

## **Press Clippings 11/2/2021**

**---Daily Herald---11/2/2021**

### **Elgin planners support relocating near school a facility that counsels domestic abuse convicts**

**By James Fuller**

One of the main facilities in Kane County offering court-mandated counseling for people convicted of domestic violence wants to move to a larger facility near a middle school.

The proposal to move the Elgin-based Community Crisis Center program to a building across the street from **Kimball Middle School** on McLean Boulevard comes in hopes of serving more clients, after a spike in domestic and child abuse cases throughout the county last year.

The Elgin planning and zoning commission unanimously recommended the plan Monday night, with few questions.

Kane County prosecutors filed charges in more than 1,000 misdemeanor domestic battery cases in 2020, a 5.4% increase from 2019, according to the most recent annual report from the Kane County state's attorney's office. That jump follows nearly a decade of declining domestic cases.

There were nearly 300 felony domestic violence cases on top of that, including more than 100 cases involving strangulation or great bodily harm, a 15.5% increase in such cases from the year prior. The report attributes the spike to financial and employment difficulties during the pandemic as well as being quarantined at home with abusers.

The Community Crisis Center program runs out of the Ecker Center building on Larkin Avenue. But Maribel Duran-Mendez, the abuse intervention program coordinator, told Elgin's plan commission Monday night that she needs more space to accommodate the increased number of clients.

"We want to stop domestic violence," she told the commission.

The potential answer is a vacant office on the first floor of a building at 452. S. McLean Blvd. The two-story building is already home to the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services, on the second floor.

The space would host up to four employees and 10 clients at a time. Counseling sessions run Monday through Saturday from as early as 8 a.m. to as late as 9 p.m.

Duran-Mendez said the location is much easier to navigate because the program would have an entire floor, and clients have two nearby bus stops to help them reach the site.

The location is adjacent to existing multi-tenant office buildings to the north and south. There are three single-family homes to the west. Kimball Middle School is across McLean Boulevard to the east.

The city council must take a vote before the plan can move forward.

### **---Elgin Courier-News---11/2/2021**

**U-46 lost more than 530 students between this school year and last, continuing a drop the district will keep seeing annually, officials said**

**By Mike Danahey**



Enrollment at Elgin High School is up slightly this school year but that won't be true in future years, District U-46 officials said. The district's overall enrollment is going down because the birth rate is going down, they said. (Dave Gathman, The Courier-News)

Enrollment is down another year at **School District U-46**, although not as dramatically as had been seen in previous years, district officials said.

Numbers presented to the U-46 School Board Monday night show the district lost 533 students between this school year and last. That's about a third of the drop seen between the 2020-21 school year and 2019-20, when the district lost 1,391 students.

"There are just fewer and fewer kids coming through our system," U-46 Chief of Staff Brian Lindholm said.

The 2021-22 enrollment is 36,090. In 2019-20, it was 38,014.

Despite the decline, the district remains the largest in Illinois outside of Chicago. The next closest in size is Rockford District 205, which had about 26,100 students in 2020-21.

Superintendent Tony Sanders said U-46's drop was not as steep as what the state as a whole saw.

Last week, the Illinois State Board of Education released enrollment figures that showed the state had 1,887,316 students at the start of the current school year. The number a year earlier was 1,957,018 — a drop of about 3%.

U-46's high point for enrollment was 2014-15, when the district reported having 40,487 students, Lindholm said. The largest decline was the one the district had two years ago.

Lindholm said the current enrollment figure includes 240 students who returned to U-46 schools this year. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents opted to either homeschool or send their child to a private school last year, he said.

"It's great to have these students back in U-46 schools," Lindholm said.

Another thing to consider, he added, was the 2018 opening of the Elgin Math and Science Academy charter school. About 350 children attend kindergarten through 6th grade there, students who would otherwise be attending U-46 schools, he said.

“There are several factors that are impacting our enrollment declines, the most significant being the declining birth rates across the district,” Lindholm said. “Over the last 15 years, the birth rate has dropped approximately 1,000 per year.”

While middle and high school enrollment has remained fairly consistent over the last six years, enrollment in grades K-6 is going down, he said. It’s anticipated the district will eventually be down to about 2,500 per grade level and will have an overall enrollment in the low 30,000s, he said.

Total K-6 enrollment this year is 16,995, 545 less than reported in September 2020. The biggest increase was at Wayne Elementary School in Wayne, which has 39 more students this year than last, Lindholm said. Timber Trails Elementary School in Hoffman Estates and Hilltop Elementary in Elgin had the biggest loss at 48 students each, he said.

Wayne had a significant number of students being homeschooled in 2020-21, Lindholm said.

Six of eight district middle schools have fewer students this year than last, seeing a loss of 159 students total and a current total enrollment of 5,618, numbers show. The school with the biggest drop is Ellis Middle School in Elgin, which is down 60 students from last year.

Collectively enrollment across the district’s five high schools is up 184 students, with a total of 12,401 this year, Lindholm said. Numbers are up at Elgin, Larkin and South Elgin high schools, but down slightly at Bartlett and Streamwood, data shows.

That won’t continue, and the high school numbers will be far fewer five years from now, Lindholm said.

“I really think (these numbers are) consistent with what we were seeing just prior to COVID. It’s really due to those (declining) birth rates,” he said.

