

# Press Clippings - 12/06/2023

## - The Examiner -

### U-46 academic data lags behind state per ISBE

By: Seth Hancock

December 06, 2023

**School District U-46's** academic numbers lag behind the state in every category, according to the annual report card from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

The report card was released last month, and the data presented to the U-46 Board of Education on Nov. 6.

The district's number of commendable schools, the second highest rating, dropped from 40 to 29 while targeted increased from 12 to 15 and comprehensive from one to seven. U-46 had no exemplary schools, the highest rating.

"A school that has no underperforming student groups, a graduation rate greater than 67 percent, and whose performance is not in the top 10 percent of schools statewide," the ISBE states of commendable.

Targets are schools with "one or more student groups performing at or below the level of the 'all students' group in the lowest performing 5 percent of schools," and comprehensive schools are "in the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools in Illinois and any high school with a graduation rate of 67 percent or less," according to the ISBE.

On the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR), the district saw 23.3 percent meeting or exceeding expectations in English language arts (ELA) and 19.8 percent in math, up from 19.6 and 19.3 percent respectively last year. State numbers: ELA (35.4 percent) and math (27.1 percent).

The district's growth percentile was 45.9 in ELA, down from 47.9, and 44.6 in math, down from 49.5.

On the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessment, the district had 12.8 percent at-target or advanced in ELA (down from 13.1), 9.5 in math (down from 13.6) and 6.2 in science (up from 5.4). The state was 15.3 in ELA, 15.4 in math and 10.2 in science. On the science assessment, the district had 47.1 percent proficient or exemplary, up from 45.8 last year. The state was 52.2.

The district saw gains in proficiency for ELA (19.4 to 22.9 percent), math (18.9 to 19.2 percent) and

science (45 to 46.6 percent). State numbers: ELA (34.6), math (26.9) and science (51.8).

The district had 28.9 percent of eighth graders passing algebra, up from 25.5 last year and behind the state's 31.

U-46's graduation rate was 85.5 percent compared to 87.3 percent for the state.

## **- The Examiner -**

### **Engagement still lagging for U-46 staff per survey**

**By: Seth Hancock**

**December 06, 2023**

Over two-thirds of **School District U46** employees are either not engaged or actively disengaged from work according to an employee engagement survey presented at the Monday, Nov. 20 Board of Education meeting.

The results showed that 50 percent of the 2,934 respondents were not engaged and 18 percent were actively disengaged while 32 percent were engaged.

Brian Lindholm, chief of staff, said this was the second year the district has used Gallup to conduct an engagement survey.

This year's results were better than last year's, including in number of respondents which saw 2,897 in 2022. Last year's numbers were 23 percent engaged, 54 percent not engaged and 23 percent actively disengaged.

According to Gallup: "Employee engagement is the involvement and enthusiasm of employees in their work and workplace. Employees can become engaged when their basic needs are met and when they have a chance to contribute, a sense of belonging, and opportunities to learn and grow."

"Engaged employees know the scope of their job, thrill in the challenge of their work every day, are in roles that use their talents and always look for new and different ways of achieving the outcomes of their role," the Gallup survey results added.

Gallup stated that organizations in the top quartile of engaged staff have 59 percent lower turnover, 17 percent higher productivity, 70 percent fewer safety incidents, the wellbeing of staff is 66 percent higher, absenteeism is 41 percent lower and organizational citizenship is 13 percent higher. This year's results put the district in the 25th percentile, up from the 13th percentile last year.

The survey had 12 categories of questions. Lindholm said there was growth in all categories, significant in 10 categories and slight growth in two.

The district is now sharing results with teams and determining action plans, and it will consider a possible “pulse survey” (a few questions) for the spring and creating an “accountability index.”

## - Chicago Tribune -

### As a leader, senior point guard Luis Vergara tries to ‘not step out too far’ for South Elgin. Instead, he steps up.

By: Paul Johnson

December 05, 2023



South Elgin's Luis Vergara (22) drives against Larkin's Jahvion Sowers (10) during an Upstate Eight Conference game in South Elgin on Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023. (H. Rick Bamman/The Beacon-News)

As the senior leader for a relatively inexperienced team, **South Elgin** point guard Luis Vergara is embracing his role. And he tries his best to keep things simple.

The 5-foot-10 Vergara just gets it. He realizes some of his younger teammates look up to him on the court, so he wants to guide them through the battles as best he can.

“I feel like I have to control the team, make sure that everyone is valuing possessions,” Vergara said. “We know we’re going to face pressure, so just value possessions.”

“I feel like everyone has to do their certain roles and not step out too far. We’re doing just enough to maintain success.”

Tuesday’s 59-49 Upstate Eight Conference win over **Larkin** wasn’t always pretty, but Vergara helped spark the Storm in the second half when they started to pull away.

Vergara led all scorers with 18 points for **South Elgin** (3-4, 2-0). Ethan Zagore followed with 16 points and Derek Clark added 13. Josh Hibbett paced Larkin (0-5, 0-2) with 14 points. Jahvion Sowers had 11.

**Larkin** was hanging around in the third quarter when Vergara scored seven straight points. He had a driving layup, a 3-pointer from the wing and a pullup jumper on the wing, extending the lead to 40-32.

While **South Elgin** led by as many as 15, Vergara tried to apply his own advice to his game in the second half as the Storm pulled away.



South Elgin's Luis Vergara (22) guards Larkin's Andre Jones (3) during an Upstate Eight Conference game in South Elgin on Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023. (H. Rick Bamman/The Beacon-News)

“I just wanted to make sure that I had good possessions,” Vergara said. “I knew they were going to come out scrambling. We just want to value possessions and execute.

“The momentum, I just felt like we could keep going with it, and now we can take it to the games ahead of us.”

**South Elgin** coach Phil Church described Vergara as one of the few veterans on his roster, so he’s comfortable putting the ball in his hands.

“Right now, Luis has the most experience running the point,” Church said. “He’s definitely not happy with how many turnovers he had. Those are fixes we can deal with, small tweaks that we’ll take care of.”

Although the Royals cut the lead to 33-30 early in the third, eight turnovers in that quarter proved too much to overcome.



South Elgin's Derek Clark (20) shoots over Larkin's 's Tyler Burke (2) during an Upstate Eight Conference game in South Elgin on Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023. (H. Rick Bamman/The Beacon-News)

“We couldn’t take care of the ball,” **Larkin** coach Deryn Carter said. “Right now we’re turning the ball over too much. We’re in the Christmas season. We’re giving games away.”

But despite the fact the Royals are still looking for their first win of the season, Carter remains positive about his team’s direction.

“We’re going to keep getting better,” Carter said. “As crazy as it sounds, I kind of like where our guys are at. The effort is unquestioned. We’re ready to carry on and add to that.

“We start with energy and effort. That’s what we’ll build off.”

One hallmark of **South Elgin** in the early going has been perseverance. Larkin jumped out to a 12-3 lead Tuesday but the Storm wound up winning by 10.



South Elgin's Luis Vergara (22) defends as Larkin's Jahvion Sowers (10) drives toward the lane during an Upstate Eight

Conference game in South Elgin on Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023. (H. Rick Bamman/The Beacon-News)

“I think it’s a testament to these guys,” Church said. “They’ve been punched before and they keep battling. Every team we play says the same thing — that we play hard.

“It’s good to turn that into a win.”

Vergara believes people may have overlooked **South Elgin** coming into the season. Wins like Tuesday’s decision show him and his teammates they have some surprises up their sleeves.

“There are obviously a lot of things we can work on, but I feel like we have a lot of potential,” Vergara said. “I think we can shock some people.”

## **- The examiner -**

### **Sabres girls hoops topple Tomcats for first UEC win**

**By: Seth Hancock**

**December 06, 2023**

The **Streamwood** girls basketball team used teamwork and defense to defeat East Aurora 41-17 in Upstate Eight Conference play on Friday, Dec. 1 at Streamwood.

The Sabres defense, which had nine steals and 11 blocked shots, held East Aurora to single digits each quarter, including a shutout frame.

“We’ve been stressing defense,” said Streamwood coach Elizabeth Endriukaitis. “Almost every single practice, that’s what we do. We push defense because defense wins games, and we know we have the ability to lock down offensive players and win games off defense.”

It was a slow start for the Sabres who held just an 8-6 lead after the first quarter, but they ran away in the middle frames outscoring the visitors 25-4 to take a 33-10 lead after three, which included a shutout second quarter for a 20-6 halftime advantage.

Brianna Coffey led the effort scoring nine of her game-high 15 points over the middle frames, including a threepointer. She added 17 rebounds and seven assists.

“We just weren’t playing our basketball,” Endriukaitis said of the first quarter. “Going into the game, we said that we need to play Streamwood ball. It isn’t about doing too much, it’s about playing our game and controlling the pace.”

Endriukaitis added: “I think we started being too complacent and we just told them they have to

step up, and they did. I think we really played as a team tonight and it was a wellrounded win. I think this was a team win and everyone who came off the bench contributed. This was an amazing team win for us.”

Jamia Gatlin (six points, five rebounds), Ayumi Ishikawa (five points, six rebounds, four steals, three blocks), Kailey Pawlikowski (four points, six rebounds, four blocks), Ro’aria Stewart (fours points, six rebounds), Ronaja Stewart (four points, five rebounds) and Cassandra Cruz (six rebounds) all contributed.

Streamwood opened the week with a 60-51 nonconference win at Wheeling on Monday, Nov. 27. Gatlin (21 points, seven rebounds, six steals), Coffey (20 points, nine rebounds, five steals, four assists) and Ishikawa (10 points, four steals) led the effort.

The Sabres are now 4-1 overall, 1-1 in the UEC.