This will be my last full weekly message for the 2019-20 school year. I have so much on my mind to share with you. We’ve had multiple highs and lows this year. (Warning: LONG MESSAGE ABOUT TO START)

Some of our highs that relate to students: Our 2019-20 Student Board member, Hallie Furtak, along with my student advisors held a student summit with 220 high school students from across U-46. We celebrated Natalie Gort, Constantina Hondros, and Laila Tran who all won gold medals at the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games, and Renee Grandstaff who earned a gold medal at the International Cheer Union’s World Championships.

Ana Pascual won first place in the On-Air Radio Show category at a statewide competition. Melanie Salazar was named Youth Leader of the Year by the Township Officials of Illinois. The South Elgin High Hot Rodders of Tomorrow qualified for a national spot in an engine teardown competition. We recognized our All-State and All-State Honors Musicians including Thomas Arns, Ryan Blake, Mikayla Chin, Gauri Yadav, Ethan Montgomery, Elianna Nielsen, Miguel Rodriguez, David Galanes, and Jacob Pangilinan.

Most recently we recognized Glenbrook Elementary students Mannat Ashta, Risha Lakkadi, Veer Gupta, and Yuvan Ganne who won the Illinois’ junior division of the Future Problem Solvers competition.

And, of course, who could forget our South Elgin High Co-ed Varsity Cheer Team for winning the state championship!

For staff, we had a visit by the State Superintendent, Dr. Carmen Ayala. Chairman of the State Board of Education, Darren Reisberg, serving as our special guest speaker for Principal for a Day. We witnessed the U-46 Dancers - Ann Chan, Mary Fergus, Dr. Suzanne Johnson, Janet Greshock, Melinda Leman, and Dr. Ushma Shah - as they won the annual Winter Harvest for the Homeless Dance (along with dance coach and Lincoln Elementary Principal Abbie Eklund.

We also had our lows. Our school year started with the tragic loss of our friend and colleague, Ron Raglin. August 26, 2019 is a date many of us will not forget. In September we lost Christine Cagney, a Special Education Administrator. We lost Sheila Neuman, Streamwood High’s secretary. This week, we lost Lisa Mercado who most recently was the instructional coach at Lords Park.

Then our world was turned upside down on March 13 when all Illinois schools were ordered to close. We immediately shifted to prioritize work, thinking about it as sprint, mid-distance, and marathon work.
Our sprint work included providing food and comfort for families, keeping staff and community informed, and preparing for distance learning. We did this successfully. Since March 17, our Food and Nutrition Services has served 1,111,149 meals and 370,838 snacks.

To prepare for distance learning, I cannot thank our administrators and teachers who planned, prepared, provided professional development, and quickly adjusted to working remotely. Our Distribution Center and others worked to secure more Chromebooks to ensure every family had at least one device (and the ratio keeps getting lower). And, we reached an agreement to provide the Comcast Internet Essentials program for low-income households free of charge.

Our mid-distance work was preparing for a virtual graduation, working on summer learning opportunities, and getting materials left at school back into the hands of kids.

Our marathon work continues. I wish I could tell you today what to expect next school year. I do not have those answers yet. We expect guidance in June from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health for next school year. However, we are not awaiting that guidance to begin our work.

This week I established a Learning Transition Team with three subcommittees: Instruction (Dr. Suzanne Johnson leads), Operations (Dr. Jeff King leads), and Health and Wellness (John Heiderscheidt leads). I need you to be prepared that school will still look different next fall. We all need to plan for in-person instruction but perhaps with modified schedules or structures, and a hybrid approach of in-person and online learning, and the possibility of all distance learning if we realize a spike in COVID-19 cases.

As we contemplate options for the fall, our priorities will be:

- Equity and access;
- Health and welfare of students and staff;
- Engaging and connecting with students and families;
- Clear communication; and,
- Learning and growth for all students.

We have demonstrated that #WeAreU46. Your work this year has been inspiring. Please continue to lift up one another this summer.

All my best,
School & Community Relations, Human Resources

Retirement Celebration
A total of 125 people are retiring from U-46 this year. On behalf of the Board of Education, members of the Superintendent's Cabinet, and all of School District U-46, we are celebrating our retirees "virtually" this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn a bit about our retirees here under Community on the u-46.org website. Thank you to all our retirees for their service, their dedication, their knowledge, and experience — and for making a difference in the lives of countless students.

Class of 2020

Website and Social Media
The new Class of 2020 section on the u-46.org website is designed to celebrate our amazing U-46 students. You will find bios and photos here of our 20 Superintendent’s Scholarship winners and the seniors who are being recognized in the Top 2 Percent of their graduating class.

There is also currently a series on the District Facebook page highlighting each of our Superintendent’s Scholarship winners. Please make sure to comment, like and share these posts to spread the word about our impressive graduates! A similar series on the Top 2 Percent graduates will start on Facebook soon, and they will be recognized virtually at the Board of Education meeting on June 1.

Virtual Graduation
We are continuing to work on creating the virtual ceremony for our Class of 2020. Seniors have received communication about the process and they need to upload photos of themselves in their cap and gown by Saturday, May 23, in order to be featured in the virtual graduation. We look forward to celebrating our virtual ceremony at 3 p.m. on Saturday, June 13. Links to the graduation will be shared as we get closer to the date.

Teaching and Learning
Secondary Summer School
Middle and high school students who end second semester (May 26) with an incomplete will be contacted by their counselor so that they may enroll in our proficiency summer programming. Students will be able to show proficiency by working through Apex Tutorials with the support of a teacher. Once students have shown proficiency, their grade will reflect completion.
Students who end the second semester with an incomplete in a course for which there are no available Apex Tutorials will be contacted by their counselor to enroll in a distance learning summer school course. These students will remediate their credit by successfully completing the second semester in that class.

For students who failed a class during the first semester, counselors will reach out to them to register for that first semester class in distance learning summer school.

Finally, students hoping to graduate early or create flexibility in their schedule can register for distance learning secondary school. Courses required for graduation will be offered based on student enrollment. If a student is interested in secondary summer school, he/she should reach out to their counselor.

All summer school programming begins on Monday June 8th. Those with questions or a concern that a school counselor can’t answer should send a message using the “distance learning” button on Let’s Talk.

Distance Learning Resources
While we aim to provide distance learning opportunities for students we identify, we know that this summer most families will see travel plans interrupted, and children remaining at home. We are asking U-46 staff to help identify free, online educational resources that we can share with all our families in hopes of extending learning this summer. Please use this Google form to submit your suggested resources. Participation is not limited to teachers.

Elementary and Secondary Report Cards
For kindergarten, the KIDS report will be sent electronically.
For students in first through sixth grade, the elementary report card will be available to view online in Infinite Campus, at 4 p.m. May 26, 2020.
For students in Specialized Student Services, progress reports will be emailed to the email the District has on file.
For ESL Elementary students, the report card will be going out by email within the next week. Parents may request a printed copy of any of these end-of-year results by contacting their child’s school principal.
Secondary report card available online in Infinite Campus at 9 a.m. Friday, May 29. Printed reports cards will be mailed home on June 2.
Directions for accessing the online elementary report card can be found on the district website, under Families, Learning Benchmarks.
Distance Learning Planning Day: May 27

For all staff, the day will be broken into two main areas providing you both directed and self-directed planning opportunities. More specifically we ask the you to work together to complete the following:

All Staff:

- **Plan, prepare and reflect with specific teachers/teams/grade levels/departments/committees:**
  - As you reflect on the 19-20 school year what was able to be accomplished/not accomplished?
  - As we plan and prepare for the 20-21 school year, what do we have to consider in terms of student support, curriculum implementation, etc.?

Secondary Only:

- **Ensure grades are entered and completed by the deadline.**
  - Any student whose final grade will be an incomplete should receive the grade of **I**
  - Utilize your site-based process for confirmation.

All Staff:

- **Ongoing Support:** Self-directed time to engage in professional learning and planning. As always, you can access past professional learning sessions in [Canvas](https://canvas.uisd.net). You can access the “We Can Help” catalog (emailed Friday) of various teacher supports related to Distance Learning.

**Equity**

**Student Survey**

Last week, we sent a survey to all 4th through 12th graders that invites them to tell us how included and equally represented they feel throughout their U-46 experience.

Students may use a computer, tablet or smartphone to access the online survey. The survey will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete. Students will be asked to provide their student ID.

U-46 is partnering with Panorama Education, a leading K-12 research company, to administer the survey and ensure data privacy and security. Student responses are an important part of helping to create wonderful experiences in our schools. We have shared news of this survey with our families and are sending reminders as well. All responses to the survey are completely confidential. Please feel free to use [Let’s Talk](https://onation��統.com) to ask any questions about the survey.
Human Resources/School Safety & Culture

Safety Protocols
In the last few weeks we all have directly and indirectly received information on COVID-19 safety protocols and how to wear a face mask. We have now made this information more easily accessible and part of our required training.

To ensure you are aware of these safety measures, we have developed two GCN tutorials for you to review. To access GCN, visit www.gcntraining.com click LOGIN TO VIEW TRAINING and enter the Organization ID: 87642d then enter your User ID (your U-46 Employee ID). The titles of the two tutorials you are to complete by Friday, May 22 are: How To Wear A Mask and Employee Safety Procedure.

All safety information, temporary procedures, and a Q and A’s are located for all staff to view at the School Safety and Culture Intranet page. Remember, you just need to use your normal network name and password to sign in to the Intranet. If you should have any questions please contact your immediate supervisor.

Plant Operations

Facilities Rental
Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, Plant Operations’ rental program will be supported by MLSchedules Software. MLSchedules will be used for all internal and external requests in order for Plant Operations to provide custodial coverage, building system support, etc. This includes building level, internal requests (i.e., meetings, parent nights, concerts, etc.) and external rental requests. MLSchedules seamlessly integrates with Google Calendar and 8 to 18, making scheduling for your building easier and more convenient. Training will be provided on this new program so stay tuned for more updates.

School & Community Relations

Volunteer Recognition
School District U-46 annually recognizes many of the volunteers who so generously give their time and talents at the school and District level. U-46 has named longtime TalentFest volunteer Jeff Grosser as the 2020 Volunteer of the Year and Glenbrook Elementary School volunteer Nicole Martinez as the recipient of the Helping Hands award. Grosser helped create TalentFest, which is a performing arts showcase for all five of the District’s comprehensive high schools. In the 10 years since, it has become a staple event in the community. Martinez has been a volunteer at Glenbrook Elementary School in Streamwood for more than five years, serving in various
capacities on the school parent-teacher organization, being an advocate for all students on the school’s School Improvement Planning team, and representing the school in various committees of the U-46 Citizens’ Advisory Council. This year’s nominees included six for the Volunteer of the Year Award and 13 for the Helping Hands category. Typically, the nominees are recognized and celebrated at a gathering with fellow volunteers at the Educational Services Center. The global pandemic means U-46 can’t celebrate these wonderful individuals in person, but all 19 nominees are highlighted on the District’s Facebook page. Just search for #U46Volunteer!

Community
Childcare
The Boys and Girls Club of Elgin is now accepting applications to provide care to children of essential workers. Detailed information and an application can be found at bit.ly/ApplyEssentialWorkers.

Photo of the Week
Bagged Up

Schools across the District have undertaken the mammoth effort of returning to students personal belongings that were left behind in desks, lockers, and classrooms when school buildings closed and Distance Learning began. Pictured is the gym at Eastview Middle School.

State News
The May 18 Weekly Message from State Superintendent Carmen I. Ayala, Ph.D., is available online in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format here. All COVID-related editions of the Weekly Message are archived on the Illinois State Board of Education's website at here.

Kudos
Send Kudos directly by clicking here. They are due by noon each Wednesday. Be sure to click to the bottom of your email to ensure you can read all the kudos each week.

Kudos to Mrs. Jessica Smith, Mrs. Pat Blasen, Mrs. Elizabeth Blaschak and Ms. Dulabaum Bohrer, part of the Support Services Staff at Washington Elementary School, from an Anonymous Parent at Washington Elementary School
For their exemplary service and effort during distance learning and throughout this school year as well as their tireless support and advocacy for my children. You are phenomenal and thank you for being a fantastic collaborative team. Have a wonderful summer.

Kudos to the Great Kenyon Woods Middle School Family, from Marilyn Mattei, Assistant Principal at Kenyon Woods Middle School
For their generosity and kindness toward our families and community. I am so proud of being a part of our school. Thank you all for supporting, and going above and beyond for our kids!

Kudos to Mayté Arreguín, Instructional Coach at McKinley Elementary School, from Josephine Gama, Teacher at McKinley Elementary School
Mayte has done an outstanding job being accessible and offering constant support to staff members at McKinley. Thank you for your time and patience. You are very much appreciated!

Kudos to Jim Cook, Dean’s Assistant, Charnetta Cook, Dean’s Assistant, Denice Compton, Secretary, and Geoffrey Fleming, Assistant Principal at Kenyon Woods Middle School, from Marilyn Mattei, Assistant Principal at Kenyon Woods Middle School
This amazing group of individuals who volunteered and were present to collect, pack, label, and organize all student belongings for pick up. It was a tedious process, but each of these committed staff members approached it with a smile, motivation, and love in their hearts! We did it! Thank you all for your hard work and dedication!

Kudos to Mrs. Vicki McVey, 2nd Grade Teacher at Wayne Elementary School, from Anonymous Parent
Mrs. McVey has taught both of my children. Mrs. McVey ignited the love of reading and writing in my oldest child! My daughter currently reads three and four grade levels above her actual grade. This all came from Mrs. McVey’s great encouragement! My youngest child is finishing this year in her class. Although it’s been a challenging year’s end for teachers, students, and parents helping educate their children, Mrs. McVey has been amazing at communicating and touching base with the kids! My son misses his teacher a lot. This year, he not only discovered his love for school, he adores his teacher. She knows how to speak his language. She encourages
him and tells him he can do it, and he believes and knows it now! Again, igniting the love for learning, enriching and encouraging ... She is one amazing teacher. As a mother I am forever grateful.

**Kudos to Dr. Barbara Thomas, Media Teacher at Streamwood High School, from Josephine Gama, Teacher at McKinley Elementary School and a Streamwood High Parent**

Dr. Thomas has done an outstanding job being accessible and offering constant support to her students during Distance Learning. Thank you, Dr. Thomas for your dedication to your students during this difficult time. You are very much appreciated!

**Kudos to David Hinojosa-Felix, Shawn Leaver, and Kelly Miedwig, 6th Grade Team at Hilltop Elementary School, from Anonymous**

For re-creating a wonderful virtual camp experience for our 6th grade students. There were many creative and engaging activities planned for the students and it was truly a memorable week!

**Kudos to the Retiring Staff at Willard Elementary School, from Sara Henry, Teacher at Willard Elementary School**

We have to say good-bye virtually to some very special teachers at Willard!! To our 6th grade team, Debra King and Julie O'Connor, we wish you all the best in your next adventures. To our 3rd grade team, Kathy Butler and Kristi Hostman, we wish you all the best in what life brings your way. To Melinda Schaefer, special ed para, your support of kids and staff in our building over the years has been remarkable, we wish you all the best in your next adventure. You all have had an impact on so many students’ lives as well as the staff! We will all have fond memories of you all, you will all be missed!! Good luck in retirement!

**Kudos to Judy Steinbeck, Guidance Counselor at Streamwood High School, from Anonymous**

Thank you Judy for all what you do and for who you are. You are one of the most caring and dedicated people I have worked with over the years. You are relentless in your pursuit of what is best for our students and are always willing to go the extra mile to help both students and staff. You have made a positive difference in our students' lives and in mine. You are one in a trillion!

**Kudos to Carme Henrich, Teacher at Larkin High School, from Andreea GrigoricGal, Teacher at Larkin High School**

For her Years of Service as a Teacher at LHS and her upcoming retirement. You are an amazing friend and teacher! Thank you for all your love and support — enjoy your retirement! You will be greatly missed!
Kudos to Holly Fagiano, Cross-Category Special Education Teacher, from Sunnyvale Elementary School
Holly, thank you for your unwavering support and advocacy for our students. Thank you for your above and beyond support to teachers and always going the extra mile. You are a positive person that has always made students, teachers and parents feel comfortable, thus creating a true feeling of "team.” We wish you the best in your next chapter at Canton, and we will miss you so much!

Kudos to Nelida Uribe, Teacher at Larkin High School, from Andreea GrigorieGal, Teacher at Larkin High School
Dear Nelida! Congratulations on your retirement, you are an amazing teacher and friend!

Kudos to Brittney Walker, College Readiness Coordinator, Kathleen Dickerson, Teacher, and Scott Venters, Guidance Counselor, all at Larkin High School, from Joan Riedel, Associate Principal at Larkin High School
Wanted to shout out a big thank you to Brittney for helping the seniors have a special end of the school year. She provided a Prom on the Porch, a virtual prom experience, decorated the senior gift bags for cap and town delivery, delivered several bags to seniors, created videos for each of the events, and has been reaching out to keep the seniors informed so they don't miss any major activities or requirements. Thanks for making the events Royal! Additionally, both Kathy Dickerson and Scott Venters came in to help organize the cap and gown event on multiple days and continued to follow up making sure our seniors received the appropriate graduation materials! Thank you for finishing the school year strong!

Kudos to the Staff at Fox Meadow Elementary School, from Sjoukje Brown, Principal at Fox Meadow
Thank you to the amazing staff who assisted with student personal item distribution. My heartfelt thanks go out to Laurie McCann, Beth Sullivan, Jenny O'Neal, Linda Carter, Lisa Mertinat, Jill Kacer, Debbie Santos, Wendi Smith, Renee Reid, Colleen Salerno, Trenie Gorak, and Amy Stewart. I deeply appreciate the help and professionalism.
Thank you to Fox Meadow teachers for your tireless efforts to pack student belongings and prepare them for distribution. That wasn't easy, and I appreciate the efforts on behalf of our families.
Thank you to our Fox Meadow families for the kind words, cheerleading, tears, and well wishes. We appreciate the support. We miss you, and love you all.

Kudos to Maira Nava and Jonell Dudek, Paraprofessionals at Horizon Elementary School, from Dr. Jennifer Schwardt, Principal at Horizon Elementary School
Thank you for your help in recognizing our PBIS Distance Learners of the Week these past six
weeks! Your efforts behind the scenes were really helpful in getting this valuable work done! I appreciate it!

Kudos to Sara Olsen, Lisa Micka, and Ginger Olson, our 6th Grade Teachers at Horizon Elementary School, from Dr. Jennifer Schwardt, Principal at Horizon Elementary School
Thank you for all your work to find ways to recognize our 6th grade students, even through distance learning! Moving their recognition to an on-line platform so they could still be celebrated was a wonderful way to say goodbye to this deserving group of students. Thank you for your efforts in getting their yard signs out too. They were lucky to have a group of such dedicated and caring teachers this year!

Kudos to the Staff Volunteers at Century Oaks Elementary School, from Andrea Erickson, Principal at Century Oaks Elementary School
There’s no other way to say it---We’d be lost without these staff members who helped distribute students' belongings and Chromebooks this week to our families.
Shout Out to .. Patty Cardenas, Social Worker, Dawn Dalcero, Interventionist, Charity DiLiberti, 6th DL Teacher, Meghan Doyle, Interventionist, Adriana Lasso, Kindergarten DL Teacher, Audrey Leaver, Instructional Coach, Rosario Manzello, 2nd Grade DL Teacher, Sandra Marsh, 4th Grade Teacher, Patsy Martin, 1st/2nd Grade Teacher, Betsy Mendez, Secretary, Jennifer Newton, 3rd Grade Teacher Julie Radcliffe, Cross-Cat Teacher, Becky Salvato, 6th Grade Teacher, Carla Sanchez, 3rd Grade DL Teacher, Maria Schnecke, 3rd Grade DL Teacher, Cesar Tabares, 1st Grade DL Teacher, Lisa Toppel, Librarian and Lisa Wolowicz, Music Teacher.
Thanks for always being willing to lend a hand!!!

Kudos to the SHS Academy Staff: Balzer, Li, Hieber, Vassolo, Thomas, Porto, Gloss, Hernandez, Fernstrom, Sims, McLaughlin, Abe, and Hayashi, from Frank Wapole, Assistant Principal at Streamwood High School
They have worked incredibly hard on connecting with Academy students, delivering sashes, and contributing to a virtual Senior Academy Night. They continue to find innovative ways to make the last few weeks of the year meaningful for all students, but especially for our seniors.

Kudos to Delia Alba Gallegos, Home School Liaison at Streamwood High School, from Carl Draeger, Teacher at Streamwood High School
Delia goes above and beyond in communicating with the Spanish-speaking parents of SHS students. She provides answers to their questions in a timely manner and is an expert problem solver. She makes the communication process seamless for non-Spanish speaking staff. I am grateful to work at the same site as her.
Kudos to Mary Kaltenbach, Marie Jones Stenger, Sue Toomey, and Angela Balk, Support Staff at the Early Education Station, from your Building Colleagues at the Early Education Station
It's been a true joy working with this group of passionate women over their many years of service to our District. Ladies, your knowledge, dedication, and professionalism have made a huge impact on the lives of so many families within our communities. Congratulations on your retirement. You will be greatly missed.

Kudos to Erika Nelson, Principal’s Secretary at Prairieview Elementary School, from Tara Burghart and Ellen Kamps of School & Community Relations
Thank you, Erika, for turning the challenges of remote working and Distance Learning into an opportunity to make your Prairieview website a wonderful tool for staying connected and engaged with the school’s families. We appreciate your enthusiasm and can-do attitude, and your appreciative emails always put a smile on our faces.

Kudos to Mr. Ryan Corcoran, 8th Grade English Teacher at Larsen Middle School, from the Bonner Family
Thank you for taking the time and being so kind to deliver many books to students to read for enjoyment. We appreciate your time and dedication to your students throughout the year. Thank you for making learning fun, enjoyable and educational. Best Wishes Always!

Kudos to Jose Mora, Nicole Volkman, Kari Botkin, Ally Badalamenti, Ryan Carbonaro & Laura Thorpe, Outstanding Teachers at South Elgin High School, from a Grateful Parent.
I want to say thank you to these teachers for going above and beyond all expectations these last few months. Your commitment and dedication to your students has been noticed and is appreciated. Thank you for ALL you do!

Kudos to the Staff at Harriet Gifford Elementary School, from Joe Corcoran, Principal at Harriet Gifford Elementary School
I would like to share a heartfelt thanks to the staff at Harriet Gifford for their outstanding efforts these past couple weeks. Teachers came in and packed their students' belongings and their classrooms in order to get ready for a major construction project. I have heard from several Plant Op people how great of a job our teachers did in packing. I wasn't surprised because HG staff always rises to the occasion. They also willingly volunteered for distribution and made that go very smooth. Thank You, Thank You, Thank You.

Kudos to the Staff at Fox Meadow Elementary School from Sjoukje Brown, Principal at Fox Meadow Elementary
Thank you to paraeducators Wendi Smith, Lisa Mertinat, and Renee Reid for all the help on May 20th with student item distribution, round two. You are valued and appreciated! Thank you to social worker Karen Osborne for helping with two very serious situations this week. You are a rock star!

**Kudos to the Visual and Performing Arts Academy Teachers at Larkin High School from Todd Duty, VPAA Divisional at Larkin High School**

Thank you to all the VPAA teachers for volunteering their time and efforts to deliver Academy yard signs to all the seniors, and for recording individual messages for our virtual VPAA Senior Recognition this week. They all jumped at the opportunity to celebrate our kids! Go Royals!

**Kudos to Kim Saletta and Amyra Smerecky, Teachers at Tefft Middle School, from Valerie Albuck, English Teacher at Tefft Middle School**

For decorating the front of the school for the 8th graders to see when they picked up their belongings. Kudos also to Kim and the Recognition Committee: Nataly Rodriguez, Xochitl Chavarria Lujan, Jill Hansen, Lisa Kassabov, Christine Santosdiaz, Olga Bucio, Laura Azcoitia, Leticia Yera, and Georgie Towa for working to make the end of the year special for our 8th graders.

**Kudos to Maddie Dennis, Edwin Martinez, and Samantha Saez, Monitors at Tefft Middle School, from Valerie Albuck, English Teacher at Tefft Middle School**

For getting all the students' belongings from their lockers ready to be picked up. Thanks also to our custodial staff for getting belongings from the PE lockers. That was a lot of work. Thank you!

**Kudos to Mary Fulin for her 35 Years of Service as a Teacher and Her Upcoming Retirement, from her Friends and Colleagues in the Blue Hall at Otter Creek Elementary:**

- **Juan Perez** - Mary always has a smile on her face. She is never in a bad mood. I admire how she is able to establish a relationship of caring and respect with her students every single year. It shows that she truly cares about her students, and their emotional needs. Thank you, Mary, for being a great example to all of us. Enjoy your retirement!

- **Nicte Gomez-Klapperich** - Mary always takes so much time in making the most kind contact with coworkers and students every day, kneeling down to speak at a child’s level. I will miss her morning greeting and her smile each day. Well deserved Mary, do not forget to tune that piano. :)

- **Cristina Munoz** - Mary, thank you for welcoming me into your team and sharing your knowledge. You are a loving and caring person. You'll be truly missed.

- **Jami Windau** - As we say goodbye, and celebrate Mary’s 35 years of teaching, I am reminded most of what a blessing she has been … to her students & families, to her teaching colleagues, to
the staff she has been a part of, and to me! So happy for you, Mary! Once an Otter, Always an Otter!

**Jody Pecoraro** - Mary has been a wonderful friend, teaching partner and mentor for many years. She truly cares for her students and has been an integral member of the Otter Creek community, and she will be dearly missed.

**Gia Tummillo** - Mary is one of the most compassionate and caring teachers I know. Her door is always open to anyone .... Whether you need a laugh, a kind ear, or some last minute supplies for a lesson, you can count on Mary! You will definitely be missed, and I just don’t know how 2nd grade is going to make it to any event or meeting without you and your planner to guide us! Congratulations and enjoy! You deserve only the best!

**Angelica Ramirez** - I am blessed to have had such a wonderful colleague and kind person in my life. Best wishes for this new chapter in your life.