

# Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter

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**March 13, 2025**

Dear Colleagues,

As we nudge closer to the spring season, we also nudge closer to the full construction season in U-46. One of our primary goals for the 2024-2025 year indicates "U-46 will establish and operate equity-focused, inclusive, efficient, and safe learning environments," and this work is going to become even more evident in the next few weeks. Our middle school projects include the following:

- **Hawk Hollow Middle School:** Construction is on track, with no major delays or budget changes. Expected to be completed in time to welcome 7th graders only for the 2025-26 school year.
- **Kenyon Woods Middle School:** A 46,000 sq. ft. addition is planned, with completion targeted for August 2026. The groundbreaking is scheduled for March 26.
- **Kimball Middle School:** A 53,000 sq. ft. addition is underway, scheduled for completion in August 2026. The groundbreaking is tentatively scheduled for April 7.
- **New Middle School in Elgin:** Scheduled for occupancy in August 2027, extensive site work and community feedback are shaping its development. The groundbreaking is tentatively scheduled for April 22.

Our elementary school projects include:

- **McKinley Elementary School:** Plans are moving forward to replace McKinley Elementary due to its age and accessibility challenges. The district is exploring a new site at the former David C. Cook property on Grove Avenue. Our architectural partners are working on a conceptual design that honors the location's historical significance while taking advantage of its natural landscape near the Fox River. The timeline for this project is being finalized.

- **Glenbrook and Century Oaks Elementary Schools:** Glenbrook and Century Oaks elementary schools will undergo renovations, including new additions, while students continue learning in the buildings throughout the process. Work is expected to start later this year and be completed by August 2027.
- **Illinois Park Early Learning Center:** Illinois Park, currently an early childhood center, will transition to an elementary school and will receive a small addition and updated driveways and drop-off areas. The update is expected to start later this year and be finished by August 2026.

Please keep in mind that all dates concerning construction are estimates. I continue to encourage all of our colleagues to review the [Unite U-46](#) work, where updates will be shared.

While it is thrilling to see the work take shape across our district, I realize this plan includes significant changes for our school system. I continue to remind our team and community that these changes will positively impact students across our system as every student will have access to an updated, safe and modern learning environment. This goal is also vital to providing every student the learning environment they deserve to be college- and career-ready and increase access to early learning. I appreciate the work of our teams to bring these updates to our school district. Thank you for your commitment to changing our systems until they measurably work for all students.

Together, we are making sure each U-46 site is able to provide an optimal learning environment to be sure it is always a great day to learn in U-46!

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

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## Kudos

**Note:** We enjoy seeing the recognition and respect among our U-46 Team through the [Kudos submitted](#) in each issue of the Superintendent's Weekly. In an effort to further recognize our team members, we will be sharing select Kudos on social media each week under the hashtag #U46StaffKudos. When entering Kudos in Let's Talk, please note if you would prefer to not have your kudos shared on social media. We look forward to continuing to receive your kudos and celebrating them in this new way.

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 the Larkin Network Special Education Service Teams from Gladys C. Crespo, in Special Education**

I want to extend a heartfelt shout-out to our dedicated Special Education Service teams, for the unwavering commitment and hard work they put in every day. Your passion for supporting students with diverse needs truly makes a difference in their lives, and we are beyond grateful for all you do. The work that all of you do is essential in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students, and we are truly grateful for your dedication. Thank you for the compassion, expertise, and determination you all bring to our team!

**Kudos to Amarilys Vazquez, Yudelsi Mastrapa and the Coleman Team, from Carolyn Flores, in Special Education**

Kudos to you! Your dedication to creating supportive and outstanding work and establishing a well-structured and engaging learning environment is evident in the student's unstoppable progress. Keep up the good work!

**Kudos to Samantha Colando, from Jessica Harrison and The Behavior Specialists**

We sincerely appreciate Sam, the Secondary Teacher Leader for ILP, for her invaluable support and resourcefulness in assisting a classroom at EHS. Her dedication to providing collaboration notes and sharing essential resources has been instrumental in fostering meaningful and supportive change for the EHS ILP classroom. Her guidance and teamwork continue to make a positive impact, and we are grateful for her contributions!

**Kudos to Kenyon Woods Middle School and the U-46 Catering Team from Melinda Leman, in Human Resources**

Thank you to the Kenyon Woods Middle School main office and library staff for letting us use their library facilities for the years of service held on February 20.

Thank you to Pete Marroquin and Gus Konstantinidis for doing an amazing job getting the room set up for the celebration and cleaned up ready for classes the next day!

Thank you to Audrey Etheridge and her team for making a delicious spread for the recipients to enjoy!

**Kudos to Pam Maxey, in Early Learners Initiatives, from Gloria Helin, in the Teacher Mentor Program**

Thank you for visiting the preschool classrooms at Liberty Elementary School dressed up as Tucker the Turtle! Thank you for bringing the book, "Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think," to life for the students. You are amazing!



**Kudos to the ELL Speech Language Pathologists, from Anabela Largo, ELL SLP Lead**

I want to thank all the ELL SLPs for always being willing to support me and more importantly to support each other. Your dedication to your job doesn't go unnoticed.

Thank you to all the SLPs who promptly responded to my emails while gathering substantial information for a recent project.

Thank you Maria Margarita Marin, Amy Allen, Heidi Valerio, and Lily Frantzis for volunteering your time to help organize information and ensure that all the relevant documentation was completed. You are awesome!!

**Kudos to Paige Moran, at Streamwood High School, from Tara Burghart, in Communications & Community Relations**

Thank you, Paige, for being willing to fulfill ABC Channel 7's last-minute request for their story on Gov. Pritzker's proposal about cell phones in schools. You are a natural on camera, and I'm so glad you were able to [share details](#) of the good work going on at Streamwood High School. I'll work on a story about a "policedure" with you any time!

**Kudos to Liberty Elementary School Staff, from Arshiya Quadri, at Liberty Elementary School**

A huge thank you to our supportive principals, Mrs. Sylvester, Mr. Wilsey, and resident administrator Mrs. Schmidt, for being proactive in providing a quiet space for our fasting students during Ramadan.

Grazie to our wonderful secretaries, Mrs. Bhatia, Mrs. Falco, Mrs. Mackender, and Nurse Franks, for watching the students while they wait in the office. Gracias to our efficient lunch supervisors, who are so diligent about sending the fasting students to the office on time. Merci to our P.E teacher, Coach S, for rescheduling intense P.E activities. Shukran to our amazing teachers and librarian for reading Ramadan books and planning activities.

Your kindness, flexibility, and support mean so much, and it truly makes a difference for our students. Liberty is a better place because of you!

**Kudos to Shannon Fitzhugh, Jason Kwasniak, and the CAAEL Basketball Team, from Mary Mangione, all at Dream Academy**

Congratulations to CAAEL Basketball players for taking home the Sportsmanship Trophy and coming in second place at the State Tournament! Special thanks to Coaches Shannon Shannon Fitzhugh and Jason Kwasniak and for your dedication and guidance for our players! Way to go DREAM!



**Kudos to Damon Anderson and the Benefits Team, from Claire Ditchman, in Information Services**  
Thank you to Damon and the Benefits team for your expediency, helpfulness, kindness, and all around inspiring professionalism!

**Kudos to Erica Berchtold, AVID Lead Teacher at Bartlett High School, and Samantha Cosentino, AVID Lead Teacher at South Elgin High School, from Corey Elton, at Larkin High School, Felicia**

**Randle, at Streamwood High School, Ryan Smith, at Elgin High School, Steve Tucker, at South Elgin High School, and Jeff Villarreal, at Bartlett High School**

Erica and Samantha: our leadership and coordination of the District AVID Student Leader Summit were nothing short of exceptional! Your attention to detail, teamwork, and commitment to student success helped create an unforgettable experience for everyone involved. Thank you for making this event such a huge success – you both truly went above and beyond! We appreciate all your effort and the positive impact you've made on our AVID students and the potential it brings for the future of our program districtwide!



**School District U-46**

