

Press Clippings - 8/28/2023

- The Daily Herald - 'We are hiring in every department': School staffing shortages continue across suburbs and state

By: Alicia Fabbre

8/27/2023



Kindergarten teacher Brooke Hemlinger leads her class into Western Avenue Elementary School in Geneva on their first day back. Schools across the state started the school year with thousands of positions unfilled. (Brian Hill | Staff Photographer)

As she visited schools on students' first day of the new academic year, Elgin Area **School District U-46** Superintendent Suzanne Johnson made sure to ask about staffing levels.

Six days later, at the Aug. 21 school board meeting, she made another pitch for the district.

"If anyone is out there still thinking about how they'd really like to dust off that teaching certificate ... or they think they could be of support in that noon hour supervision or food services," Johnson said, "we are hiring in every department."

As of Thursday, the state's second-largest school district had 100 teaching positions open, 100 paraeducator positions to fill, and another 20 open spots in the food and nutrition services department.

The staffing shortage is not unique to Elgin U-46.

According to the Illinois State Board of Education, school districts statewide started the year with more than 7,000 open teaching, paraprofessional, support and administrative

staff positions.

Last year, the state agency reported about 5,000 vacancies at the start of the school year.

"That's not an ideal situation," said Al Llorens, president of the Illinois Education Association, which represents teachers across the state.

Llorens is quick to note that school staffing shortages have become a more significant issue in recent years. In 2017, the state board reported a total of 2,006 unfilled positions statewide at the start of the school year.

Since then, vacancies have risen annually except in 2021, when most schools started the year with remote learning.

"There were years where the public narrative was not in favor of public education, and that has had a chilling effect on people wanting to go into the profession," Llorens said.

To help address staffing shortages, the Illinois Education Association has partnered with the Illinois Federation of Teachers and the state board to develop mentoring programs to help retain young teachers. The IEA also is working with universities to prepare prospective teachers.

State lawmakers earlier this year also approved a \$70 million pilot program to help hire and retain teachers.

As of Jan. 1, the state also began offering a short-term paraprofessional license, allowing those 18 and older to work in an elementary school as a paraprofessional while completing coursework for full licensure.

Paraprofessionals act as teacher assistants or provide additional student support in the classroom. Of the more than 7,000 unfilled positions reported by the state board, roughly 2,700 are for paraprofessionals.

"We believe the changes in requirements for paraeducators have helped, but we are still facing challenges in filling all of our positions," said Adam Palmer, assistant superintendent of human resources for Hawthorn School District 73.

Many districts have been able to hire enough teachers to staff classrooms. But specialized teaching positions, such as bilingual or special education, are among the most challenging to fill, suburban school leaders say.

"We don't have teachers in all the bilingual classes, and I don't expect that we will," said Mark Moore, assistant superintendent for human resources in Elgin U-46. "There's just not enough bilingual teachers to cover the needs."

Wheaton Warrenville Unit District 200 kicked off the school year with teaching positions fully staffed. But other positions -- school nurses, school psychologists and instructional assistants -- have been tougher to fill.

"We've had a challenge there. We made some adjustments that seemed to make hiring a little bit easier, but there still is just not a really strong pool of candidates," Superintendent Jeff Schuler said. "The workforce doesn't appear to be out there as much."

The school board earlier this summer approved a one-year contract extension with the union that represents more than 400 district employees, including teaching assistants, health aides, secretaries and maintenance workers. To ease hiring challenges, the district increased starting pay rates, beginning with this school year.

Like other districts, Palatine-Schaumburg Township High School District 211 is looking for more bus drivers. The district started the school year short 25 bus drivers.

"This is a continued trend," said Erin Holmes, District 211's director of communications.

She added the district is also looking to fill teaching assistant and substitute teaching jobs. "While we held a productive hiring fair that filled many important slots, our administrators are consistently needing to devise creative solutions for the shortages."

In many instances, education leaders say, those creative solutions involve stretching existing resources to fill the gaps.

A long-term substitute, for example, may fill in as a bilingual teacher. Bus drivers double up on routes, meaning earlier pickup and later drop-off times for some students. A teacher may take on an additional class to teach, or social workers might take on extra students to meet the demand for services.

Even Elgin U-46's Moore filled in to serve lunch at Bartlett High School for three days during the first week back to school due to a shortage of cafeteria workers.

"For me, it was fun," Moore said, "but that isn't a sustainable solution."

• *Daily Herald* reporters Katlyn Smith, Eric Peterson, Mick Zawislak and Christopher Placek contributed to this report.

- Patch -

South Elgin High School Evacuated After Bomb Threat: District

An anonymous call was received at the school at 7:40 a.m. and police said that students are safe after being moved outdoors as a precaution.

By: Jeff Arnold, Patch Staff

Aug 28, 2023



The South Elgin Police Department and Kane County Sheriff's Department are investigating a bomb threat that was called into the school on Monday morning. (Shutterstock)

ELGIN, IL — Students at **South Elgin High School** have been evacuated after a bomb threat was called into the school Monday morning, U-46 District officials said.

The school district said that the call was received around 7:40 a.m. and was believed to be a swatting call involving a bomb threat.

As a precaution, students were moved outdoors, but the district said that all students were safe. The district said that no other U-46 buildings were involved in the threat. The South Elgin Police Department and the Kane County Sheriff's Department are investigating the threat, the district said.

Parents were told that police have restricted the entrances to the school building as the investigation continues. All of the students are supervised outside of the school building, the school district said.

No further information is being provided at this time.

- WGN9-

All-Clear South Elgin High School call of bomb threat: District

By: Neshmia Malik

Aug 28, 2023



(Getty Images)

ELGIN, Ill. — **School district U-46** said it was safe for staff and students to return to South Elgin High School after they received a call of a bomb threat Monday morning.

The school district said they received a call around 7:40 a.m. that was believed to be a swatting call with a bomb threat.

The school district said in a Facebook post that students were moved outside. The South Elgin Police and Kane County Sherriff are investigating and that no other U-46 schools are involved.

Police investigation cleared it was safe to return to the school at around 9:10 a.m. and that school schedules will resume normally with the usual dismissal.

For precautionary measures, police presence will be increased in the area today.

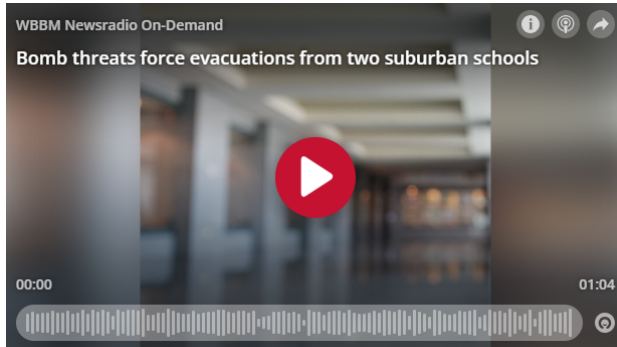
WGN is actively following the incident and will update as more information is recovered.

- WBBM Newsradio-

Bomb threats at suburban schools force evacuation

By: Nancy Harty

Aug 28, 2023



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(WBBM NEWSRADIO) — Two bomb threats Monday morning forced evacuations at South Elgin High School and Daniel Wright Junior High in Lincolnshire.

Elgin **District U-46** administrators believe it was a swatting call. In a message to parents, the district said South Elgin High School received an anonymous call at about 7:40 a.m. about a bomb threat.

Students and staff were evacuated while local police investigated.

The Kane County Sheriff's Office determined that the building was safe for students and employees to return a little after 9 a.m., school officials later announced to parents.

"If parents of South Elgin High School students want to pick their children up early from school, they can do so at the school's main entrance," administrators said.

Lincolnshire Prairie View District 103 announced an evacuation at Daniel Wright Junior High, after staff found a voicemail at 7:30 a.m. with a computer recorded message about a bomb in the building.

Administrators encouraged parents to keep students at home if they had not already arrived, and a spokeswoman told WBBM that school at Daniel Wright was canceled for the day.

District 103 administrators said there are no threats to Sprague and Half Day Schools, which were running normally on Monday.

- The Daily Herald -

Salvino's 4 TD passes lead Glenbard East past Larkin

By: Jared Birchfield

8/25/2023

Glenbard East exploded for 28 second quarter points to take a 42-0 victory over **Larkin** at Memorial Field in Elgin Friday night in the teams' season opener.

After scoring two TDS on the ground in the first 12 minutes, Rams quarterback Blake Salvino went to the air for the Rams' four second quarter touchdowns in the Upstate Eight contest.

Fifty-one seconds into the second frame Salvino connected with Chikodi Nze for a 43-yard pass.

The Rams' second and third drives of the quarter both ended with TD passes, a 9-yarder and a 12-yarder.

Glenbard East extended its lead to 42-0 with four seconds left in the half when Salvino teamed up again with Nze for a 25-yard scoring play.

Salvino completed 8 of 9 passes for 135 yards in the first half. Junior Max Salek took over the offense in the second half.

The senior gave his teammates credit for the productive second quarter.

"The main thing was our receivers were getting open on routes," Salvino said. "Also, the line got the blocks, and I had plenty of time in the pocket."

The Rams scored on all six of their first half possessions.

Running back Matthew Larson ended the Rams' first drive with a 3-yard scamper across the goal for the first score at the 8:34 mark of the first quarter.

The senior extended Glenbard East's lead to 14-0 on a 1-yard run four minutes later.

Larson's second TD was set up by Eric McClain's interception. The senior cornerback snared the ball at midfield and returned it to the Royals' 16-yard line.

The Rams' defense shut down Larkin's offense. The Royals' best scoring chance came in the third quarter. Sparked by a 69-yard pass from quarterback Tizairan Johnson-Williams to Jahiem Vincent, Larkin reached Glenbard East's 21-yard line but was unable to convert on a fourth down.

Glenbard East (1-0, 1-0) coach John Walter thought the game was a great team effort.

"We really did a nice job on both sides of the ball," Walters said. "Defensively, I think our guys were locking in and ready to play. Offensively, we were six for six in the first half getting the ball into the end zone."

Larkin (0-1, 0-1) coach Vincent Ray knew his first game as the team's head coach would be big test.

"The challenge tonight was making sure the guys were prepared and that they were focused on their assignments and executing assignments. We've got to get better at that for sure," said Ray. "But I saw some kids compete, they didn't give up. I saw some fight in them."

- My Journal Courier -

Football scores for Friday, August 25

By: Dennis Mathes

Aug 25, 2023



A young Triopia football fan waves her pompon after the Trojans beat Pleasant Hill in the season opener Friday night at Triopia

Dennis Mathes | Journal-Courier

The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL

Addison Trail 39, Maine East 6

Amboy 46, Decatur (LSA) 0

Andrew 49, Thornwood 6

Antioch 42, Schaumburg 13

Argo 49, Chicago (Noble Street Charter/ Muchin) 0

Auburn 20, New Berlin 13

Aurora (East) 56, Glenbard South 21

Aurora (West Aurora) 42, Proviso East 0

Barrington 40, Gurnee Warren 33

Bartlett 19, Streamwood 8

Batavia 42, Phillips 20

Bethalto Civic Memorial 42, Alton Marquette 16

Aurora Christian 42, Ottawa Marquette 0