The return of in-person events continues to lift spirits and make our lives feel more normal. Tonight at the Q Center, the Kane County Regional Office of Education will be holding its Educator of the Year event. Nominees from U-46 include:

- Juan Figueroa, Dual Credit Spanish and Language Arts Teacher, Elgin High School (High School Teacher Category)
- Faviola Ximena Escobar, Dual Language Spanish Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher, Larsen Middle School (Middle School Teacher Category)
- Dr. Steve E. Tucker, Assistant Principal, South Elgin High School (Administrator Category)
- Sandy Ritter, Special Education Teacher, Tefft Middle School (Middle School Teacher Category)

Congratulations to these outstanding educators on your nominations!

Last evening we celebrated 152 U-46 colleagues who are retiring at the end of the school year. Thank you to all our dedicated staff who have worked tirelessly on behalf of students. Congratulations on your retirement!

All my best,

Tony
Calendar

- **Saturday, April 30** - U-46 Job Fair. [Details here.]
- **Saturday, April 30** - El Día del Niño Celebration. [Details here.]
- **Saturday, April 30** - STEM Expo. [Details here.]
- **Monday, May 2** - U-46 Board of Education meeting. [Details here.]
- **Tuesday, May 3** - Dual Language Informational Session. [Details here.]
- **Thursday, May 5** - Community Advisory Council’s general meeting. [Details here.]
- **Friday, May 6** - Institute Day. No classes, offices open.

U-46 Educational Foundation

You can recognize, honor, and celebrate the U-46 teachers and staff members who have made a difference in you or your child’s life by making a lasting gift that will benefit the entire U-46 community. In honor of Teacher Appreciation Week — May 1-7, 2022 — make a donation to the U-46 Educational Foundation’s [Teacher Appreciation campaign.](#)

With a donation, you will have the opportunity to customize a card which will be sent to teacher or staff member via interoffice mail. Tell us what makes this person so special, and we will share those stories on the [Foundation’s](#)
Your support funds programs that benefit U-46 students and schools, including our teacher and staff grant program. This year, the Foundation awarded 20 grants to U-46 teachers and staff totaling nearly $22,000. Grants paid for projects such as costumes and props for Larkin High School’s Bring a Book to Life production, an after-school crafting club at Tefft Middle School, programmable robots for a STEM lab at Fox Meadow Elementary School, parenting workshops for caregivers at Illinois Park Early Learning Center, and more! The Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Click here to #ThankAU46Teacher

Nearly 300 people attended the first Unite U-46 community engagement session on April 27 either virtually or in-person at the U-46 Welcome Center. Unite U-46 is a public engagement initiative that will allow us to develop recommendations on the best way to implement the Board of Education’s vision on topics including the implementation of a true middle school model (grades 6-8), expansion of early childhood education, and addressing the educational adequacy and operational efficiency of our facilities.

There are two meetings remaining this spring before there will be a summer break. Both will be held at 7 p.m. at the U-46 Welcome Center, 1019 E. Chicago St., with a virtual option offered as well. Each will focus on a different topic:

- **Wednesday, May 11:** How Our School Buildings Impact Student Success
- **Wednesday, May 25:** The Whys Behind PreK and Middle School
We need your help in spreading the word about these meetings to friends, neighbors, family members - anyone who lives in U-46’s boundaries, whether they have a student in the District or not. Here is a printable flyer and here is a graphic (English and Spanish) that you can post on your own social media accounts.

At UniteU46.org, you can learn more about this important work, find the dates and topics for the fall meetings, watch recordings of past meetings, and register to receive a Zoom link for the virtual option.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Middle School Transition - Call to Committee

School District U-46 is seeking input into the planning for the 6th grade transition to middle school. In alignment with the Association for Middle Level Education, the committee will engage in research and make recommendations in each of the areas of Culture and Community; Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; and Leadership and Organization. The committee’s work will be complete when we are able to successfully transition 6th grade to middle school.

Click here to read more about the 6-8 Middle School Transition Committee, including meeting dates, expected outcomes, the committee configuration, and more.
The deadline for application submission is 5 p.m. Monday, May 9, 2022. The application, which is for a Steering Committee, can be found here.

Human Resources

Your U-46 Path

ABC-Channel 7 aired a segment last week on the District’s new Horizons 4U Tuition Reimbursement Program. A collaborative effort between neighboring universities and colleges, the District recently formed this program to provide current U-46 employees with the support to pursue a career in teaching, as a certified school nurse, as a paraprofessional, or within the trades. More info can be found in these FAQs. Questions can be sent via email to Horizons4U@u-46.org. Watch the broadcast segment by clicking here.

Multilingual and Multicultural Education

ESL Endorsement

We are excited to share that there are still open spaces for U-46 teachers and administrators to join a cohort to earn a Bilingual/English as a Second Language endorsement. This opportunity is a partnership between U-46 and Northern Illinois University. Given that the information sessions have passed,
we are requiring that those interested watch the informational session recording in its entirety before applying. If you are still interested after watching the entire video and understand the program elements and what is expected of you as a participant, please use this link to apply to the cohort. We are extending the application deadline to Friday, May 6 (pushed back from what is communicated in the video). Finally, we will be sharing communication with all those who have been accepted into the cohort on Friday, May 13. If you have additional questions, please submit them here (do not email MME department members directly). We hope you consider this great opportunity!

Teacher Appraisal Plan Professional Practice

Peer Assistance Review
Do you anticipate being in a new role next year or looking for additional support with your TAP Process events? The U-46 Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR) is a year-long, job-embedded program designed to support teachers one-on-one through both instruction and appraisal. PAR is available to any ETA member who is not formally matched with a mentor through the U-46 Teacher Mentor Program (TMP). Once a teacher has elected to participate in PAR, they are matched with a Peer Consultant Teacher (PCT). Visit the PAR website, view the PAR Flyer, or email PARadm@u-46.org for more information.

Assessment & MTSS

Assessments
District Literacy Assessments (DLB) - April 25 - May 20, 2022
- Review PreK-6 District Assessment Guide to know who to test

Assessment Guides:
- 2021-22 Grades PreK-6 District Assessment Guide
- 2021-22 Grades 7-12 District Assessment Guide

Testing Dates:
El Día del Niño

The U-46 Bilingual Parent Advisory Council will celebrate Children’s Day from noon to 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 30 at Tefft Middle School in Streamwood.

The free celebration will begin with a snack followed by crafts, stories, a fire truck, Gail Borden Public Library’s Bookmobile, and a face painter. Each family will also receive a free book! More details are located here.
The U-46 Online Backpack allows community organizations that have not-for-profit status to share information on events, activities, and resources with U-46 families. The Online Backpack has a new logo and the website page has a streamlined appearance. If you have organizations ask about distributing flyers to families, please refer them to the Online Backpack page here where they can read guidelines and complete a request form.

**In Memoriam**

Lydia Solorzano, who joined U-46 in 2009, was the Principal’s secretary at Elgin High School. She passed away on April 12. Co-workers say they will always remember Lydia’s laugh, incredible dedication to the school’s students and staff, and unrelenting faith. She was the face of Elgin High School and welcomed teachers, parents, and District leaders into the building with her infectious smile. You can read more about Lydia and other U-46 employees we have lost during the last two school years, here on the Intranet under School & Community Relations.

**State News**

The April 26 Weekly Message from State Superintendent Carmen I. Ayala, Ph.D., is available online in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format here. All editions of the Weekly Message are archived on the Illinois State Board of Education's website at here.

**Photo of the Week**
This year marked the 10th anniversary of U-46’s Superintendent’s Scholarship program, which supports outstanding students who are the first in their immediate family to attend college. Twenty members of the Class of 2022 were honored at a reception earlier this month. They will also receive a $1,000 scholarship. Click here to learn about these inspiring students.

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 Brenda Morones, ILP Teacher at Centennial Elementary School; Andrea Kohl, Paraeducator ILP in Special Education Support Services; and Kimberly Blazek, 2nd Grade Teacher at Centennial, from Erin Bryant, Kindergarten Teacher at Centennial

Thank you to Brenda, Andrea and Kimberly for helping to organize this year’s Autism Walk! We had a great turnout, and everything ran smoothly. This walk would not have happened without you!

Kudos to Michael Huizar, Social Worker at Tefft Middle School, from
Abigail Aragon, Home School Liaison, English Language Learners, Tefft Middle School

Mr. Huizar has been a wonderful addition to Tefft Middle School. He is lovely to work with, and it's great seeing him work with the students. Mr. Huizar is always available to see students who are in need of his help or guidance. We love seeing Mr. Huizar around the building, and he is always available to jump in and help. The office staff would like to say, “Thank you for all your hard work that does not go unnoticed and for going above and beyond your duties. We know this is your first year at Tefft, but you have already started to make your mark.” Thank you!

Kudos to Mark Gonnella, Assistant Principal of Tefft Middle School, from Abigail Aragon, Home School Liaison, English Language Learners, Tefft Middle School

The Tefft office ladies would like to say thank you to Mr. Gonnella for fulfilling his role to the fullest. Mr. Gonnella goes above and beyond every day to help students and staff with anything they may need. Mr. Gonnella is never too busy or too tired to do everything he can for everyone at Tefft. We specifically noticed his determination to serve our kiddos during the week of IAR. Mr. Gonnella lost his voice, but he still showed up and got the job done. I can’t explain how he is able to do all of this and still have time to stop by the main office and say “Hello” with a smile on his face. We love you, Mr. Gonnella!

Kudos to Lorena Mendoza, Assistant Principal at Tefft Middle School, from Abigail Aragon, Home School Liaison, English Language Learners, Tefft Middle School

“Go Trojans!” These are the words we hear from Ms. Lorena Mendoza on days we are hardly surviving. Ms. Mendoza has such a positive attitude that radiates to the Tefft students and staff. We have seen how she has helped troubled students get back on track with their behavior and academics. There is no doubt she has been a lovely addition to Tefft. Ms. Mendoza is quick on her feet and never leaves things for another day. We love that about you, Ms. Mendoza. We appreciate you and all that you do for the kiddos.

Kudos to Ximena Vences, T-1 Parent Outreach Worker, Curriculum and Instruction, Tefft Middle School, from Abigail Aragon, Home School Liaison, English Language Learners, Tefft Middle School
I want to applaud Ximena Vences for making the impossible seem possible. Ximena never ceases to amaze us with her determination and her passion to help our families and students - especially those who are new to our country. Ximena is reliable and someone that our students trust and love. Thank you Ximena for always being so smiley and ready to help! She deserves a million kudos. We love and appreciate you so much!

Kudos to the U-46 Food Service Team, from Elena Hildreth, Director of Food and Nutrition Services
Not all heroes wear capes - some wear hairnets and aprons! Please join me in recognizing all of our school lunch heroes on National School Lunch Hero Day - May 6, 2022. The U-46 Food Service Team is an amazing, dedicated, highly passionate group of people who give 110 percent every day to serve our students.

Kudos to Abbey VanDeWoestyne, Social Worker at Ellis Middle School, and Miriam Vazquez Alvarado, Teacher T1 Comm Liaison, Curriculum and Instruction at Ellis Middle School, from David Dybalski, Psychologist at Elgin High School
This kudos goes out to Abbey and Miriam, the two social workers at Ellis Middle School. It’s a long overdue acknowledgment of the fine care they have provided to the students at Ellis for years. Their care, compassion, patience and knowledge of students and families is incredible, year after year. It is an honor to work with them.

Kudos to Melina Pantoja, Bilingual Social Worker, Special Education, from Genevieve Hebeka, Social Worker at South Elgin High School
Thank you a million times over to Melina for not only doing an amazing job conducting a social developmental study with one of our non-English-speaking parents, but also for going well above and beyond to find ways for this parent to access resources. Thank you so much for sharing your “how-to” in this unusual circumstance with us, and for helping this family. You’re amazing!

Kudos to Brittany Hennessey, English Teacher at South Elgin High School, from Kendra Dicker-Krase, English Teacher at South Elgin High School
Huge kudos to Brittany for always going above and beyond to create unique
and useful learning opportunities for our seniors. She came up with the idea of hosting mock interviews for our senior English students. Each year that we have conducted these interviews, she organizes the entire event and helps our senior English curriculum team make sure that it runs smoothly. I am so lucky to work with my entire senior curriculum team - but it is high time (after 12 years!) to recognize the extraordinary effort Brittany puts into creating a meaningful and engaging curriculum.

Kudos to Jessica Hayes, Teacher for the Visually Impaired, Special Education, from Sharon Rodriguez, Occupational Therapist, Illinois Park Center for Early Learning; Jaclyn Schulze, Social Worker, Special Education, Illinois Park Center for Early Learning; and Kristin Embury, Early Childhood SC Teacher, Illinois Park Center for Early Learning

Kudos to Jessica Hayes. Jessica has been working alongside Jack Hartman to create songs for the visually impaired. Jack Hartman is a popular YouTube creator who has created more than 1,000 children’s songs. They have collaborated together to make educational braille videos for students and other learners. Well done!! These videos can be seen on YouTube when searching “Jack Hartman Braille.”

Kudos to Michael Miserendino, English Teacher at Bartlett High School; Alexa Mount, Music/Vocal Teacher at Bartlett High School; David Goldman, Stage Tech, Plant Operations, Bartlett High School; Eric Hollaway, Music/Orchestra Teacher at Bartlett High School; and Tristan Broeker, Music/Orchestra Teacher at Eastview Middle School, from Lisa Swan, U-46 Parent/Guardian

Shout outs to Mr. Miserendino, Ms. Mount, Mr. Goldman and Mr. Hollaway and all the Fine Arts staff at Bartlett High School for their awesome production of “Legally Blonde the Musical.” There are a thousand moving parts in a production, on top of handling all the facets each student brings with them to every rehearsal. And in addition, they are also awesome teachers! It was great to see Mr. Broeker from Eastview who came to support his former students in the production. We are lucky to have these caring teachers in our schools, and appreciate that they go above and beyond.