

Press Clippings Through May 19, 2025

- Daily Herald -

U-46 honors 30 first-generation college-bound seniors with \$2,000 scholarships

By: Tara Burghart, Elgin Area School District U-46

Date: May 12, 2025



Elgin Area school District U-46 and the Educational Foundation recently recognized first-generation college-bound students at an April 23 reception. Pictured with 10 of the scholarship winners are: John Devereux, left, U-46 Educational Foundation board president, and, at right, Elgin High Principal Avelira Rodriguez Gonzalez and Superintendent Dr. Suzanne Johnson.

Elgin Area School District U-46 celebrated 30 seniors during the annual Superintendent's Scholarship reception and awards ceremony.

These members of the Class of 2025 are first-generation college-bound students, and each will receive a \$2,000 scholarship from the U-46 Educational Foundation.

"These impressive students and their families understand the transformative power of education. Through their hard work and dedication, the students are ready to take on their next challenge," said Superintendent Dr. Suzanne Johnson. "It's important to not only celebrate our Superintendent's Scholarship recipients but also to remind them of all the people who believe in them here in U-46. These students have bright futures ahead."



[To watch the video on the district's YouTube channel click here.](#)

The students, who are spotlighted in a video on the district's YouTube channel, will graduate this month from the district's five comprehensive high schools: Bartlett, Elgin, Larkin, South Elgin and Streamwood. They attended a reception on April 23 along with their families, principals, U-46 administrators and board of education members, and members of the U-46 Educational Foundation's board.

Since the Superintendent's Scholarship fund was established in 2012 through the U-46 Educational Foundation, approximately 340 U-46 graduates, including this year's recipients, have been honored.

This year's scholarships were funded by a grant from the Seigle Foundation and donors including KCT Credit Union, Studio GC, the Association of Elgin School Administrators, John B. Sanfilippo & Son Inc., and K12 Insight.

Eligible seniors submitted applications for the scholarship this past winter. Each submitted application included the student's high school transcript, a letter of recommendation, and a personal essay.

A panel of judges reviewed nearly 100 applications. The selected 30 students are bound for post-secondary institutions including Northwestern University, Stanford University, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the University of Illinois Chicago, University of Wisconsin, Case Western Reserve University, Aurora University, and DePaul University.

During the scholarship reception, held at the U-46 Welcome Center, the students were encouraged to visit with administrators and supporters of the U-46 Educational Foundation to start establishing their professional network.

A week earlier, the students participated in a workshop led by Matthew Punnoose, a member of the U-46 Educational Foundation's board, and Jason Pierce, an alumnus of Bartlett High School who now works at Google.

They instructed the students in the importance of building a strong personal and professional network, and guided the scholarship winners through setting up a LinkedIn profile.

The 30 Class of 2025 Superintendent's Scholarship recipients are as follows:

- **Bartlett High School:** Jatziry Alba, Anthony Corona, Kyle Depakakibo, Melani Flores, Shaila Ochoa, Sara Sulemanjee and Emilia Tredota
- **Elgin High School:** Brianna Calderon, Julissa Chavez, Damaris De Alba Valdivia, Gael Flores, Lesley Gonzalez, Alondra Lechuga-Pita, Anahi Melendez, Wilebaldo Modesto Hernandez, Eric Nazario and Guadalupe Rivera
- **Larkin High School:** Dayanara Aguilar, Lara Amaro and Andrea Jimenez
- **South Elgin High School:** Mackenzie Klinger, Oscar Miranda, Ayush Patel, and Zuzanna Szelag
- **Streamwood High School:** Samantha Camarena, Jennifer Gaspar, Omar Lopez-Aguado, Leonor Nevarez, Sophie Saflarski, and Juliana Solis.

- Kane County Connects - South Elgin Teacher Matthew Erbach Wins Golden Apple Award Date: May 15, 2025

Matthew Erbach, a precision manufacturing teacher at South Elgin High School, has been awarded the 2025 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching—one of only 11 recipients statewide. With nearly 20 years of experience, Erbach is known for his innovative approach and dedication to student success. [READ MORE](#)

- Chicago Tribune/ the Courier News - Elgin News Digest: Planetarium presentation on Elgin Watch Co. set for May 21; ribbon-cutting for new East Dundee parking deck set for May 22 By: Mike Danahey Date: May 15, 2025



The School District U-46 Planetarium in Elgin will hold two public programs Wednesday on the Elgin National Watch Co., its observatory and its connection to the planetarium.

Planetarium presentation on Elgin Watch Co. set for May 21

The School District U-46 Planetarium in Elgin will hold two public events on Wednesday, May 21, about the Elgin National Watch Co., its observatory and its connection to the planetarium.

According to the school district's website, the programs are scheduled for 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. with self-guided building tours from 4 to 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Admission is free, with a suggested donation of \$2 per person. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.

The planetarium opened in September 1963, according to the city of Elgin's website. It was an addition to the original part of the building, which was the 1909 Elgin National Watch Co. Observatory. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Chicago Tribune/ The Courier News - Elgin News Digest: Sherman nurse throws out first pitch at Cubs game; museum Public Museum program to focus on local butterflies

By: Mike Danahey

Date: May 12, 2025

Auto show being held Saturday at South Elgin High School

The Auto Club at South Elgin High School will be hosting an auto show from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, May 17, in the campus parking lot, 760 E. Main St.

Vehicles can enter to compete for trophies in 20 classes. The event also will feature food, raffles, students demonstrating automotive work and T-shirts for sale to benefit the school's auto technology program, according to a news release.

Entry fee for vehicles is \$10, and spectators attend for free. For more information, email steveschertz@u-46.org.

To read the full article, please click [here](#).

- Daily Herald -

Girls soccer: South Elgin blanks Glenbard South to win first Upstate Eight championship game

By: Mike Garofola

Date: May 14, 2025



It was all South Elgin Wednesday night in the first ever Upstate Eight Conference final with the Storm overwhelming Glenbard South 7-0.

Junior Avianna (Avi) Hernandez, who leads her club with 20 assists, bagged three goals on the night, with Nevaeh Gyurko adding her 19th of the season, and Christina Slovik netting her 14th to add to the eventual seven-goal tally.

The Storm, no stranger to success in the UEC, won the league title in 2024 with a 7-0-2 overall record, and again in 2023 with the same record.

This year, after its 3-6-1 start, the Storm (14-7-2) went 10-1-1 in its next 12 games, with its only defeat in penalties to Deerfield.

"With the new format in the UEC this year, the girls really wanted to be the first league champion, and they went out and took control of this game to be able to win the title," said South Elgin coach Jerzy Skowron.

The Upstate Eight expanded from 10 teams to 14 this season with the Storm winning the West division. Glenbard South (9-5-6) won the East with a 5-0-1 overall record.

Glenbard South is the No. 5 seed in its own 2A sectional, and will look to seniors Annika Wise (17 goals, 9 assists) and Brooklyn Moore (9 goals, 7 assists) to lead the way when the Raiders open regional play next Tuesday.

The Storm are the No. 7 seed in a top-heavy Glenbard West sectional that features top seed St. Charles East and No. 2 Wheaton Warrenville South.

- Daily Herald - DuPage County and Fox Valley softball notes: South Elgin streaking; Addison Trail ends skid against Downers Grove South

By: Mike Miazga

Date: May 14, 2025



In 19 innings last week, Lake Park's Gianna Furlano struck out 28 batters.

The wins keep piling up for the South Elgin softball team.

Coach Brad Reynard's squad started the week winners of 11 straight and 16 of its last 17 to sit at 21-4 overall and a perfect 13-0 in Upstate Eight action.

Key reasons for the hot streak include Anna Kiel (.550 hitting, 18 RBI, 10-3, 0.81 ERA, 118 K in 69 innings), Chloe Ricard (.417 hitting, 10 doubles, 2 homers, 18 RBI), Addison Tinnerella (.431 hitting, 11 RBI, 25 runs), Emma Bell (.421, 32 hits, 18 RBI) and Jenna Sheehan (.405, 8 doubles, 6 triples, 28 RBI, 5-1 with 64 K in 47 innings). "Anna and Jenna have been doing great both at the dish and in the circle and Chole offensively has been awesome and is great working with our staff," Reynard said.

Bartlett update: Christina Stankus (10-8, 116 K in 107 innings, .397 hitting, 4 homers, 21 RBI, 24 steals) recently passed the 500 strikeout mark for her Bartlett career. Hannah Phillips (.453 hitting), Suzie Piaskowski (.388, 4 homers, 24 RBI), Emma Engels (.362, 3 homers, 17 RBI, 23 runs) and Addie Moore (.333, 16 RBI) also have helped the Hawks (13-9, 11-4 Upstate Eight), who had a recent big league win over Riverside-Brookfield.

Elgin update: Grace Tetrev (.472 hitting) and Abby Motolo (.370 hitting) have been bright spots for the Maroons (4-18, 4-10 Upstate Eight). Tetrev leads off and patrols center field, while Motolo hits third and stars behind the plate.

- Shaw Local News Network -

South Elgin wins 1st Upstate Eight championship game with shutout of Glenbard South

By: Mike Garofola

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- Chicago Tribune -

On a North Carolina college tour, South Elgin's Adriana Jimenez finds next home. 'Been a staple for three years.'

By: Rick Armstrong

Date: May 13, 2025



South Elgin's Adriana Jimenez (9) puts down a bunt against West Aurora in the first inning of an Upstate Eight Conference game in South Elgin on Monday, May 12, 2025.

Go your own way.

South Elgin senior Adriana Jimenez is doing just that in high school, despite having followed in the footsteps of older sister Sammy by competing in both softball and cheerleading.

"She's had a nice career and been a staple for three years now," Storm coach Brad Reynard said of Adriana. "I've been fortunate to have her play both third base and catcher for me.

"Sammy probably caught a bit more than Adriana, but both have the same skill sets — cannons for arms, hit for power."

Jimenez didn't flex that power Monday for host South Elgin in a 6-2 Upstate Eight Conference win over West Aurora, but she did execute a sacrifice bunt with two runners on to key a four-run first inning that was all the support senior pitcher Anna Kiel needed.

Kiel and sophomore first baseman Jenna Sheehan produced RBI doubles and senior second baseman Amber Gnutek added a two-run single for the Storm (22-4, 14-0), who are staging a strong defense of last year's conference title.

South Elgin owns a two-game lead over Riverside-Brookfield, Reynard's alma mater, with four left to play.

"We like where we're at," Reynard said.



South Elgin's Adriana Jimenez (9) catches a throw on West Aurora's Bella Marzullo (5) in the second inning of an Upstate Eight Conference game in South Elgin on Monday, May 12, 2025.

Kiel (10-3), a Loyola recruit, is swinging a hot bat. She went 3-for-3 to lift her average to .571 and checked the Blackhawks (14-14, 11-5) on three hits with nine strikeouts.

West Aurora (14-14, 11-5) was held scoreless until the seventh when Ohio State-bound senior shortstop Sara Tarr drew a two-out walk and came home on a triple by senior outfielder Keira Hayton, a Missouri-St. Louis commit. Hayton scored on a single by sophomore outfielder Gracie Del Toro.

Jimenez, meanwhile, did much of the research and legwork before signing with Gaston, a Division I junior college in Dallas, North Carolina, a suburb of Charlotte. She's three years younger than Sammy, who's playing at NCAA Division II Tusculum in Greeneville, Tennessee.

"I was on a search of schools and was interested in Belmont Abbey," Jimenz said of the NCAA Division II program, also in the Charlotte area. "I went there for a camp and decided to tour a lot of the schools in the area. I found it, met the coach and loved it and thought it was for me."



South Elgin's Anna Kiel (20) pumps her fist after a strikeout against West Aurora during an Upstate Eight Conference game in South Elgin on Monday, May 12, 2025.

Jimenez, who also plays shortstop as well as third base and catcher for her travel team, continued to send Gaston coach Michael Steuerwald video and eventually received an offer.

Gaston's program is in its third season and recently qualified for its second NJCAA World Series by winning region and district titles.

Jimenez, who is hitting .319 with seven doubles and two home runs, is second on team for South Elgin with 26 RBIs. She hit .383 last season and earned all-conference honors. She has been a member of Storm competitive cheerleading teams that won one state title and placed third twice.

"Hopefully, we can do the same," Reynard said.



South Elgin's Adriana Jimenez (9) pats pitcher Anna Kiel (20) on the back against West Aurora in the seventh inning of an Upstate Eight Conference game in South Elgin on Monday, May 12, 2025.

Last season, the Storm lost 2-1 in nine innings to Lake Park in a regional final and to the same Lancers 6-3 in a sectional final the previous season.

“I have confidence we’ll make it further in the playoffs than we have,” Adriana said. “I feel like this team, we like to have fun. In the past, it’s been a little bit more businesslike.

“This team, it’s more like we trust each other and we want to have fun all the time. Maybe we put more pressure on ourselves. This dynamic is different than any other year.”

Reynard is enjoying the ride.

“Having seven years of Jimenz helping our program out has been a blessing,” he said. “I joke with her parents (Oscar and Renee) about it. Next year, what am I gonna do now at third base?”

- Daily Herald -

Softball: South Elgin doubles up Larkin, stays perfect in Upstate Eight

By: Allen Oshinski

Date: May 13, 2025



South Elgin has quietly been putting together an outstanding softball season. The Storm won their 13th straight game with an 8-4 victory Tuesday against Larkin on Elgin’s West Side.

Led by 7 seniors, the Storm is 23-4 overall and 16-0 in the Upstate Eight Conference.

Storm coach Brad Reynard cited the senior battery of pitcher Anna Kiel and catcher Chloe Ricard as leading the way for the Storm. Second pitcher Jenna Sheehan, who started Tuesday, has also contributed.

The Storm will honor Kiel, Ricard, Lexi Genz, Amber Gnutek, Adriana Jimenez, Grace Krabbe, and Addison Tinarella when they host Glenbard South Thursday on senior night.

A couple of seniors were in the spotlight Tuesday. Kiel broke the school record with her 150th hit in the seventh inning. Her teammates held up a banner in honor of the achievement. Kiel also holds the school records for doubles and strikeouts.

One batter after Kiel's hit, Jimenez, who got the start behind the plate, provided some much-needed insurance by depositing a 2-run homer over the right-field fence.

Kiel wasn't even supposed to play Tuesday. But when Sheehan's pitch count began to rise, Kiel entered the circle to start the fifth inning. She pitched 3 scoreless innings for the save. She set the hits record with a grounder up the middle leading off the seventh.

"We were hoping she'd [get the hit record] on Thursday which is our senior day, but that's how things work out," said Reynard.

"I didn't even know," Kiel said. "They surprised me. I had no clue."

The Storm jumped ahead 5-1 Tuesday, with Kaidence Rumachik providing a pair of run-scoring doubles.

Ali Herrick kept the Royals in it with a 3-run shot to right in the third, but Sheehan and Kiel restored order after that.

An RBI double by Sheehan and Jimenez's shot provided some insurance, which came in handy when the Royals brought the tying run to the plate in the seventh. Larkin loaded the bases on a walk, a hit batter, and an error, but Kiel reared back and got 2 strikeouts to end it.

"Just overcoming adversity is a feather in their cap," Reynard said. "It wasn't pretty at times, but our girls did enough to go ahead and win. It's always a game with them here. We've got to bring it from here on out."

Kiel said picking each other up is nothing new for the Storm citing team chemistry as the key to the Storm's success this year.

"When everyone's on I feel like everyone really is on," she said. "Everyone is supporting everyone. The team dynamic is working really well."

- Daily Herald -

'Edgy' Tim: South Elgin's Mueller set to make college decision

By: Tim O'Halloran

Date: May 11, 2025



South Elgin High School Junior tight end Gavin Mueller will announce his college decision on Wednesday

South Elgin High School junior tight end Gavin Mueller (6-foot-6, 255 pounds), a four-star-ranked recruit by Rivals.com, wrapped up his final planned official visit last weekend at Louisiana State University, and remains on target to announce his college decision.

The announcement will take place at 3:20 p.m. Wednesday in the school's library.

Mueller, also a standout basketball player, played his first season of high school football last fall while attending St. Francis. He's narrowed his final list to Colorado. Wisconsin, LSU and Notre Dame.

Mueller made official visits to all four except Notre Dame.

West Aurora junior quarterback Mason Atkins (6-foot-3, 190 pounds) gave his verbal commitment last week to Ball State University.

"I've been able to build up a really strong relationship and a connection with the Ball State coaches and it was time for me to make my decision," Atkins said. "Ball State made me feel wanted and it's a place where I feel I can succeed so I gave them my commitment."

Atkins pointed to a few key factors in making his commitment.

"The relationship I have with Ball State coaches, including (head coach Mike Uremovich) along with (offensive coordinator Craig Harmon) and the overall connection we have was really an important factor in my decision," he said. "The Ball State staff really believe in me.

"Iowa was a school that early on seemed to be pretty interested in me, but they wanted to wait on offering me and wanted to see me in a camp this summer," he said. "I also looked into several other (Mid-American Conference) schools like NIU and also Buffalo. In the end I just felt like I was ready to make my decision, and why wait on other schools to offer me? I also did

not want to wait and pass up a great opportunity waiting for me at Ball State. A lot of schools at all levels wanted to see me in camps this summer but I was ready to make my decision and didn't want to wait any longer.”

With his college decision behind him, Atkins can now focus on his summer and gearing up for the 2025 season without having to focus on recruiting.

“I would say the hardest part of the process for me was just how wild it can get with quarterback recruiting,” he said. “Offers seem to get picked up really fast and it's always changing. Just the overall timing with recruiting really is important and it worked out for me in the end.”

Rolling Meadows junior tight end Sean Kerr (6-foot-5, 215 pounds) has continued to see his recruiting stock steadily rise this spring.

“I've been able to add new offers recently from both Bryant and UMass,” Kerr said. “My recruiting has definitely picked up over the last few weeks and we are expecting more college coaches to stop into school over the next few weeks.

“Besides Bryant and UMass I've also been in contact with the coaches from Indiana State, San Diego State along with South Dakota State and also South Dakota,” he said. “Holy Cross is supposed to be in school soon and also Columbia has been starting to show more interest. The feedback from the college coaches has been good and they all want to see me in a one day camp this summer and see what I can do in person.”

- MSN -

2026 TE Gavin Mueller commits to Colorado

By: Hunter Shelton



2026 TE Gavin Mueller on Colorado official visit

South Elgin (Ill.) three-star tight end Gavin Mueller has committed to Colorado, he announced on Wednesday.

He chose the Buffaloes over LSU, Notre Dame and Wisconsin.

Mueller is the No. 516 overall prospect and No. 22 TE in the 2026 cycle, according to the On3 Industry Ranking, a weighted average that utilizes all four major recruiting media companies. He's also the No. 14 player in Illinois.

The 6-foot-6, 231-pounder becomes the second pledge for head coach Deion Sanders and the Buffs this cycle. Last month, Calabasas (Calif.) EDGE Domata Peko Jr., the son of CU coach Domata Peko, announced his commitment.

Mueller, who also excels in track and field via the shot put, took his official visit to Boulder on the first weekend of May. Colorado receivers coach Brett Bartolone helped lead the Big 12 program's push for the tight end.

To read the full article, please click [here](#).

- Sports Illustrated - Colorado Buffaloes Land 4-Star Recruit Gavin Mueller's Commitment Over LSU

The Colorado Buffaloes landed four-star tight end recruit Gavin Mueller's commitment over the LSU Tigers, Wisconsin Badgers and Notre Dame Fighting Irish. Coach Deion Sanders and the Buffs now have two class of 2026 commitments, and more are likely coming soon.

By: Jack Carlough

Date: May 14, 2025

Gavin Mueller, a class of 2026 four-star tight end from South Elgin, Illinois, gave his commitment to coach Deion Sanders and the Colorado Buffaloes on Wednesday afternoon.

Just over two weeks after earning three-star EDGE Domata Peko Jr.'s pledge, Mueller becomes Colorado's second class of 2026 commit. 247Sports, Rivals and On3 all predicted Mueller to land with the Buffs, but the LSU Tigers, Wisconsin Badgers and Notre Dame Fighting Irish were also in the running.

Listed at 6-foot-5 and 255 pounds, Mueller visited Boulder on May 2 and was in Baton Rouge last Friday. He announced his college commitment live on 247Sports' YouTube channel.

"Colorado is the next generation of football," Mueller told 247Sports. "I think there's a lot of opportunity. Most of all, it seems like a brotherhood there. All the guys are very interested in me and my journey, and it seems like they genuinely want me to be there. The coaches made me a priority, and the fans have reached out and shown non-stop support. I'm very excited to get to know all of them."

Mueller is a three-star prospect according to 247Sports and On3 but is considered a four-star by Rivals. The 247Sports composite ranks Mueller as the No. 42 tight end in his class and the No. 18 prospect in Illinois while Rivals pegs him as the No. 23 tight end.

247Sports national analyst Hudson Standish believes Mueller holds great athleticism and has the potential to become an elite college tight end.

Profiles as an in-line Y tight end at the next level who can use his physicality at the LOS (line of scrimmage) to create running lanes and his frame to box out defenders at the first two levels. Has shown the ability to make plays at the catch point and excels at tracking the football in crowded conditions. Played through a shoulder injury and underwent surgery following his first season of football, should be viewed as a high-upside attached tight end who could blossom into a key piece for a College Football Playoff contender.

- Hudson Standish

"I get my athleticism from basketball, and then I kind of get my blocking and my hitting people from lifting weights and loving that," Mueller told 247Sports. "I think the best part about me is being able to do a little bit of both."

Colorado tight ends coach Brett Bartolone made Mueller a high priority in recent days, visiting with the prospect before, during and after his official visit to Boulder.

Mueller shared that he has only been playing football for about one year.

"The path was a little bit more sped up than anyone else," Mueller told 247Sports. "Almost a year ago today, I didn't even know I was playing football. To make this many strides and get this far in the year has been it's been a blessing, so I'm very grateful for everything."

Other class of 2026 recruits Colorado is trending well with include five-star wide receiver Cederian Morgan, four-star wide receiver Jase Mathews, four-star linebacker Duyon Forkpa Jr. and four-star offensive linemen G'nivre Carr and Deacon Schmitt.

With Peko and Mueller being the only commits, Colorado's 2026 recruiting class ranks No. 88 nationally, according to 247Sports.