As Teacher Appreciation Week draws to a close, let me add my personal thank you to all our teachers and related service providers. If ever there was a time to shine the light on the teaching profession, it is now.

For each of the past eight years I have greeted all new teachers to our school district. I ask them if there was a movie or television show that inspired them to enter the field of teaching. The most common responses: *Freedom Writers*, *Stand and Deliver*, *Dangerous Minds*, and *Dead Poets Society*. If you were to read my doctoral dissertation, you would learn how the depictions of teachers in Hollywood are problematic. I will share that observation for a more in-depth weekly message at some point.

While I am critical of these movies, I cannot deny that they capture the importance of relationships. They also demonstrate the long hours that teachers put into their craft. However, they do not show the collaboration and cooperation needed to do the job well. They do not show the planning and preparation for the lessons. They do not show the professional learning, or the committee work, or the curriculum writing, the after-school activities, and on and on.

I have spent more time in classrooms this year than ever before. It has blessed me with so many opportunities to observe those qualities that Hollywood never captures. For example, I've been able to see the “off-stage,” high quality planning like the team of Kate Dusek and Holly Fels at Hawk Hollow Elementary; the thoughtful preparation of a system for students to track their progress towards a learning standard like that of Samantha Scimeca at
Huff Elementary. The movies do not show the extra hours you work to support students after school, like our teachers who engage in Battle of the Books (such as Amy Kovacs at Fox Meadow who led the school’s 12-member team to the first-place trophy), or offer extracurricular activities (like Dan Affleck at Larsen Middle who offers a Broadcasting Club).

The movies do not show those teachers who serve to support other teachers, like our instructional coaches Kim Stancl and Isabel Torres, among others; and other teacher-leaders based at the central office including Alicia Wildermuth, Heather Fellows, and Doreen Roberts, among others. This year many of these teachers spent several days each week serving in classrooms as substitute teachers while also juggling their day-to-day duties.

Hollywood does not show you Peggy Hernandez, our Astronomy teacher at the U-46 Planetarium, who has likely seen the face of every U-46 student, leaving her celestial mark on generations of kids.

As you read these names, insert your own. Each of you makes a difference every day and is deserving of your own movie. Each of you is a beacon of light helping others find their way to a fulfilling life.

All my best,

Tony
Calendar

- **Monday, May 9** - U-46 Board of Education meeting. [Details here](#).
- **Wednesday, May 11** - Unite U-46 Community Engagement Session. [Details here](#).

Did you know that you could add the District’s website calendar to your work Google calendar? Here is how:

1. On your computer, open Google Calendar.
2. On the left, next to "Other calendars," click Add (+) “Add other calendars” and then “Subscribe to calendar.”
3. Enter the calendar’s address by copying and pasting the following > u-46.org_0nme8ocv8kn3qi8qd5r4k6f7d8@group.calendar.google.com
4. Hit Enter. The calendar appears on the left, under "Other calendars."

**Tip:** It might take up to 12 hours for changes to show in your Google Calendar.
Equity Symposium

Our 2nd Annual Equity Symposium, being held virtually, is looking for U-46 presenters to share their expertise and knowledge. Specifically, our 2nd Annual Equity Symposium requests that our presenters ground their presentation in one or more of the following themes: critical love, equity pedagogy, and social justice. The symposium is scheduled for Aug. 8 through Aug. 12. Breakout session presentations should include participation interactions that allow for an engaging session. If this is you and you are interested in presenting, please let us know by completing the Equity Symposium Presenter Interest Form here. Note that compensation and a CPDU will be offered to presenters as part of this professional development opportunity.

Health Services

COVID-19 Testing

For U-46 employees who comply with Governor Pritzker’s Executive Order No. 87 by consenting to weekly COVID-19 testing, note that the executive order has been extended to be effective through May 28, 2022. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Humanresources@U-46.org.

Unite U-46

Community Engagement
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 the 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.
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.

**Summer Connection 2022**

Exciting update - we have more than 2,000 students registered for summer programming across all grade levels! A number of teachers and staff are ready to serve these students but we are still looking for additional teachers and staff at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Summer school is from June 8 to July 14 with no summer school on Fridays and July 4. Staff PD will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on June 6 and 7. If you or someone you know is interested in joining our Summer Connection team, learn more, and find details on how to apply, here. Please encourage student teachers and substitute teachers to apply.
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 the end of the day 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!
Writing Contest

The Multilingual and Multicultural Education department is proud to announce Voces del Corazón/Voices from the Heart, a Districtwide project that will begin with a writing contest in the fall of 2022. Dual language and ESL students from K-12th grade will be invited to reflect on their bilingual identity and write about their experience as part of a district wide writing contest. If you are interested in getting involved please complete this Google form. More information can be found here.

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

NWEA MAP Growth - May 9 - May 27, 2022
MAP Spring 2022 Planning Checklist

- Only Dual Language students - Spanish Math - Grades 2 -7
- Or any Special Education students, as needed per IEP
- Special Education teachers must contact the assessment office for the
regular English Math and English Reading test to be turned on. As they will not be left open on a daily basis.

**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:**

- 2021-22 Assessment Testing Windows

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**School & Community Relations**

**Online Backpack**

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 inquire about distributing flyers to families, please refer them to the Online Backpack page [here](#) where they can read guidelines and complete a request form.

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**Community**

Thank you from Alignment Collaborative for Education
Please join us today on Teacher Appreciation Day to thank our teachers. We appreciate all that they do to champion student success.

“A teacher affects eternity and one can never tell where their influence stops”
-Henry Adams-

#U46Proud
Congratulations to Larkin High School seniors (left to right) Mariana Villagomez, Anayeli Flores, and Dasani Johnson, who won scholarships from the Elgin Teachers Association through their Those Who Excel program. All three students plan to pursue a career in education. Joining them to celebrate were Larkin Principal Krystal Bush; Steve Hoyt, Larkin Math Teacher and ETA Secondary Section Director #3; ETA President Barb Bettis; and Superintendent Dr. Tony Sanders.

State News

The May 3 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

Four educators in U-46 were celebrated at the Kane County...
Regional Office of Education’s annual Kane County Educator of the Year awards banquet on April 29. Elgin High School’s Juan Figueroa (top left) received the Regional Superintendent Award. Also nominated for an award at the event were (from right to left) South Elgin High School’s Dr. Steve Tucker, Tefft Middle School’s Sandy Ritter, and Larsen Middle School’s Faviola Ximena Escobar. All four will receive an Accent on Achievement certificate from the U-46 Board of Education at the meeting on May 9. Read more about these amazing educators here.

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 Harriet Gifford Teachers Rocio Torres, Kindergarten, Dual Language; Lourdes Buchs, Kindergarten, Dual Language; Zehra Tahir, Kindergarten; and Sarah Willging, 1st Grade, Dual Language; Hillcrest Elementary Teachers John Alimi, 3rd Grade, Dual Language; and Elida Bach, 4th Grade, Dual Language; and Kimball Middle School’s Social Science Teacher Michael Kalusa and English Teacher Amy Kelly, from Aurora Scarpaci, Childhood Education Teacher at Larkin High School

Thank you to the teachers listed above for hosting a Larkin High School student and a Future Teacher Club member to shadow them in their classroom during Teacher Appreciation Week! Following this opportunity, the students said they appreciated teachers even more for their patience, kindness, friendly demeanor and dedication. Thank you for inspiring students interested in education and welcoming them into your classroom!
Kudos to Yuritzin Rodriguez Ortega, Dual Language Kindergarten Teacher at Parkwood Elementary School, from U-46 Parent Fabiola Marquez

Since the beginning of the year, Yuritzin Rodriguez Ortega has been such an amazing teacher to my son and all of the students at Parkwood. My son had separation anxiety, and Mrs. Rodriguez Ortega made the school year an easy one with her kindness and love for her students. She has made a secure and safe environment for all those who attend Parkwood. I say this because not only does she help the students in her class, but also those around her. Just from dropping off my son in the mornings, I can see how dedicated she is to her work. If someone has a jacket unzipped or a shoe untied, she will help. If someone is crying, she makes sure that they are safe and OK. Mrs. Rodriguez Ortega always has a smile on her face and is always willing to help others. Not only is she an amazing person, but she is also an amazing teacher. I seriously can’t believe my eyes and ears when I hear my son read to me. He breezes through his math homework. And my son came home so excited because his teacher dressed up for the 100th day of school. Mrs. Rodriguez Ortega goes above and beyond as a teacher. I really wanted the school district to know what an amazing teacher they have as part of their team.

Kudos to Bartlett High School Teachers Jeff Horler (English); Anthony Glorioso (Project Lead the Way); Rachel Wehrle (Science); Serena Armas (World Language); Jim Wolfsmith (Math); and Jeffrey Schierer (Science), from U-46 Parent Jennifer Schwardt
Happy Teacher Appreciation Week! Thank you for your dedication and hard work this year with my freshman daughter! You have made her transition to high school fun and exciting, and you have taken extra efforts to learn about her as a student. I appreciate all that you have done for my freshman, and all of the students at Bartlett High School! Thank you!

Kudos to the Bartlett High School STEM Academy Teachers, with Special Thanks to Joseph Manuel Morales, Tech Ed Teacher at Bartlett High School, and Janine Stevens, Project Lead the Way Teacher at Bartlett High School, from Kristin Sanson, 4th Grade Teacher at Liberty Elementary School and a U-46 Parent

Kudos to the Bartlett High School STEM Academy teachers for organizing an amazing STEM Academy Showcase. And a special thanks goes to Joseph Manuel Morales and Janine Stevens for their part in organizing the event. Juniors and seniors worked on their projects throughout the year and presented them to parents, engineers and other students. I was impressed on how well it was organized and how well the students were prepared in presenting their projects.

Kudos to Karl Vizethum, Custodian at the U-46 Welcome Center, from Elena Hildreth, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, and the Food and Nutrition Services Staff

We can't say enough about Karl Vizethum, Custodian at the Welcome Center. He has been so very helpful to us when we go there to set up for various events. He is kind, thoughtful and always eager to help. You are a gem, Karl. Thanks for all that you do - from your friends in Food and Nutrition Services (especially Food Service Manager Audrey Etheridge).

Kudos to the Horizon Elementary School PBIS Team, the Horizon Teachers, and Rajan Sharma, Assistant Principal at Horizon, from Laura Avelar, Kindergarten Teacher at Horizon

Kudos to the Horizon PBIS Team, Horizon teachers, and Mr. Sharma for all their hard work in making McTeacher's Night a success! Also, a huge Kudos to all of the Horizon students and families who came out to support McTeacher’s Night! Horizon families caused the local McDonald’s to sell out of cookies TWICE!
Kudos to Nancy Kalush, 6th Grade Teacher at Hanover Countryside Elementary School; Michele Mullen, 3rd Grade Teacher at Hanover Countryside; and Gina Peri, 4th Grade Teacher at Hanover Countryside, from Harold (Jack) Shepherd, Principal at Hanover Countryside

Kudos to Nancy, Michele, and Gina for hosting the first classroom demonstrations of Academic Teaming. These amazing teachers opened their classrooms to help their colleagues get a better picture of academic teaming in action. Thank you, all!

Kudos to Margarita Bryan, Library Paraprofessional at Timber Trails Elementary School, from Karrie Gillespie, Kindergarten Teacher at Timber Trails Elementary

Thank you for all your hard work in putting together our in-person book fair. The students were so excited to purchase books, and our PTO generously donated a few books to each classroom. You did an amazing job, and we greatly appreciate you!

Kudos to Susan Roth, Psychologist at South Elgin High School, from Genevieve Hebeka, Social Worker at South Elgin High School

A huge thank you to Susan Roth, our school psychologist. Susan has the tireless dedication, patience, and diligence of a saint! Susan, you always manage to complete an enormous amount of work with a sense of humor and
grace. Thank you!

Kudos to Sheila Knapp, Food Services Lead at Heritage Elementary School, and Gina Edgerton, Food Services Assistant Lead at Heritage, from Catherine Fletcher, Principal at Heritage
Sheila and Gina are a wonderful team in Food Service here at Heritage! They always have a smile on their faces and are always up for ideas on how to get our students excited about healthy meals. We appreciate them so much! They are also a hoot to work with! Thank you Sheila and Gina!!

Kudos to Roseann Spina, 2nd Grade Teacher at Heritage Elementary School, from Melanie Patterson, U-46 Parent
Kudos to Ms. Spina. I truly thank you and appreciate all you do - not just for my daughter, but also for your entire class. My daughter loves coming to school every day, and it’s all because of you and your exceptional teaching skills. Happy Teacher Appreciation Week.

Kudos to the Larsen Middle School Mathletes Team and their Coach, Emily Bartz, Math Teacher at Larsen Middle School, from Gayle Toppel, Retired U-46 Teacher
Congratulations to the Larsen Middle School Mathletes in taking first-place at the District U-46 Middle School Math Competition! Not only did they achieve first-place overall, but they placed first in the relay competition, first in the rapid-round competition and took first-place in the cooperative round!
Congratulations to this very talented group of students and to their coach Emily Bartz on a job well done!

Kudos to Yesenia Vargas, Para-ILP, Special Education Support Services, Canton Middle School; Amy Marfil, Social Worker at Canton Middle School; Jennifer Sabal, Speech Therapist at Canton Middle School; and Monique Dusek Sparacino, Para-ILP, Special Education Support Services, Canton Middle School; from Lisa Remblake, Teacher-ILP Secondary, Canton Middle School
To Yesenia, thank you for all the hard work you put in to welcome our new student! Thank you to Amy, Jen and Monique for all your additional support and effort to help this transition! You all make my job better, and I am so
thankful to have all of you by my side!

Kudos to Lisa Soron, Social Worker at Centennial Elementary School, from Dolly Mandrelle, Social Worker at Liberty Elementary School
I can't thank Lisa enough for her support of me as a colleague and a social worker during a difficult week. Lisa, thank you again. Please know that I so appreciated your guidance and support this past week. I would not have been able to get through it without you.

Kudos to Mentor Specialists Sherry Pedersen, Kristi Giannotti, Crystal Solov, Melisa Creighton and Karen Smith, from Gloria Helin and Veronica Kernler, Teacher Leaders/Mentor Specialists of the TMP
We appreciate all you do to support the growth of new certified staff members, mentors, and the TMP department. Your collaboration and reflective practices have helped to continuously strengthen the program. Thank you for demonstrating what the Plan, Teach, Reflect, and Apply (PTRA) cycle looks and sounds like in real life! We are grateful to call you colleagues! Happy Teacher Appreciation Week!

Kudos to the over 450 Mentees and Mentors in the Teacher Mentor Program from all of us at the TMP: Gloria Helin and Veronica Kernler, Teacher Leaders/Mentor Specialists, and Kristi Giannotti, Sherry Pederson, Crystal Solov, Karen Smith, and Melisa Creighton, Mentor Specialists.
Happy Teacher Appreciation Week! We appreciate all of your hard work in supporting each other, the program, and your students. We constantly hear about how beneficial it is to have a thought partner, a go-to person, and someone to share what's going on personally and professionally. Thank you for all you do to model a fantastic culture of learning for each other, our students, and our U-46 community!