

Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter



Dec. 5, 2024

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Dear Colleagues,

It's beginning to look a lot like...snow! Or, now that December has arrived, at some point, it is going to look like snow. That spurs the annual question about whether or not we will use snow (or emergency) days if needed instead of a "remote instruction" day. The short answer: Yes.

Whenever inclement weather is expected, I am in regular contact with our Transportation and Plant Operations teams for updates. We continue to contract with a weather service that provides real-time alerts and updates for the entirety of U-46.

Everyone should read our [Emergency Closing Procedures](#). This document provides additional guidance regarding who must work even when I call a "snow day," and also provides the process we follow for communicating the decision.

In U-46, we have not applied to the State Board of Education to use e-learning days in lieu of using emergency days. A primary reason for this decision continues to be my concern about meeting the needs of our students requiring specialized programming and instruction through "remote instruction." Additionally, there are implications for paying some of our colleagues who do not get paid when an emergency day is taken because that day gets made up at the end of the school year.

If the weather requires U-46 to close, then I hope our students and staff appreciate the ability to take a day to watch the snow fall, clear their driveways and sidewalks, drink hot chocolate, read, and then report to school to make it a great day to learn when streets are clear.

Regardless of whether we close due to weather or remain open, our top priority will always be the safety and well-being of our students and staff.

Thank you for making each day a great day to learn in U-46!

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

Kudos

Send Kudos directly by clicking [HERE](#) or using Let's Talk. Remember, only Kudos with the sender's name will appear in the Weekly; no anonymous messages. Kudos are due by **5 p.m. each Tuesday**.

Kudos to Evelyn Vega, at Lincoln Elementary School, and ITW in Elgin, from Mayrena Guerrero at Lincoln Elementary School

A heartfelt thank you to Evelyn Vega for organizing a Thanksgiving meal donation for 20 of our Lincoln Elementary families! Thanks to your dedication and the incredible generosity of ITW in Elgin, families were able to pick up baskets filled with all the essentials to prepare a Thanksgiving meal and enjoy the holiday with their loved ones.

Thank you to ITW in Elgin for supporting our school community during this past Thanksgiving holiday. Your generosity and kindness are deeply appreciated, and made this Thanksgiving a little brighter for so many of our families.

We are grateful to Evelyn Vega and to ITW for their efforts to make a meaningful difference in our community. Thank you!

Kudos to Cecilia Anderson, at Laurel Hill Elementary School, from Gloria Helin, in the Teacher Mentor Program

I would like to thank Cecilia Anderson for giving me the opportunity to come and observe her with her adorable first grade classes... especially coming back from break. I was very fortunate to work with her at Channing Memorial for many years and was able to see that she continues to share her love for music with her students through patience and by celebrating their learning. Thank you for being you!

Kudos to Kimberly Widerski, at Larkin High School, from Amber Peters, of the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning

A huge thank you to Kimberly Widerski, Larkin's CTE Education Pathways teacher, and the five students/future educators who participated in the "Night at the Museum" event at DuPage Children's Museum, sponsored by YWCA Metropolitan Chicago. When I invited educators to the event, Kimberly was the first to respond, expressing a wish to bring students along. I immediately said, "Hold on, we'll make that happen!" Kimberly brought four seniors and one junior, all exploring the teaching field, to gain hands-on experience by learning through play alongside current educators who are already making a difference.

It was an incredible evening to celebrate the importance of educators and the lasting impact they have on young children's lives. We look forward to expanding this experience with the YWCA next

year to include more high schools with future teachers, so students can learn alongside some of the best early childhood educators in the field.

The CTE Education program's Childhood Education pathway allows students to focus on child development from conception through childhood, while gaining valuable skills to promote healthy physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth. This experience outside the classroom was an excellent opportunity for future educators to develop their skills through interactive STEM activities!

Kudos to Kimberly, YWCA Metro Chicago, and the Pathways team for making this program accessible to such promising future teachers!



Kudos to Lisa Harrison, from Anissa Upshaw and the Front Office Staff, all at Highland Elementary School

I just wanted to take a moment to brag about the fab job that Lisa is doing as the new AP at Highland! She has been in the District for just about two decades, but this year, she has entered the role of AP. Lisa is handling the millions of things thrown her way (LEA, discipline, parent meetings, etc.) with glitter, kindness, confetti and unicorns! I/We at Highland are lucky she is here and want her to know "We see you!" "We feel you!" and "Hold on to your unicorns!" - We got U! Your hard work is not going unnoticed. I'm super proud of U! Wink-wink!

Kudos to our Paraprofessionals and Sign Language Interpreters, from Tanya Case, all at Horizon Elementary School

Thank you to our hardworking paraprofessionals and sign language interpreters at Horizon. We have such wonderful people supporting our students from preschool to 6th grade. Thank you for all you do to Dana Ward, Aneela Nughal, Keyla Garcia, Grisel Sanchez, Lorraine Wuertz, Michele Brodbeck, Marvi Khokher, Josie Caravello, Lisa Fish, Lilli Leseberg, Deirdre Ellis, Rosa Gonzalez, Nancy Perez, Lori Drake, Kelli McElroy, Katia Bove, Rebecca Harris, Sabrina Hernandez, Leti Carrillo, Ornina Barkho, and Aga Kubowicz.

Kudos to the Faculty and Staff of Eastview Middle School, from Angela Ginnan, at Eastview Middle School

U.S. News recently did a ranking of the best middle schools in the state of Illinois, and Eastview Middle School was recognized in the top 40% statewide and also the number one middle school in the District! This is a first time accomplishment for the Wolves, and I could not be more proud to work with all of you. Everyday, you provide a safe and engaging learning environment for our students. As always, it's a great day to be a wolf ... and #wegotthis!

Kudos to Sibel Aygul, Margarita Bautista, Amena Begum, Yenny Molina, Sanaa Qureshi, Moona Rahman, Shelly Szymczak, and Kim Tazbier, from Cyndi Aleman and Nancy Mireles-Garcia, all at Nature Ridge Elementary School

We'd like to recognize the paraeducators at Nature Ridge. They work tirelessly to support our students from arrival to dismissal. They are exceptionally caring and committed to the safety and well-being of our students. We recognize your part in our students' success and thank you for always doing more!

Kudos to Maria Kantt, Amy "Beth" Kohler, Gladis Marin and Iraidia Camacho, all in Early Learners First Steps, from Lynn Reuter, in Early Learners

Thanks to this group of professionals who provided on-site preschool screenings at Sunnydale to support families in the neighborhood. I appreciate your willingness to try something new, prepare all of your materials to be off-site, and for the great customer service you provided to our families during the screenings. It was a great day for everyone!

Kudos to the Entire Liberty Elementary School Teachers and Staff, from Stephanie Sylvester, at Liberty Elementary School

U.S. News recently did a ranking of the best elementary schools in the state of Illinois, and we're excited that Liberty Elementary was one of the schools recognized in U-46 for schools in the top 40% statewide. Thank you to our caring and dedicated Liberty teachers and staff members who create a safe and engaging learning environment for our students every day.



Kudos to Jennifer Ford, from Stephanie Sylvester, both at Liberty Elementary School

Thank you, Jen, for making sure every single 3rd and 6th grade finished the i-Ready test last week. I am so thankful for your drive to always have 100% of the students finish the test so we can have the data we need to support all of our students. We could not have done it without you! Thank you so much!

Kudos to Andrea Gaitan, Cristina Martinez, Adrianna Miranda, and Katie Bowers Evaristo, all at Sunnydale Elementary School, from Lynn Reuter and the Early Learners Team

Thank you for all you did to welcome us for on-site screenings at Sunnydale. It was a wonderful experience for us as well as the families, and we are excited to partner with you to find more little learners for your preschool classrooms! Thanks for a great day.

Kudos to the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) Program, from Zainab Sheth, at Horizon Elementary School

A big shout to the wonderful DHH staff. Your generosity and kindness truly make a difference in the lives of everyone you touch. Thank you for your unwavering dedication and for going above and beyond to help a family in need in our program. You are the heart of our community, and we are so grateful for all you do!

Kudos to Kimberly Cicenelli, Susan Harter, and Sarah Heitter, all in Health Services, from Brittney Daufenbach, at Clinton Elementary School

I would like to acknowledge this dedicated vision and hearing team. Kim, Susan, and Sarah did a fantastic job screening students. They are always willing to be flexible, going above and beyond each year. Screenings always go smoothly and their communication is top notch. Additionally, they are amazing with the students. Thank you so much for all your hard work and being such an asset to our schools!

Kudos to All Those Who Made It Possible to Provide 65 Turkey Dinner Meals to Liberty Families, from Stephanie Sylvester, at Liberty Elementary School

Thank you to the Bartlett Jewel and Village Church of Bartlett for providing 65 Turkey Dinner Meals for our Liberty Families. Thank you to Parul Bhatia for all the work to organize the turkey meal pickup with all of our Liberty Families. Thank you to our School Social Worker Dolly Mandrelle, for always networking with our community!



School District U-46

