

Press Clippings - 9/20/2023

- The Courier News - U-46 School Board to vote next week on closing two Elgin middle schools and building a third

By: Mike Danahey

Sep 19, 2023



Ellis Middle School on South Liberty Street is one of two Elgin schools proposed to be closed under a plan presented Monday to the District U-46 School Board. (Janelle Walker / The Courier-News)

A proposal under which Ellis and Abbott middle schools in Elgin would close and a new middle school adjacent to Hilltop Elementary School built will be voted on at next week's **District U-46** School Board meeting.

Board members were briefed on the plan Monday night and also told the transition of sixth-grade classes into the middle school system would be postponed until the 2026-27 school year and additions built onto Kimball Middle School in Elgin and Kenyon Woods Middle School in South Elgin.

"We feel a sense of urgency to make decisions on these projects given the current construction environment, with long lead times, supply chain issues and rising costs," Chief of Staff Brian Lindholm said.

"But we also feel a sense of urgency to bring these updates to our facilities so that more U-46 students will be able to experience the safe and modern learning experiences and environments that they all deserve," he said.

The new middle school would be built on 12.4 acres of undeveloped land at 2604 Rohrssen Road, an Elgin site the district is in the process of buying. Because it's in the Ellis attendance area, those student will be able to move to that school, according to the board presentation.

Kimball and Kenyon Woods expansions would allow student enrollment to increase from about 800 to 1,125 students at each school.

The district is currently in the process of transforming Hawk Hollow Elementary School in Bartlett into a middle school for 750 students. Officials said the renovation cost will not be known until the bidding process is complete.

The district's other middle schools — Canton and Tefft in Streamwood, Eastview in Bartlett and Larsen in Elgin — may require updates, such as secure front entrances, updated science labs, and space for STEM, career and technical education, according to the presentation

Lela Majstorovic, deputy superintendent of instruction, said the move to a 6th-to-8th grade middle school model will free up more capacity in elementary schools, allowing the district to offer more preschool programming, eliminate mobile classrooms and provide dedicated rooms for art, music and other classes.

The new middle school is estimated to cost between \$90 million and \$130 million, Kimball's price tag would be between \$40 million and \$60 million, and the bill for Kenyon Woods would be \$30 million to \$40 million, according to the presentation.

Ellis and Abbott schools have limitations that are difficult to overcome, Majstorovic said. With small lots, changing elevations and accessibility issues, updating the buildings is not cost effective, she said.

Funding for the construction work will come from the sale of bonds and surplus money being held in reserve, Deputy Superintendent Ann Williams said.

As for the elementary schools, staff is continuing to work with consultants to analyze each building related to recommendations made last year by the Unite-46 committee, Williams said. A construction management services agreement will be brought to the board at next week's meeting that will provide time lines and cost estimates.

Board member Kate Thommes said she's anticipating the positive changes the

improvements will produce.

“It’s just really very exciting that we will be able to bring these buildings to these kids.”

To keep residents updated on plans and to gather feedback, a public meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 5, in Elgin High School library, Lindholm said.

Parent Katrina Neal spoke at Monday night’s meeting about her thoughts on closing Ellis.

“I am asking and begging to the board, to operations, to all of you that although you are intending to retire Ellis, that you would continue to work on the small facility’s plan and (have) updates like a bike rack, brighter hallways and a new parking lot,” Neal said.

“I believe if we do at least some of these things, it will give students still there for the next three years a sense that Ellis is still prideful,” she said.

- The Examiner -

U-46 Board of Education to vote on policy changes

By: Seth Hancock

The Board of Education in **School District U-46** is set to vote on updates to six policies at its upcoming meeting on Monday, Sept. 25. They were presented on Sept. 11.

The changes were not provided to the public, but Trisha Olsen, chief legal officer, said the changes were largely not substantive.

Included is Policy 2:170 (procurement of architectural, engineering and land surveying services) which Olsen said there are “no substantive changes.” She did say the Illinois General Assembly passed legislation to address design contracts for school districts and the policy is expected to come up again in the near future to address that bill.

Policy 4:45 (insufficient fund checks and debt recovery) included “very minimal changes including the removal of the phrase ‘in the future’ which does not change the context of how the language reads,” Olsen said. Similarly, Policy 4:100 (insurance management) makes “minimal changes to outdated concepts, for example it makes changes to terms like ‘certificates’ and now it says ‘licenses.’”

Policy 5:230 (maintaining student discipline) addresses licensed and certified personnel

and a requirement to maintain discipline. A change adds specification for paraeducators.

“It makes a carve out for paraeducators to maintain discipline,” Olsen said. “This is aligned with law and to our current practices.”

On Policy 6:190 (extracurricular and co-curricular activities), Olsen said: “Our previous iteration of the policy addressed all the optional items that IASB (Illinois Association of School Boards) is already recommending for our review. Therefore, there really is no substantive change to our U-46 board policy. But I did want to make sure to point out that it does make more than minimal changes to citations and references.”

Policy 7:330 (student use of buildings-equal access) concerns access to buildings for students for clubs and other activities.

Olsen said the update “truly does not make any substantive changes, but it does address equal access to buildings which has been a point of concern.”

- The Examiner -

Budget, expense items set for upcoming U-46 vote

By: Seth Hancock



Picnic of a project It appears that Streamwood High School will be receiving a picnic pavilion in the near future. The District U-46 Board of Education will be voting on a proposal to provide an ‘area for sporting event attendees to enjoy their purchases from the concession stands’ as well as be a hosting area for ‘meetings and special events.’ If approved at the next U-46 board meeting on Monday, Sept. 25, the picnic pavilion at Streamwood High School, at a proposed cost of \$161,617, will be the first such installation planned for all five district high schools. (Examiner photo by Bruce Leighty)

The Board of Education in **School District U-46** is expected to vote on the 2023-2024 budget as well as \$2.5 million in expenditure items at its upcoming meeting on Monday,

Sept. 25.

The expenditure proposals were presented at the Sept. 11 meeting. A public hearing was originally planned for that meeting, according to the Aug. 21 presentation, but no public hearing was on the Sept. 11 agenda.

For the ninth straight year, spending is expected to increase with enrollment declining. The budget increases spending by \$78.9 million (\$696.4 million to \$775.3 million), an 11.3 percent increase, and revenue is set to increase by \$36 million (\$690.5 million to \$726.5 million), a 5.2 percent increase.

As for the expenditure proposals, the largest is a five-year contract renewal with Newsela costing \$2.2 million, paid by the education fund if approved. Newsela, originally purchased in 2015, is a “digital resource” that “provides 2nd-12th grade students’ access to instructional-level texts to complement teacher-led instruction by giving additional explanations, examples, and context,” the proposal states.

With Game Time c/o Cunningham Recreation, the district is seeking \$161,617 (operations and maintenance fund) for a picnic pavilion at Streamwood High School’s Millennium Field.

“The addition of a picnic pavilion to Millennium Stadium will provide an additional area for sporting event attendees to enjoy their purchases from the concession stands, and to host outdoor meetings and special events,” the proposal states. It adds that the plan is to install picnic pavilions at all five high schools over the next five years.

Two plant operations equipment purchases are proposed including a skid steer from Alta Equipment costing \$89,211 (operations and maintenance fund) to replace a current skid steer from 1998.

Costing \$43,447 (operations and maintenance fund), the district is looking to purchase a mini skid steer from Vermeer Midwest. It is an addition to a current mini skid steer.

“Since the initial mini skid steer’s purchase in 2020, it has become extremely sought after for project work due to its versatility,” the proposal states. “By purchasing a second unit, multiple projects can occur simultaneously; increasing the efficiency and productivity of the Grounds Department.”

The district is also seeking \$48,510 (education fund) for a contract with the Illinois

Principals Association for mentoring of 16 resident administrators.

- The Examiner -

Sabres soccer defeated by OPRF in tourney final

By: Seth Hancock

The **Streamwood** soccer team was unable to recapture the defensive magic in its first game against Oak Park-River Forest (OPRF) in the championship game of the Streamwood Fall Classic on Saturday, Sept. 16 at Millennium Field.

Earlier in the tournament, the Sabres battled to a 0-0 tie with OPRF on Tuesday, Sept. 12. In the rematch for the tournament title, OPRF beat Streamwood 5-0.

“I told the team that sometimes it’s okay to get your butt kicked,” said Streamwood coach Matt Polovin. “I’d rather have it happen now than at the end of the season when we are getting ready for regionals. Hopefully, this will humble us a bit and make us ready to come out for our next game.

We have to just forget about it. I know it’s tough when you lose 5-0 in a championship game. We have to push it aside and move on and be ready for the next game.” Sabres goalie Issac Morales made seven saves in the title game. He was only called upon for three saves during the scoreless tie.

OPRF, which remains undefeated, was averaging three goals per game entering the first matchup with Streamwood.

Alex Alcala was called on to defend OPRF’s top scorer, and Polovin said he “had one of the best games I’ve seen all season and maybe one of the best I’ve seen in a couple years by a single defender.”

Streamwood finished 3-1-1 for the tournament with a 7-2 win over Timothy Christian (Saturday, Sept. 9), a 3-0 win over Lake Park (Thursday, Sept. 14) and 4-3 victory over St. Charles East (Friday, Sept. 15).

AJ Sabanovic led the offense with four goals and five assists during the tournament. Streamwood had eight goal scorers during the tournament with Max Galvan and Ricardo

Aguilar scoring twice each. Morales had 23 saves during the event.

The Sabres entered the tournament having earned a 4-3 win in their Upstate Eight Conference opener against Larkin on Tuesday, Sept. 5 and a 3-2 nonconference win over Romeoville on Thursday, Sept. 7 both at Millennium Field. Jairo Sanchez had two goals and Sabanovic and Sergio Barrera one each against Larkin while Alcala, Sabanovic and Aguilar scored against Romeoville. Streamwood is now 9-3-1 overall

- The Chicago Tribune - Paul Johnson's Aurora-Elgin area boys soccer rankings and player of the week

By: Paul Johnson

Sep 19, 2023



Geneva's Trent Giansanti, left, battles for control of the ball with St. Charles East's Connor Brown during a Class 3A Addison Trail Sectional semifinal on Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021. (James C. Svehla/The Beacon-News)

West Aurora and Streamwood close in on Elgin at the top of the rankings, while Geneva's Trent Giansanti is the player of the week.

Top 10

With records through Monday and previous rankings in parentheses.

1. **Elgin** 7-2 (1)

Eduardo Nava comes through with a hat trick in a 4-0 win over Riverside-Brookfield.

2. West Aurora 11-0 (4)

A late goal from Pacifique Ndayishimiye gives Blackhawks 4-3 win over Minooka.

3. **Streamwood** 9-3-2 (5)

Sabres reach finals of tournament they hosted but lose 5-0 to Oak Park-River Forest.

4. St. Charles East 8-3 (3)

Marc Walker is up to seven goals this season after a loss to Streamwood in penalty kicks.

5. Marmion 5-1-3 (6)

New turf field has Cadets excited to better utilize speed in transition from grass.

6. Dundee-Crown 8-3 (7)

Diego Flores scores pair of goals in a 5-0 win over Crystal Lake Central.

7. St. Charles North 6-4 (2)

North Stars are on a 1-3 slide after 4-2 loss to York.

8. Oswego East 6-3-2 (8)

Wolves bounce back from consecutive losses with wins over Sandburg, Lincoln-Way West.

9. Oswego 10-4-1 (10)

Panthers see seven-game winning streak snapped in 1-0 loss to Bolingbrook.

10. **Larkin** 8-2 (9)

Royals recover from two straight losses, dominate in wins over Round Lake, Glenbard South.

Player of the Week

Senior forward Trent Giansanti followed up a four-goal performance against Bartlett with a goal and an assist in Geneva's 3-2 win over South Elgin.