

School District U-46

Freshman Seminar

for the 2025-2026 School Year

Board of Education Presentation

Michele Chapman, Director of Post-Secondary Success
Beth McKinney, Coordinator of Programs and Supports

May 5, 2025



Purpose

This proposal seeks the adoption of an updated curriculum, including rubrics and assessments, for the one-semester high school course Freshman Seminar.

Alignment to Strategic Plan

U46 STRATEGIC PLAN AUG 2022 Revised



Student Success

It is our responsibility to ensure all students are engaged in rigorous learning, receive quality core instruction, and can develop the skills they need for better life chances and opportunities. By helping students develop self and peer agency, they will develop a growth mindset as they learn to expand their perspectives.

Effective & Engaged Staff

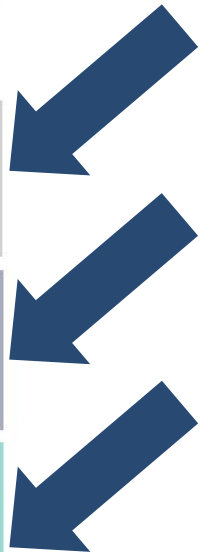
We will value, develop, recruit, and retain a forward-thinking, highly qualified, and diverse workforce. We will establish a robust process for measuring employee engagement to identify and proactively address employee engagement issues.

Culture, Climate & Community

We will engage in meaningful and effective relationships with our students, families and the greater community and will ensure that our schools are welcoming and inviting places for all of our U-46 students and families. We will become a choice district that inspires families to join us.

Excellence, Efficiency & Accountability

We will advocate for and utilize systems and resources that promote fiscal equity, operational excellence, efficiency and accountability. It is our moral imperative to change until all our systems measurably work for all students.



Rationale

Freshman Seminar is a one-semester elective course that will address the high need for support as our students transition to high school.

Support our district goals and Freshman On-Track rates.

Freshman Seminar is an updated curriculum that provides instruction in three recursive units:

- Self concept/personal success
- Collaboration
- Annotation/note-taking

Available as both a general education and multilingual option.

Rationale

This revised course is built to help first-time freshman students adjust to the **academic** and **social emotional** shifts that come with transitioning to high school.

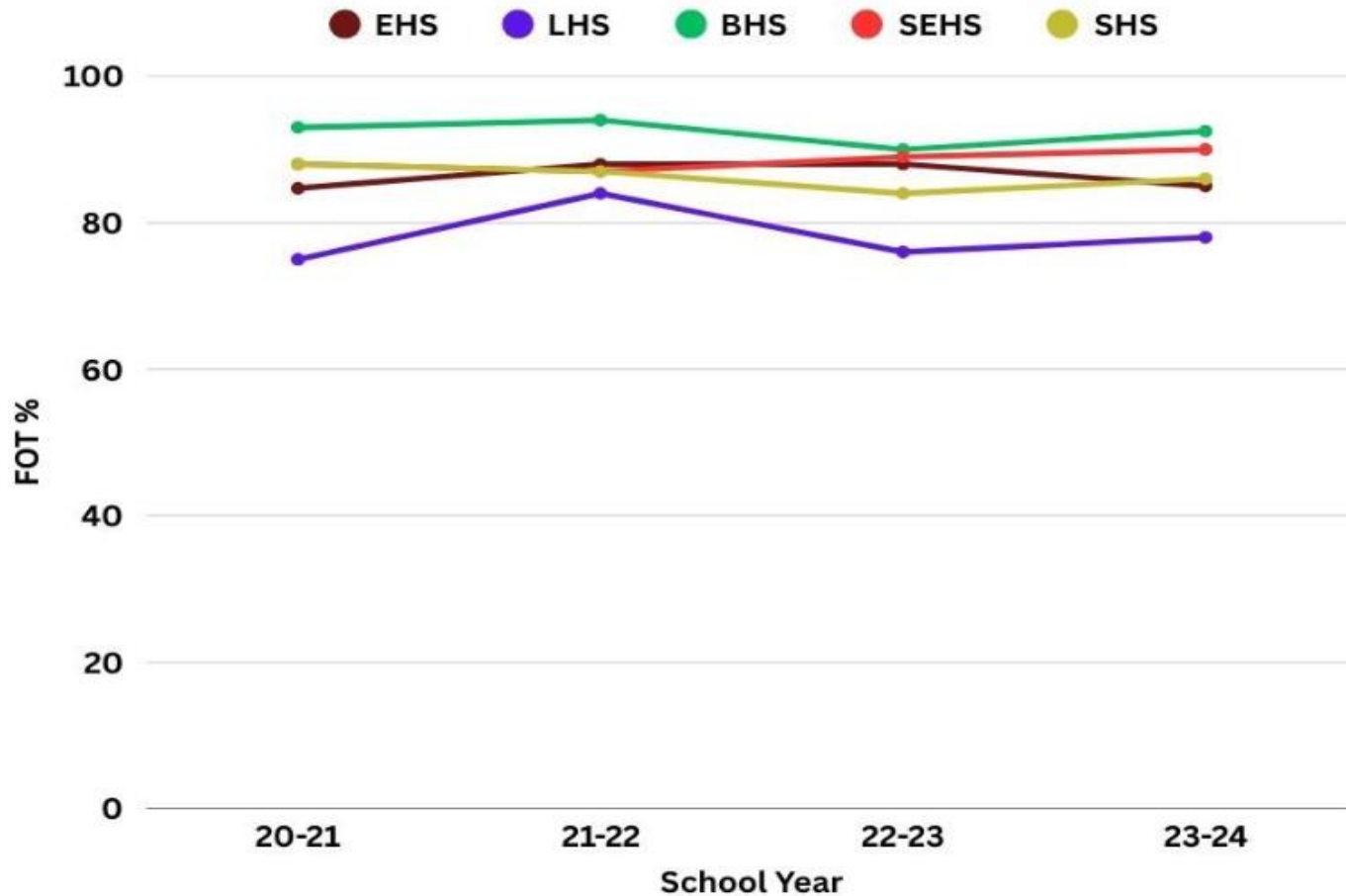
It provides support with goal setting, time management, organization, collaboration, note-taking and critical reading, as well as specific study skills to promote overall success.

The updated Freshman Seminar is designed to promote a growth mindset and help students create positive connections in the high school community.

This class provides a structured environment for students to begin building habits that will help them navigate high school and beyond.

By introducing postsecondary options, students are able to begin thinking about their long-term goals and see the benefit of building a strong foundation from the start of their high school career and meet PACE standards.

Freshman On-Track Rates



Committee Members

Member	Position	School
Elizabeth McKinney	Coordinator of Instructional Programs and Supports - Postsecondary Success	Districtwide
Corey Elton	Assistant Principal of Freshman Success	Larkin High School
Felicia Randle	Assistant Principal of Freshman Success	Streamwood High School
Ryan Smith	Assistant Principal of Freshman Success	Elgin High School
Steven Tucker	Assistant Principal of Freshman Success	South Elgin High School
Jeff Villarreal	Assistant Principal of Freshman Success	Bartlett High School

Process Timeline

Summer 2024 - Members from district administration and each high school attended professional development by the National Freshman Success Institute.

Fall 2025 - Freshman Seminar Curriculum Team began work on updating curriculum.

Each school presented the standards, framework, and activities of the course to two teams for feedback which was then taken back to the curriculum team for updates.

- AVID Lead Teachers
- Freshman Success Teams -variety of content area teachers

Freshman Seminar Course Overview

- Available to true freshman
- One-semester elective
- First semester only
- Offering support to students who are not taking Study Skills or AVID
- Credit - bearing
- Supports the transition from middle school to high school

Standards

The updated curriculum for Freshman Seminar was developed using standards from these resources.

Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Social Studies:

https://www.isbe.net/Documents/ELA_common_core_standards.pdf

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/K-12-SS-Standards.pdf>

AVID Standards – Student Agency, Rigorous Academic Preparation, and Opportunity Knowledge

Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/SEL-Standards.pdf>

Recommended Resources

The updated Freshman Seminar will utilize existing district-approved resources and instructional strategies from the following:

- AVID Schoolwide Advisory
- National Freshman Success Institute
- Schoolinks

Implementation Plan

Freshman Seminar will be offered in Fall 2025 to incoming ninth-grade students at all high schools as a one-semester elective course.

Professional Learning

May 2025

Goals and standards

Frameworks and rubrics

July or September 2025

AVID Implementation 1: training from AVID on reading strategies, collaboration skills, goal setting and evidence-based AVID strategies and the AVID elective

August DCD

Analyzing standards and unpacking units of study

Professional learning on the goal – setting process and collaborative study groups

Late September

Continued professional learning on coaching collaboration, goal-setting, and critical reading skills

Mid- November

Using feedback in the formative cycle, supporting student learning

Cost

The Freshman Seminar curriculum resources have already been acquired by School District U-46.

This includes AVID Schoolwide Advisory and SchoolLinks.

Proposed Results

The goal of implementing this Freshman Seminar course is to improve student achievement, which will then be represented in each high school's Freshman On-Track rate.

Plans for the Evaluation of Change

Freshman Success teams at each high school will continue to track FOT data to analyze the impact of this course on student outcomes.

Assistant Principals of Freshman Success will lead this work.

