

Press Clippings 02-10-21

---The Courier-News--- 02/10/2021

U-46 families get break

Students won't have to pay instructional fees during the 2021-22 school year

By: Karie Angell Luc

Fees paid for registration, equipment usage, sports and other things will be waived for the 2021-22 school year to give District U-46 families a little financial relief, Superintendent Tony Sanders told the school board Monday.

"Last year at this time we certainly didn't know in February when we presented last year's fees that we would be entering an unparalleled pandemic," Sanders said.

"Had we known at that point, we might have made different decisions," he said. "For this year, we are really looking at trying to help our families by waiving the instructional fees."

Board members concurred with the administration's action.

"I know this has been a difficult year and continues to be a challenge," board President Sue Kerr said.

The fee waivers will result in a financial loss of \$2.3 million to \$2.5 million.

Jeff King, deputy superintendent of operations/chief school business official, assured board members there is enough money in reserve funds to cover the loss.

The waiver will be in effect starting in fall 2021 and will include the fees paid for half- and full-day kindergarten, grades one through six and the Ignite Program for elementary schools.

Parents of middle and high schools students will not have to pay for instructional materials and Chromebook usage.

The \$80 athletic participation fee per sport for middle-schoolers also will be waived as will the \$150 fee for each sport a high school student plays (the fee for football is \$200).

The fee is capped at two sports per student or four sports per family, officials said.

Optional a la carte fees for high school students that won't be collected includes \$250 for driver's education, \$100 for a parking permit, \$46 for a lifeguard course and a \$40 activity fee.

Rates for student insurance plans, such as for dental, are not yet determined, but King said few families elect to pay for coverage. New rate amounts will be known in April or May.

Also waived for one year are registration fees for the Central Schools Programs, which includes Moving On, SWEP and Center House.

Board member Melissa Owens said the plan is a good one although it won't help everyone.

"I think this provides some welcome relief for the families of our students," she said. "The one group that is not getting relief (are families with high school seniors). They're not going to benefit."

Sanders acknowledged that was true.

“We have had some discussion, but I don’t have an answer for you at this point,” he said.

“The fees that we charged this year were based on the fees that were approved by the board last year and most of them have already been paid,” Sanders said. “Unfortunately, we’ve not come up with a solution for that yet.”

---WBBM Newsradio--- 02/10/2021

School districts look to offer tax break, refund school fees amid ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

By: Bernie Tafoya



CHICAGO (WBBM NEWSRADIO) -- Because of these very different times, school districts in the Chicago area are making decisions on whether to refund school fees and to give property taxpayers a break during the ongoing pandemic.

At least three school districts have made such decisions this week. The second largest school district in the state, Elgin District U-46 decided this week to waive up to \$2.5 million in fees paid for registration, equipment usage, sports, and other things for the 2021-22 school year, because students were not in schools for a few months.

"Last year at this time, we certainly didn't know in February when we presented last year's fees that we would be entering an unparalleled pandemic. Had we known at that point, we might have made different decisions, but by the time March hit, we were already doing registration and charging people fees," said Superintendent Tony Sanders.

"For this year, we are really looking at trying to help our families by waiving the instructional fees."

The waiver will be in effect starting in fall 2021 and will include the fees paid for half- and full-day kindergarten, first through sixth grade, and the Ignite Program for elementary schools.

Parents of middle and high schools students will not have to pay for instructional materials and Chromebook usage, the district said.

Additionally, the \$80 athletic participation fee per sport for middle-schoolers will be waived, as will the \$150 fee for each sport a high school student plays. The fee is capped at two sports per student or four sports per family, district officials said.

Elgin District U-46 is also giving a more than \$9 million tax break to property owners.

Meanwhile, the Stevenson High School District 125 school board authorized a \$1 million property tax abatement and agreed to refund all student fees for the current school year.

"In a typical year, these funds are collected for a variety of needs, but this year is far from typical," board Vice President Dave Weisberg said in an announcement of the decisions. "I am grateful to our school leadership for their ongoing thoughtfulness with respect to our resources, especially during what has been a challenging year for many of our families."

Savings from the tax abatement will appear on property owners' 2020 tax statements, when taxes are due in June and September 2021.

But, Indian Prairie School District 204 will not be refunding tax money. The district said its finances are far different from those in Naperville School District 203, which is refunding \$10 million in tax money not spent during the pandemic.

SPORTS

---The Courier-News--- 02/10/2021

Boys Basketball

Wafford, South Elgin come 'a long way'

Senior guard hits winning jumper with a minute left to lift South Elgin past St. Charles East

By: Paul Johnson



St. Charles East guard AJ Gaca drives between South Elgin's Aaron Wafford (4) and Drew Cwik (21) during a game in St. Charles on Monday.

South Elgin's Aaron Wafford took advantage of his time away from the team.

The boys basketball season was delayed over two months by the Illinois High School Association due to the coronavirus pandemic, but the senior guard didn't rest.

He improved.

"His game just continued to develop," Storm coach Brett Johnson said of Wafford. "I got to watch it on film and see what he can do. I'm proud of him.

"He's come a long way. I think it's special because he's gone through a lot for three years to get to this point where he can have a varsity opportunity."

In Monday's 61-58 nonconference victory at St. Charles East, Wafford put that skill on display. He scored 13 of his 18 points in the second half, converting the winning jumper with a minute left in the game.

"I had the ball and I had a nice look," Wafford said. "I've been working on that all summer. It's a perfect shot for us. I got to hit it, got a few stops, and won it."

Wafford had to be creative to get gym time with things shut down, but when he and his teammates had an opportunity, they jumped at the chance.

"We would find a gym anywhere we could, obviously being safe within the regulations and stuff like that," Wafford said. "We spent countless hours in the gym over the past few months just getting better."

South Elgin (1-1) led briefly twice during the first half — 15-14 in the first quarter after a pair of driving layups from Drew Cwik and 33-31 in the second quarter after Cwik made two straight 3-pointers.

St. Charles East (0-1), however, took a 39-35 lead into halftime and led until the 5:30 mark of the fourth quarter.

Wafford's jumper with a minute remaining gave the Storm a 57-55 lead, and they never looked back.

"That's a confident young kid right there who has a high basketball IQ knowing what to do," Johnson said. "He said, 'I want the ball in my hands in tough situations.'"

South Elgin ended the game on a 13-6 burst to pull away from the Saints, who were making their season debut.

"We're happy to be back," St. Charles East coach Patrick Woods said. "Not the result we wanted, but I thought our kids played hard.

"Unlike others, I don't think our kids play too much in leagues around here. For seven days of practice and not playing in 11 months, I thought we were pretty good. We have a long way to go, obviously."

One bright spot was senior forward Zach Masud. He paced the Saints with 20 points after biding his time to get meaningful varsity minutes. He added 10 rebounds.

"He waited his turn," Woods said. "He's definitely an example of that. I expect that from him pretty much all the time. We just have to get a couple more guys on the same page."

Matthew Peddy scored 11 points for the Saints and Brice Clayborn had 10.

Cwik led all scorers with 22 points for South Elgin. He scored 16 points in the first half.

When the Saints started to key in on Cwik, though, Wafford started to take over.

Wafford and his teammates are just happy to have a chance to close out their careers on a high note.

“We’re all very grateful for this, and we’d like to take advantage of it,” Wafford said. “Especially for us seniors, getting one last ride out here, it’s been great.”

Paul Johnson is a freelance reporter for The Beacon-News.

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"IF I WERE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT A NEWSPAPER OR A NEWSPAPER WITHOUT A GOVERNMENT, I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO CHOOSE THE LATTER." THOMAS JEFFERSON

50 cents
February 10, 2021

Tobacco store given
special use permit
See Page 3

Guest Seat:
Dictorial democracy?
See Page 5

District U-46 approves variety of expense items

By Seth Hancock

The Board of Education in School District U-46 unanimously approved, of \$3.7 million in expenditure items at its meeting on Monday, Jan. 25 which was virtual due to COVID-19 regulations.

Three domestic water replacement projects were approved, all to be done by Northwest Contractors, Inc. The total combined cost is \$2.7 million to be paid through the operations and maintenance and life safety funds as well as a \$50,000 state grant.

The projects will take place at Streamwood's Ridge Circle (\$1 million), Elgin's Hillcrest (\$885,000) and

Elgin's Ron D. O'Neal (\$744,000) elementary schools. The proposals state that pipe corrosion has "been repaired multiple times," and "instead of continuing to make costly temporary repairs, a replacement plan involving the installation of copper water lines is recommended."

As part of the third phase of a repainting project at Streamwood High School, the district will spend \$430,000 (operations and maintenance fund) with Celtic Environmental, Inc. for paint removal.

With RVK, Inc., the district will spend \$328,105 (education fund) for a five-year contract renewal with its employee retirement plan investment advisor. The advisor will provide "selection and monitoring of investment funds with better performance and lower

fees," "ongoing investment advisory services" and "assistance with advising the retirement committee," according to the proposal.

As part of a domestic water piping replacement at Elgin High School, U-46 will spend \$162,300 (operations and maintenance fund) with High Efficiency Professional Abatement, Inc. to remove asbestos-containing materials.

U-46 will spend \$52,470 (education fund) with Riverside Insights to provide the Cognitive Abilities Test, used to identify gifted students, to second through sixth graders as well as \$26,492 (operations and maintenance fund) with USA Insulation for an insulation project at Bartlett's Liberty Elementary School.

The board also unanimously approved \$8.8 million in itemized bills.

Dual language electives approved by Dist. U-46

By Seth Hancock

The Board of Education in School District U-46 unanimously approved a curriculum proposal to provide expanded dual language elective options to high school students at its meeting on Monday, Jan. 25 which was virtual due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The taxpayer expense, estimated to be \$91,966 to purchase Spanish language resources, is due to the expansion of the dual language program, according to the proposal.

"As the Dual Language (DL) program continues to roll up through the high school, students continue to express interest in Social Studies elective courses in the Spanish Language," the proposal states. "In an effort to provide more elective options for Dual Language students, next year schools will be running Dual Language Psychology and Dual

Language World Geography."

The proposal adds: "Being able to offer these courses in Spanish helps DL students meet the [language] allocation requirements of their program with more choices and flexibility in their schedule and perhaps allows them to take other electives or pathway courses that are only offered in English. The curriculum for all these courses is already in place and (board) approved. This proposal is only to fully resource each course with Spanish materials."

Dual language elective options were available in 2020-2021 in Advanced Placement Psychology and World History. This will provide options in Intro to Psychology and World Geography in 2021-2022.

The proposal states student enrollment was used to determine these new courses.

Resolution supports green infrastructure policy

By Kristin Carreno

Trustees voted unanimously in favor of a resolution adopting and implementing a green infrastructure policy at the Village Board meeting on Thursday, Feb. 4.

According to Public Works Director Matt Mann, this resolution ensures community support of green infrastructure which can be defined as elements or best management practices that reduce runoff flow rates and minimize pollutants entering the storm water system and waterways.

The village code and comprehensive plan require green infrastructure best management practices which correspond with the elements of a green infrastructure policy by approaching projects and developments as a potential opportunity to implement green infrastructure throughout the community, according to Mann.

"Some typical examples are detention ponds, native plantings, parkway trees and permeable pavement," said Mann.

According to Mann, the goal of this policy is to ensure that the

planning, scoping, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, engineering, operation and maintenance activities for projects take into consideration green infrastructure practices when feasible. It is important to note that this policy is not intended to mandate that green infrastructure be incorporated into every project but that green infrastructure improvements are considered as part of any project where the village determines incorporation of the improvements is permissible, financially viable and consistent with other village policies and plans.

The implementation of green infrastructure into future plans within the Village of Streamwood will be simple and seamless as the elements are currently being implemented in village developments, transportation and engineering projects, according to Mann.

"The gist of this is we will be much more competitive when applying for grants when this policy is adopted," Mann said.



New vehicles ticketed for police

Thanks to a recent approving vote by the Streamwood Village Board, the police department will be receiving some new vehicles. For details on the pending acquisition, see story on page 8.

(Examiner photo by Bruce Leighty)