

Press Clippings 03/28/20 to 03/30/20

---Press Clippings---03/30/2020
There are no U-46 related news stories.

---Daily Herald---03/29/20
Students begin remote learning Tuesday
By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Josh Carpenter, Elgin Area School District U-46's assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, said district students will begin distance for the first time starting Tuesday.



Fox Meadow Elementary Principal Sjoukje Brown, left, distributes Chromebooks Friday with other volunteers in front of the South Elgin school. The district distributed thousands of devices last week in preparation for distance learning starting Tuesday.

Starting Tuesday, Elgin Area School District U-46's nearly 38,400 students are going back to school, virtually.

There will be no high-fives from teachers or students shuffling down hallways to get to classrooms. While schools across the suburbs and state remain closed due to COVID-19, their students will begin learning remotely through online classrooms Tuesday and continue until in-person instruction can resume, state education officials said Friday.

Remote learning days and the planning time required to make that happen will count as actual student attendance days and toward the school year, according to the Illinois State Board of Education's emergency rules.

During this time, schools may implement either an e-learning or remote learning day plan providing students with instruction and access to educators through whatever means possible, state officials said.

Technically, U-46 is not equipped to provide e-learning.

Yet, the state's second-largest school district will test a new distance learning plan created in collaboration with teachers. It has bridged the technological divide by utilizing personal Chromebooks and available portable devices to deliver instruction.

"It's really stressed us as a system," said Josh Carpenter, U-46 assistant superintendent for teaching and learning. "It's exciting for us to be able to learn in a different way and personalize learning."

There will be bumps in the road. We will learn from our successes and also learn from the challenges that we are going to face."

The district previously issued roughly 26,000 one-to-one devices to students in fifth through 12th grades. Last week, officials pooled 5,800 communal devices from all school buildings and distributed them to families that needed them.

"We wanted to ensure every household has at least one device," Carpenter said.

U-46 also recently purchased a learning management system for teachers allowing them to provide remote instruction, resources and lessons for students. It also allows for video conferencing. Officials began training teachers Friday on how to set up their learning platforms.

Many teachers also have been using Google Classroom for instruction.

Teachers will be accessible to students between 9 and 11 a.m. and noon to 3 p.m. They will have ongoing interaction with students, but officials are still working through the logistics of providing live teaching.

"To the best of our ability, we have tried to create a learning day that is common across our district," Carpenter said. "We are trying to support our staff and students in moving to a new learning environment. This is new for everyone."

A state advisory group comprising teachers, students, paraprofessionals, related service personnel, principals, and district and regional superintendents recommended best practices for remote learning.

They address instruction, grading, communication, social-emotional needs, content selection and delivery, family engagement, as well as specific guidance for different grade bands, English Learners, and students with disabilities.

To view the group's recommendations, visit isbe.net.

---The Courier-News---03/29/20

U-46 foundation launches fundraiser to provide supplies

Seeking donations for new campaign to help area families during shutdown

By: Rafael Guerrero

School District U-46's charitable arm is seeking donations for a new campaign to assist Elgin-area families during the coronavirus pandemic.

The U-46 United campaign's first goal will be to raise funds to supply families with care kits of toiletries and household supplies.

"We have seen time and time again that U-46 families look out for each other and take care of each other, and nobody wants to see a family struggle during this crisis. If we can help each other, we will," said U-46 Educational Foundation president Bud Wilson in the announcement.

The district's educational foundation has typically raised money and sought support for projects not funded by tax dollars, such as the planetarium/observatory, student scholarships, and mini-grants for teachers.

Foundation coordinator Dawn Curran said the initial phase of the campaign will go toward fundraising for items students need at home and would expand into funding technology needs in the community. As other needs arise, the campaign may shift its fundraising focus, she said.

"When we actually contacted local food pantries on what people needed, we learned people needed things beyond food, like toiletries, personal products, household cleaners," said Curran, who was hired this year as the foundation's first full-time coordinator.

A \$5,000 donation started the campaign, and another \$2,000 had been donated as of Thursday, Curran said. The hope is they can raise at least \$10,000 outside of the initial \$5,000, she added.

The plan is to distribute 4,000 care kits at the 26 meal distribution sites at some point in April. These care kits would include soap, shampoo, toothpaste, laundry and dish detergents, and other household products.

"Hopefully everything will be delivered to us next week," said Curran.

Donations can be made at the U-46 Educational Foundation webpage at u-46.org/Foundation and clicking on the "U-46 United For COVID" tab.

---The Courier-News---03/28/20

U-46 foundation launches fundraiser to provide toiletries and supplies to families during shutdown

By: Rafael Guerrero

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