

Press Clippings 09/08/2021

---Daily Herald--09/08/2021

They don't remember 9/11, but suburban teachers say students are intensely interested in it

By Lauren Rohr



Fremd High School social studies teacher LoriAnne Frieri said the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks are the most popular response when she asks about which historical event they are most interested in learning. "They want that knowledge. They want to talk with their families. They want to know how the events that occurred before their life started continues to impact and shape the way their family and community feels," Frieri said. *Brian Hill | Staff Photographer*

At the start of the school year, Fremd High School teacher LoriAnne Frieri often asks her social studies students which historical event they are most interested in studying.

The most popular response is almost always the same: the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

High schoolers today weren't born when the terrorists struck 20 years ago. They don't know what it was like to watch the twin towers collapse on live television. They can't recall the shock and fear that permeated the school as educators like Frieri tried to navigate the gravity of the events unfolding.

But students have heard personal reflections from the generations before them, from those who can pinpoint exactly where they were at the time of the attacks, she said. They desire a better understanding of that moment in time.

"They want to know how the events that occurred before their life started continue to impact and shape the way their family and community feel," Frieri said. "It's a shared humanity. Time and connection can be reestablished through the information and (stories) we bring to them."

Suburban schools and communities have memorialized the tragedy over the last two decades with ceremonies, assemblies and moments of silence. But lessons surrounding Sept. 11 also have been present in social studies classrooms, whether it be in the form of foreign policy discourse, stories of devastation and heroism, or discussions about the nation's response to tragedy.

For teachers and parents, "it was a really major event in our lives," said Bill Stepien, lead social studies teacher at St. Charles East High School. "I think there's a tendency to want to make sure it's not lost."

It's impossible to predict the lasting historical impact of a moment while you're in its midst. That was especially true, teachers say, given the scarcity of information available when they first learned of the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

That Tuesday morning, in the same **Elgin High School** classroom in which he still teaches today, **John Devine** turned on the TV and watched with more than 30 social studies students as the second hijacked plane hit the World Trade Center.

Some began to cry. Others were silent and shellshocked. A few started asking questions right away -- "Who did this, and why?"

In the age before smartphones and broadband internet, Devine remembers escorting a worried student to the main office so she could call her father, who had an office in the Pentagon. To their relief, he wasn't inside when the plane hit.

In her first year teaching at Fremd, Frieri immediately felt the weight of responsibility for the mental and emotional well-being of her students.

The school community was learning about the attacks in real time, she said, and educators had very few answers in the hours and days that followed, making the situation even more difficult to process.

"I remember being very cognizant and aware that the scope of what had happened was much larger than things that I could speak to," Frieri said. "Our students were hurting as much as the world was. My job was to make sure they received the support they needed."

The attacks hit close to home for Palatine-Schaumburg High School District 211 upon learning of the death of Mari-Rae Sopper, a 1984 Fremd graduate who was aboard American Airlines Flight 77 when it struck the Pentagon.

The loss of the Inverness native shaped the way the district has mourned and honored the nearly 3,000 victims every year for the last two decades, Frieri said.

"Sometimes these things that happen seem like a great distance away," she said. "That distance had become much smaller."

Joe Kish, then a social studies teacher at Wheaton Warrenville South High School, had the only classroom TV in the building, and students and teachers were glued to it that morning.

"At times, there were probably three or four classes in the room," said Kish, now an assistant principal. "Kids sitting on the floor. I remember kind of sitting up on a bookshelf."

Around midday, after the collapse of the second tower, school counselors and educators wrestled with whether students should continue watching history unfold. Outside the classroom, teens and teachers were worried about loved ones who had been traveling. The principal eventually told teachers to turn off the TV.

"It was probably the right move to turn the television off. And I fully recognize that now," Kish said.

Kish recently asked his Facebook friends if any were students in that classroom on 9/11. One became a Navy SEAL. Another did a tour in Iraq, was wounded and awarded the Purple Heart.

"You just look back at the faces that were mostly freshmen in that classroom at Wheaton Warrenville South in 2001 and look at what they're doing now. No. 1, it makes you very proud," Kish said. "But No. 2, there are quite a few people that had their lives changed and occupations partly determined by what happened that day."

Later that school year and in the years that followed, Stepien and many of his social studies colleagues designated some class time to discussing America's involvement and presence in the Middle East.



Bill Stepien

It was a new topic for many of them, said Stepien, who worked at St. Charles North at the time. So they shared resources and collaborated on how best to convey a message students could understand.

Explaining the often polarizing views on American foreign policy without placing blame or "being Pollyannaish" was a difficult balance, he said. But students wanted to understand what led to the Sept. 11 attacks, why the U.S. was targeted and how the nation was responding.

Over time, Stepien noticed that interest shifting from the students to the parents. While more recent high schoolers were either too young to remember or weren't born yet, he said, the adults in their families have vivid recollections of the now historic event, on par with the bombing of Pearl Harbor or the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

"Parents in my generation ... have been a major motor in making sure schools continue to teach (Sept. 11)," Stepien said.

Personal anecdotes seem to resonate most with students, especially as the lessons have evolved the last 20 years, Frieri said. Teens can empathize with the emotional response of a tragedy, she said, and they embrace the opportunity to bring the conversation back to their families and ask what they recall about Sept. 11.

"It's an important part of allowing students to experience and feel the historical record," Frieri said.

Teaching about Sept. 11

In Devine's international relations class at Elgin High School, students complete each unit of study with a policy debate, usually about America's approach to a world problem.

Among the topics covered is whether the U.S. should defend and assertively press for democracy and human rights on a global scale.

For nearly a decade after the Sept. 11 attacks, he said, support for such a policy would "win the day" among students. Now it's the losing option.

Rather than wanting to fight terrorism and rid the world of dictatorship, Devine said, "many students, like their parents and others, believe that we need to tend to our own affairs and problems."

That makes for interesting conversations about how and why perspectives shift over time, he said.

Stepien has appreciated the variety of lessons and teaching methods stemming from Sept. 11, whether it be recognizing the heroic efforts of first responders, examining the successes and pitfalls of the country's foreign policy goals, or remembering the unity and patriotism displayed across the nation in the aftermath.

The history class curriculum in St. Charles high schools was rewritten about five years ago with a greater focus on modern events, Stepien said. That has allowed educators to put Sept. 11 and the actions that followed into more comprehensive academic context, he said.

"It's my hope that we would be as brave in looking at 9/11 through a critical lens as we would anything else in our discipline," Stepien said. "I don't think social studies curriculum is a propaganda machine. I think it's one where we ask students to ask the hard questions and have the skills and confidence to answer them."

Devine hopes students don't dwell too heavily on how the U.S. was a victim of terrorism 20 years ago. Instead, he seeks to help them understand how trauma -- and the actions taken afterward -- can change a nation and its people.

"These tests of greatness are scored on the extent in which responses to tragedy remain tied to values of human dignity, justice and good faith," Devine said. "If we stay tied to some solid values, then we can help each other through."

- Daily Herald staff writer Katlyn Smith contributed to this report

---Daily Herald--09/08/2021

U-46 surveying students, staff and families about equity efforts

Daily Herald report

Elgin Area School District U-46 is asking staff, parents, and students in fourth through 12th grades to take a survey on their experiences as part of an equity audit to determine the extent to which the district is effectively serving all students.

"This is a comprehensive dive into all layers within our district," said Teresa A. Lance, assistant superintendent of equity and innovation. "It will equip all of us with information to aggressively work toward eradicating inequities on paper and in practice and provide a blueprint for improving student outcomes for years to come."

The online survey will be open for three weeks, from Sept. 13 through Oct. 5. Students will take the survey in class after receiving a link to the survey in their student email account. A link to the survey for parents/guardians and staff will be emailed. Paper surveys will be available at each school upon request.

The survey will take roughly 20 to 30 minutes and responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. Results are expected to be shared with the U-46 board of education and the public during spring 2022. For more information, visit www.u-46.org.

---The Examiner of Bartlett--09/08/2021

U-46 budget hiked again as enrollment declines

By Seth Hancock – Note: This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood

School District U-46 plans to increase spending by \$61.3 million while seeking maximum taxation as the trend continues in Fiscal Year 2022 of budget increases while enrollment continues to decline.

The budget shows revenues increasing 9.9 percent, or \$59.9 million, from \$602.4 million to \$662.3 million and expenditures rising 10.2 percent, or \$61.3 million, from \$599.5 million to \$660.8 million. The district projects a loss of 451 total students for a total enrollment on 36,049 with 64 percent of capacity in use.

This will be the seventh straight year of spending increases and enrollment declines.

The budget was presented to the Board of Education at its Monday, Aug. 23 meeting. A public hearing is planned for Sept. 23 with a vote expected on Sept. 27.

The district expects to keep hemorrhaging students at an average of 791 a year for the foreseeable future, eventually falling to an enrollment of 33,676 by 2024-2025. U-46 projected to lose 483 last year during the budget process but lost 1,391 when official numbers were reported in November.

Spending will have increased 53.7 percent and enrollment will have declined 11.4 percent under this budget from 2012 when there was \$430 million in expenditures and 40,687 students.

Staffing is projected to remain flat, 4,898 full-time equivalent, but salaries and benefits are projected to rise 6.2 percent from \$420 million to \$446 million, a \$26 million increase. That's a 23.2 percent increase from FY2018 when salaries and benefits totaled \$362 million.

Per usual, the district plans to seek the largest property tax increase allowed with a \$5.5 million increase, \$319.1 million to \$324.6 million.

Dale Burnidge, director of financial operations, said that equalized assessed valuation (EAV), used in calculating property taxes, "has been increasing over the past four years" and claimed "as evaluations increase, the tax rates decline."

Despite that, the direct tax rate has increased each year and is projected to again this year. U-46 projects EAV to rise from \$303 million to \$326 million while the annual direct tax rate has increased from 3 percent in 2017 to around 7.5 percent this year.

The district projects an increase in state funding of \$15 million to \$212.3 million and an increase of \$39 million in federal funds to \$83.4 million. The federal government is \$28.7 trillion in debt and Illinois \$171.1 billion in debt, according to usdebtclock.org.

---The Examiner of Bartlett--09/08/2021

Board looking at having IASB control U-46 policies

By Seth Hancock - Note: This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood

Why do voters elect a board of education?

That's the question one attendee at the Monday, Aug. 23 board meeting in **School District U-46** quietly asked in response to Sue Kerr, the board's president, suggesting the board cede control over to the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), a lobbyist group for government-run schools, in writing the board's policies.

"You can actually have them maintain your policy and send you suggested updates," Kerr said. "So, instead of us going through our policies, policy by policy, to see what law has changed and see what we need to change, they will send us a summary of all changes."

Kerr then asked the board if it wanted to move forward to "begin to convert our policy to make it look more like what IASB has?" The board generally agreed, and Kerr said she would look into the costs.

Board member Kate Thommes said "it doesn't cost anything to learn more about it," and board member John Devereux said "it's a significant amount of work" to go through policies and "it makes sense" to use the IASB to do their job.

Trisha Olson, chief legal officer, said it's a "wonderful efficiency" and a "check and balance" to make sure they are following the dictates of the state rather than exerting local control. Kerr said "we're governed by policy" and admitted the state effectively dictates their policy already as they "follow exactly what they (IASB) recommend" or at least "sort of follow it."

This comes as U-46 also wants the IASB to lobby to allow them to not have to appear in person for meetings, even after the emergency dictates regarding COVID-19 are over.

"That's another distance between you guys and the people who elected you. It's not a good idea," Linda Sabo said during the Aug. 9 meeting's public comments.

Board member Dawn Martin offered another suggestion at the Aug. 23 meeting, that holding more informal meetings like town halls.

"We could possibly look at doing in the future just as a way to improve community relations and just keep open communication," Martin said.

---Daily Herald--09/08/2021

Hispanic Heritage Month celebration at Gail Borden Library kicks off with bilingual exhibit

Submitted by Gail Borden Public Library

The Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration normally kicks off in mid-September but started early this year at Gail Borden Public Library with a colorful no-touch, bilingual exhibit.

Beautiful outfits from the Ballet Folklórico Huehucocoyotl sway in the main rotunda, reminding viewers of the many times the talented dance group has performed at the library and in the community. The group is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

"We are proud to loan our outfits to the library," said Cynthia Hernandez, executive director of the Ballet Folklórico Huehucocoyotl. "Our mission is, 'To engage and inspire future leaders to realize their potential through artistic expression and community engagement.' Having our cultural outfits on display at the library helps us let people know in the community that we have been using dance to engage others for 25 years."

In addition to featuring the Folklórico outfits, the exhibit traces the history of Hispanics in this area, noting that the Census indicated "19 natives of Mexico were living in Elgin Township" in 1930, to 14,576 people "of Hispanic origin" in 1990, to the 2020 Census estimate of approximately 52,000 (45.7% of 114,797).

One panel explains that workers were recruited from Mexico to become railroad section hands who dug up land and installed railroad tracks, including those of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway. It also adds that many Hispanics worked for the Woodruff & Edwards Foundry by the 1920s.

The exhibit also includes information about Hispanic churches, organizations and U-46's dual language program.

Other library Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration programs include:

- Mexican Independence Day Celebration on Facebook Live: gbpl.info/FBLV. On Saturday, Sept. 11, from 1 to 2:30 p.m., celebrate the anniversary of the independence of Mexico! In association with the Mexican Organization of Elgin.
- José-Luis Orozco Celebrates Hispanic Heritage!, via Zoom. On Saturday, Sept. 25 at 2 p.m., children and families are invited to join José-Luis Orozco for an energetic and interactive journey through Latin American culture with singing, dancing and more! Please register at gailborden.info/register.
- Latino Voices on Facebook Live: gbpl.info/FBLV. On Saturday, Oct. 2, from 1 to 2:30 p.m., celebrate the history, traditions, culture and contributions of our Hispanic communities. They will have special guests, music and lots of fun. For other Hispanic Heritage Month activities, visit gailborden.info/hhm. In English and Spanish.

The library thanks the Elgin Area History Museum, E.C. Alft, author of "Hispanics in Elgin," and Mary Camacho for being valuable sources of information. For more information about the exhibit and month, visit gailborden.info/hhmexhibit.

---The Examiner of Streamwood--09/08/2021

Sabres football edged due to two late Bartlett tallies

By Seth Hancock

The **Streamwood** football team gave **Bartlett** all it could handle, but the Sabres came up just short in a 59-58 loss in Upstate Eight Conference play on Friday, Sept. 3 at Bartlett.

The wild game saw eight lead changes and the Sabres narrowly trailing at the end of each quarter: 18- 16 after the first, 25-24 at halftime and 45-44 after three quarters.

But Streamwood clawed back and pulled ahead 58-45 with just over five minutes to play as rushers Isaac Martinez (222 yards, four touchdowns) and Michael Estrada (186 yards, two TDs) led the way in their teams 478 total rushing yards aided by linemen JoJo Chamopoulos, Eric Gomez and Richard Rodriguez and quarterback Kevin Lunz executing the offense.

However, Bartlett was able to respond with two scores in the final minutes, the go-ahead coming with 1:39 to play.

For Sabres coach **Keith McMaster**, he “we were right there” and this performance should give his squad some encouragement in achieving their goal of a postseason spot. In his first year at the helm, McMaster’s squad was 5-1 in the shortened season last year which did not have a postseason.

“If you ask any player on the team, their goal is to qualify for the state playoffs for the first time in a decade,” McMaster said. “As a new coach to the conference, I’m excited to finally compete against all the teams in a regular season.”

Streamwood is now 1-1 overall and in the UEC after opening the season with a 62-7 victory over West Chicago on Aug. 27 at West Chicago.

The Sabres rushed for eight touchdowns led by two each from Estrada (171 rushing yards), Joel Sandoval (129 rushing yards) and Martinez (99 rushing yards). Defensively, Justin Sharks had nine tackles and both Martinez and Taro Ishikawa had an interception.

McMaster said there was some “cleanup” to do, but was overall happy with the performance from both sides of the ball and his special teams. He’s also happy to have a full season to see how his new system will do.

“Offensively, the kids now have seven games in a new system,” McMaster said. “We returned quite a few players and look forward to watching us click a little quicker this season.”

---Aurora Beacon-News--09/08/2021

‘Kudos to my team’: Bria Lomax boosts hitting percentage to .670 with four kills as Bartlett sweeps Streamwood. She passes the credit.

By Paul Johnson: Note – This story also ran on chicagotribune.com.



Bartlett's Bria Lomax (12) reacts to a point during an Upstate Eight Conference match against Streamwood in Bartlett on Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Junior middle hitter Bria Lomax entered Tuesday night's match for **Bartlett** with a blistering-hot hitting percentage that topped the .600 mark.

But when it comes to receiving any type of credit for that A-list production, the 6-foot Lomax immediately turns into a surefire passer.

"Honestly, kudos to my team for helping me reach that," she said. "Not only that, my clubs and everyone in the past that trained me, they're a big part of me hitting as high as I do. Without that, I wouldn't be hitting what I am."

The hits kept coming for the Hawks in an Upstate Eight Conference showdown against **Streamwood**. Lomax connected on four of her five swings during a 25-13, 25-6 win.



Bartlett's Bria Lomax (12) sets the ball during an Upstate Eight Conference match against Streamwood in Bartlett on Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Lomax, who also leads the Hawks with 20 blocks and has served 19 aces, is now hitting a robust .670 with a team-leading 71 kills for Bartlett (9-4, 1-1).

Lomax had two kills to cap a 7-1 run to open Game 1. Senior Maddie Hankins started off Game 2 with three straight aces to keep the momentum rolling.

Yazmine Rojas also served three straight aces later in the game as the Hawks cruised to their first conference win over Streamwood (3-8, 0-2).

It was a nice bounce-back effort from Saturday's final day at the Hoffman Estates Tournament. The Hawks were beaten by Rockford Guilford, and then had to battle back through the loser's bracket.

When they did, Rockford Guilford was waiting there and won again.

“It’s a good team,” Bartlett coach Robert Schwantz said. “I’ve got a really good team. We’re strong top to bottom. We just have to pull it all together.”

Expectations were already high when the Hawks won their first-ever conference title last spring, knowing Hankins and Lomax were returning for a third straight season together.



Bartlett's Madison Neer (10) hits the ball against Streamwood's Isabella Archulita (12) during an Upstate Eight Conference match in Bartlett on Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Time is running out for that combination, however, something Lomax is keenly aware of as the calendar flips from August to September.

“I feel like it is because freshman year when we were together it was like, Bria and Maddie have three years together,” Lomax said. “Now, this is our last season.”

Another element was added to the team last spring when freshman outside hitter Jade Lindstrom made the varsity.

Lindstrom, who led the Hawks with six kills Tuesday, is second on the team this season with 67 kills.

“She’s strong,” Schwantz said of Lindstrom. “She’s still a little raw. She makes some errors but that’s to be expected.

“I treat them all like seniors on varsity. You have to take a step back and she makes an error and say to yourself, ‘She’s a 16-year-old girl.’”



Streamwood's Natalia Maniak (11) and Isabella Archulita (12) defend the against Bartlett's Madison Neer (10) during Upstate Eight Conference match in Bartlett on Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Lomax has visions of playing volleyball in college, but that process is still in its early stages.

“It’s so stressful to think about,” Lomax said. “It’s also exciting to look past high school and think I’m going to play ball in college, hopefully.

“I totally want to play ball in college. I don’t know where. I don’t know what division. But I want nothing more than to do that.”

To get there, Lomax and the Hawks hope to build on the success of last spring and truly put Bartlett’s program on the map.

“We’ve showed that we improved,” Lomax said. “Being able to get to the point where people are like, ‘Oh, I know Bartlett would be great.’

“South Elgin already has a good rep, so we want to get on that level with them, especially since we’re in the same conference.”