinois State Scholar.

"These achievements represent, to me, the years of dedication, hard work, and a commitment to academic perseverance," said Lucy, who plans to pursue a pre-medical track at the University of California San Diego. "The most important thing I learned in high school is that resilience is paramount—the ability to persevere through challenges, to dust yourself off after setbacks, and to keep striving even when things get incredibly difficult."

Also wearing special stoles will be more than 750 students who participated in the District's award-winning Dual Language program; many of whom have been a part of Dual Language since kindergarten, including Wilebaldo Modesto Hernandez, who is graduating from Elgin High School and will major in chemistry at Aurora University.

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"The Dual Language program has offered me so many different opportunities: field trips, AP credits, earning the Seal of Biliteracy, and giving back to my community, which I love doing," he said. "It's contributed to my education by letting me continue to speak my first language, Spanish, but I've used both English and Spanish in all of my courses."

Scholarships for first-generation college-bound students

The Class of 2025 graduates include 30 recipients of the Superintendent's Scholarship, which honors first-generation college-bound students. They will receive \$2,000 from the U-46 Educational Foundation to put toward college costs. Those students are highlighted in [this video](#), also posted on the District's YouTube channel.

"Receiving the scholarship was the world's way of letting me know that I have learned, that I'm capable, that I need to keep going," said Elgin High School's Gael Flores, who plans to pursue a nursing degree at Aurora University. "I'm beyond grateful for being awarded the scholarship, I'm so happy knowing that my struggle and efforts were real, and that it's not something only I can see anymore."

Academic achievement top of mind for Top 2 Percent

Forty-seven graduates rank among the top two percent of their graduating class within the five high schools. These students will attend top universities, including Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, University of Michigan, Purdue University, DePaul University, and UIUC.

The top two percent graduates appear in a section on the District's Class of 2025 section at u-46.org/2025top2percent.

One of them is Bartlett High School's Jack Conner, who said his passion for his own personal growth will serve him well as he majors in finance at UIU.

"The most important thing I learned in high school is that being smart isn't the ability to know the answer off the top of my head. Being smart is having the ability to find the answer when I do not know it off the top of my head," he said.

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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. Nearly 34,000 preschoolers through 12th graders attend the 55 District schools and programs. To learn more, visit the U-46 [website](#), or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#).