

Press Clippings 08/07/20

---Daily Herald---08/07/20

Editorial: Ultimately, what's at risk in reopening schools is our children's - and others' – health

By: The Daily Herald Editorial Board

It's difficult to have a conversation about whether to hold in-person schooling in the fall without things breaking down into partisan arguments.

But it's the safety of our kids -- and others -- that is at stake.

We understand that there are as many reasons for sending kids to school -- or for keeping them home -- as there are kids who need to learn and parents who need to work.

We have kids and jobs, too. We've dealt with the challenge of e-learning. We get it.

When we reported that Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire had taken the step on July 20 to eliminate in-school learning until the second semester -- at the earliest -- we wondered whether others would follow suit.

And many, many suburban districts did.

The thought of mandatory, 14-day quarantines for students or employees who contract the coronavirus (as well as for those who come into contact with them) loomed large in the minds of Stevenson leaders, Superintendent Eric Twadell said during that night's school board meeting, which was held electronically.

In addition to the risks posed to the student body, educators and others in the school, the disruption would create a logistical nightmare to keep the school running, he said.

And Stevenson High School District consists of one school.

On the other end of the spectrum, the state's second largest district, **Elgin Area School District U-46**, with more than 40,000 students from 11 communities in more than 50 schools, decided to delay the start of in-school learning for the lower grades until Oct. 22, when the district will employ a hybrid model. For the district's five high schools, it will be distance learning for the full fall semester. The sheer volume of students makes safe passing periods impossible, officials say.

Parents who can work from home have challenges when kids are around. Parents who must leave home to work have even greater challenges. In many ways, the support for or objection to at-home learning is informed by one's personal situation.

But we cannot overlook that it's our kids' safety at stake -- and the safety of the many people at various walks of life with whom they may come in contact.

While teenagers are less likely to feel the full effects of COVID-19 and, in many cases, will have mild to no symptoms, we still need to worry about what they unwittingly bring home with them from school to older family members.

Delaying the opening of schools is a decision for each district to make. But, remember: it's our kids' health and the health of us all that is at stake.

That's a risk that demands the utmost consideration and caution.

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There are no U-46 related news stories for this day.

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Cops building bonds

By: Madhu Krishnamurthi

Building relationships, constant interactions and conversations with students help deter threats to school safety, says Streamwood police officer Courtney Stoiber, a school resource officer at Tefft Middle School in Streamwood.

Stoiber is among a cadre of resource officers stationed at **Elgin Area School District U-46** middle and high schools. She is trained in crisis intervention.

"It's highly focused on de-escalation and identifying persons in crisis ... with mental or physical disabilities, on the autism spectrum, with mental illnesses or other emotional needs," she said. "It's about verbally counseling them through that crisis and referring them to staff or resources to better address their needs."

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Minority student arrests

By: Madhu Krishnamurthi

At **U-46**, student arrests for behavioral infractions are down from 343 in the 2013-14 school year to 36 in 2019-20. The majority of arrests during that period involved Black and Hispanic students.

Latinos constitute nearly 55% of the district's 38,395 students, followed by whites 26%, Asians 8%, Blacks 6% and two or more races 3%, data show.

Rich Bosh, a Bartlett police detective who has served 14 years as a resource officer for Bartlett High, was part of an oversight committee reviewing district policies and procedures for identifying students as threats. He started a safety task force at the school that gives students a say in school culture.

"Kids really took ownership of the school," Bosh said. "That was a really good thing that we hope to build on with other schools."

John Heiderscheidt, U-46 director of school safety and culture, said officials are considering expanding student mentoring through resource officers.

A group of parents is pushing student-led violence prevention/safety programs to reduce bullying and build relationships, such as the ["See something, say something"](#) initiative started after the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut.

"Our officers are helping to build those programs at a grass-roots level," Heiderscheidt said. "Students are leading the effort to grow that."

The district will be asking resource officers to provide A.L.I.C.E. (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) active shooter response training for school employees.

The Elgin Police Department also trains its officers in the Handle with Care program.

"It's an excellent way to be a trauma-informed care community," Heiderscheidt said.

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There are no U-46 related news stories.
