



Tony Sanders, Chief Executive Officer

School District U-46
Educational Services Center
355 E. Chicago Street, Elgin, IL 60120-6543
Tel: 847.888.5000 x5007
Fax: 847.608.4173

U-46.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 3, 2020

Contact: Mary Fergus

Phone: 847-888-5000, ext.4160

Elgin High School to Host Annual National Biodiversity Teach-In

*Students and teachers to facilitate hour-long webinars for
environmental science enthusiasts*

ELGIN - Environmental science students from Elgin High School are preparing to virtually bring a variety of worldwide experts to the classroom as part of the school's annual National Biodiversity Teach-In — including a day featuring only female presenters in honor of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

The Teach-In is a series of nearly four dozen free webinars which will feature scientists discussing topics including climate change, clean energy, polar bears, turtles, environmental law and policy, and oceanography.

The webinars first began in 2013 to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity. The 100-year anniversary of the extinction of the passenger pigeon in 2014 and the story of Martha, the last known living passenger pigeon, increased the students' interest and desire to discuss biodiversity with some of the best experts in the field.

Since 2013, the event has attracted a growing number of environmental science enthusiasts from around the globe — registering more than 100,000 participants from 20 countries.

The student organizers delegate the event responsibilities by committees. They troubleshoot technology issues, register participants, update the website, respond to media requests, and oversee post-webinar projects. Shakira Acosta, a senior at Elgin High School, has helped manage logistics this year.

“My favorite thing about this event is the immense spectrum of subjects it delves into,” Shakira said. “There are countless topics, you can always find one you love.”

Brittney Mallen, a biology and AP environmental science teacher at EHS who helps oversee the Teach-In, said the idea for holding a full day of sessions tied to the International Day of Women and Girls in Science came from Katharine Hayhoe, a world-renowned climate scientist who is based at Texas Tech University and was one of the lead authors of the most recent federal Climate Science Special Report.

The United Nations General Assembly in 2015 declared Feb. 11 the International Day of Women and Girls in Science as part of an effort to encourage a new generation of women and girl scientists to tackle the major challenges of our time by leading innovation in science and technology.

Dr. Hayhoe could not be a part of the Teach-In this year, but suggested that organizers recruit Dr. Kimberly Miner, of the Geospatial Research Laboratory, who has climbed glaciers to study environmental change; and Patricia Yager, who was awarded a visiting professorship in Brazil. Other women who will be presenting on Feb. 11 include Noa Banayan of PeopleForBikes, who advocates for policies that promote and fund safe bicycling initiatives across the United States; Tess Krasne, a project specialist for Ocean Conservancy whose research focuses on plastic in oceans; and Alissa Huntington, a policy analyst at M.J. Bradley and Associates, whose work revolves around electronic transportation and renewable electricity.

There are also webinars scheduled during the school day and into the late afternoon on Friday, Feb. 7, Friday, Feb. 14, Friday, Feb. 21 and Thursday, Feb. 27. The speakers will lead a lecture based on their specialty and leave time for discussion and questions.

The webinars are free and open to the public. The events will be broadcast on the Teach-In website at www.nationalbiodiversityteachin.com, where those interested will also find a full schedule and details on the speakers and topics being discussed. Registration is required in advance on the website.



Tony Sanders, Chief Executive Officer

School District U-46
Educational Services Center
355 E. Chicago Street, Elgin, IL 60120-6543
Tel: 847.888.5000 x5007
Fax: 847.608.4173

U-46.org

###

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 38,000 pre-K through twelfth graders attend the 57 District schools and programs. To learn more, Visit the U-46 [website](#), or like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).