

Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter



May 15, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

It is difficult to believe, but we are preparing for the final week of the school year. Thus, I am kindly asking you to please share your kudos for your colleagues and U-46 friends. I plan to make the final weekly message of the year a celebration of our work and each other. Please take a moment to submit your KUDOS [here](#) by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 21, to make sure they are included in the final weekly message.

It's a great day to learn in U-46!

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

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 Kathy Rush, Alexandria Toledo, Lee Beattie, Judy Dalka, Jason Ward, Felira Vivas, all at Streamwood High School, from Mary Perkins, at Tefft Middle School

Thank you to all the Streamwood High School staff and leadership that made our Middle School Volleyball Championship match up a success! We appreciate the support and ability for our athletes to experience a game on a high school floor. This was a greatly run event and without your support it wouldn't have been as successful. Thank you!

Kudos to Isela Gonzalez, from Karen Rottman and Paulina Rolon, all at Hanover Countryside Elementary School

Thank you to Isela for a most memorable teacher appreciation week. We celebrated teachers around the world by having a themed lunch prepared by our amazing Hanover Countryside parents. Thank you so much for taking the time to set this up and to appreciate us as we truly appreciate you! Hanover Countryside staff and family are truly an amazing group of people.

Kudos to Steven Grant, at South Elgin High School, from Katie Thompson, at Streamwood High School

I am so grateful to know and work with Steven Grant. With only limited time to work on curriculum, he has been dedicated to creating the most engaging, relevant, real-world projects for our students. His willingness to share without hesitation and time and energy that he has put into this class goes unmatched. Thank you so much!

Kudos Amy Durkalski, from Amanda Leatherby, both in Specialized Student Services

Thank you Amy, for the countless hours and work within Specialized Student Service as our Assistant Director of Compliance. Your passion for people with disabilities and ensuring they receive all of the benefits they deserve under IDEA is inspiring.

Kudos to our Safety Hero and Bus Driver Antowanna Manuel, from Dr. Jennifer Schwardt, Principal at Horizon Elementary School

On the ride to school, Antowanna faced a safety emergency while driving Horizon Bus 17, which was full of students. Antowanna thought quickly, and took immediate charge of the situation. She was able to get all students to safety, asked older students to help with the evacuation of younger students, and then provided care and comfort to the students while they waited for additional help to arrive. We are so thankful for Antowanna's quick thinking and leadership to keep all students safe on her bus. We are lucky to have her driving our students!

Kudos to Josh Rapley, at Elgin High School, from Lorie Estanislao, at South Elgin High School

Josh Rapley is the Elgin High School freshman boys volleyball coach. He is an extraordinary coach. He keeps an encouraging disposition even when the game gets tough. You can't help but motivate yourself as you watch him motivate his team. Coach Josh's enthusiasm and perseverance is reflected in the way the team carries themselves on and off the court. EHS is fortunate to have such a positive role model. Josh is a former volleyball player himself and an alumni of Elgin High School. What an inspiring coach for the freshman volleyball teams!

Kudos to Don Jones, from Amanda Leatherby, both in Specialized Student Services

Don is the Special Education Administrator in the South Elgin Network. As a new member of the Specialized Student Services team, Don has been a welcomed addition bringing a fresh perspective and we look forward to the continued enthusiasm he brings! Thank you Don, for being so responsive.

Kudos to Jeff Bral, Jeff Schierer, Anthony Metallo, Matt Davis, Shane Kinikin, all at Bartlett High School, from Mary Perkins, at Tefft Middle School

Thank you for all the support in the booth for the Middle School Soccer Championship. The event ran smoothly because of your help. We appreciate the experience our athletes receive getting on a high school field and being able to play. Thank you for your dedication and help to make this a memorable experience for them!

Kudos to Jacob Rosborough, from Joel Bez, both at Bartlett High School

This kudos is for the food truck culminating experience at BHS. Few times in my 2 1/2 decade career have I witnessed a teacher create an exercise in application that was so perfect, easily tangible to outside observers like myself, and an opportunity to observe how other electives function. The food was amazing. Interacting with the students was awesome. This is a model of elective based programs. I heard about it last year. I got my invitation to participate this year. This is an amazing system with immediately readable results that get to be tested for reliability and validity. Super impressed with Jacob's ability to pull this system off.

Kudos to Lori Nommensen, Retirement and Pension Specialist, from Janet Krambeer, at Kimball Middle School

I want to thank Lori for guiding us all through the retirement process. You have been patient, helpful, and always kind. Thank you.

Kudos to Meghan Doyle, from Angie Peralez, both at Larsen Middle School

I want to give a kudos to Ms. Doyle for organizing the 8th grade field trip to the Schaumburg Boomers game last week. It was a great opportunity for our students to enjoy themselves and celebrate. Thank you!

Kudos to Heather Fellows, Brenda Prado, and all Instructional Conference Presenters and Supporters, from Lela Majstorovic, Deputy Superintendent of Instruction

We are thrilled to be able to offer our staff the ability to attend our Instructional Conference on May 28 and 29, and it wouldn't be possible without the amazing support from our Professional Learning Department as well as our Instructional Leadership Team, all of our secretaries and Admin support personnel at the ESC, and all of our amazing presenters. Thank you for being a significant part of making this conference a success. It really is an "all hands on deck" affair, and I am so excited to see this vision become reality. Major kudos to everyone involved!

Kudos to Mily Cruz, in Information Services, from David Dybalski Psychologist at Elgin High School

Thank you Mily for helping me with various technical issues recently and many other times throughout the years. Your patience and the time you offer are well respected. You are an asset to District U-46

Kudos to Eliu Orozco, in Information Services from David Dybalski, at Elgin High School

Thank you Mr Orozco for always assisting me with whatever technology throughout the last two years. Also re-imaging the laptop and putting in my room was above and beyond and addressing questions when I see you throughout. You are a helper!

Kudos to Brian Erlich, at South Elgin High School, from Dan Affleck

I wanted to send kudos to Brian Erlich for his incredible support when my broadcasting club from Larsen Middle School visited South Elgin High School to produce our live broadcast. While Larsen typically produces weekly pre-recorded broadcasts, and we've done a few live ones before, Brian made it possible for my students to go live from the Beacon Academy TV studio. He was instrumental in troubleshooting technical glitches before we went on air and even gave me a crash course in the system so I could better guide my students. Thanks to his help, our broadcast was a success.

Kudos to Danny Tellin, from Dr. Jennifer Schwardt, both at Horizon Elementary School

Thank you Danny, our relief custodian, for supporting us the last several weeks. We appreciate you staying on through the end of the year to keep consistency at Horizon. Thank you for doing a great job to keep our building clean.

Kudos to Pablo Díaz-González, from Elisabet García, both at Lords Park Elementary School

This kudos is seriously long overdue! I would like to publicly recognize Pablo, our 4th grade Dual Language teacher, who is also our data coach. During the time that he has taken on this extra responsibility, Pablo has done nothing more than go above and beyond. In regards to data, he collects, organizes, enters, analyzes, interprets, summarizes, visualizes, reports, explains, and communicates it all to the entire staff, and does so in a manner that is understandable and user friendly. During my 20 years at Lords Park School, he has been one of the most professional colleagues that I have had the pleasure of working with. I appreciate his willingness to support any staff member that has asked for assistance, and he does so at a drop of a dime. I am constantly dumbfounded when I see and hear him present because he is absolutely a gifted genius. Thank you, Pablo for all you have done and continue to do at Lords Park. I know that I do not speak for myself when I say, you are greatly appreciated for all the behind the scenes work that you do to help us move Lords Park forward.

Kudos to Shyrica Perdue, from Alejandro Venegas, both at Ellis Middle School

Mrs. Perdue is one of the most wonderful people I've ever worked beside, she shows she cares for our students every single day even on her worst days she never fails to put a smile on her face and everyone else. Thank you Mrs. Perdue for all that you do!

Kudos to Mathue Wurtz, in Information Services, from Paulette Walsh, in Transportation

I had a mishap with my Google drive that affected two days of work that I discovered late on a Friday afternoon, literally minutes before I was to leave for the day. I reached out to Matt, in a panic, and he was there for me. He helped me resolve this issue seamlessly. I can't thank you enough for being there to help me. You're the best!

Kudos to Alex Moliwell, Anna Knudson, Andrea Kuchler, Katie Pappas, Jasmine Tracy, Students in the Musical, and all Parent Volunteers, from Mary Mueller, all at Timber Trails Elementary School

I want to give a huge BRAVO to all the directors, students and parent volunteers for putting on the best performance and full stage production of "The Lion King Jr." musical at Timber Trails Elementary. First the directors Alex, Andrea, Anna, Katie and Jasmine. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to our students and making this musical the best yet! I enjoyed every minute of the musical from the singing, dancing and the brilliant costumes. Your vision came to life on that stage! To the over 100 students involved- you all were stars and shined bright on that stage! And to the parents- Your help was instrumental to getting this musical to the quality it was, it was

evident seeing you coordinate all the behind the scenes on the day of the musical. Way to go to everyone! HAKUNA MATATA!

Kudos to Dan Hoffman and Lori Rosengarten, from Catherine Fletcher, all at Heritage Elementary School

Our Heritage community says goodbye to two longtime Heritage teachers this week. Dan Hoffman and Lori Rosengarten, know that your dedication, kindness and patience will never be forgotten. May your retirement be filled with joy, relaxation, and the things you love to do. We will miss you!

Kudos to Detective Hernandez and the Elgin Police Department, from Mary Mangione, at the Dream Academy

Thank you Detective Hernandez and Elgin Police Department for hosting our very first community event, the DREAM SpringFest! There was an overwhelming sense of community especially during the most stressful time of the year. Special thanks to Claudio Ferreira, Byron Batres, Yefry Paguada-Urbina, and Dr. Shannon Pennington for planning and organizing the event!



Kudos to Meghan Bulgarelli, Mary Gutierrez, Dana Hoglund, Josh Rodriguez, Amy King and the Entire SWEP Team, from Mariana Feliciano in Curriculum and Instruction

A heartfelt thank you for helping make our monthly Instructional Council meetings extra special this school year. Your support in coordinating the coffee cart has not only provided a welcome treat, but also a wonderful opportunity for connection between IC members and SWEP students. Your kindness, flexibility, and dedication have made a meaningful impact. Thank you!

Kudos to Stephanie Hopkins and Kim Piper, both in Specialized Student Services, from Amanda Leatherby, all in Specialized Student Services

Stephanie and Kim are in the Special Education Committee (SEC) co-chairs. It has been a pleasure to co-chair the SEC committee with both of you. You are diligent and take pride in planning an effective meeting for this high functioning team. Stephanie Hopkins will no longer be the co-chair for SEC next year, but we know she will be cheering on the work in the background as she continues to support our young learners across the district. Kim Piper will continue as co-chair and I look forward to the work of the committee in the 2025-2026 school year!

Kudos to Melinda Leman in Human Resources, Lori Nommensen in Finance, and Tara Burghart in Communications and Community Relations, from Beth Berg in Human Resources

Kudos for their hard work coordinating the Retirement Dinner, which was held at Villa Olivia on May 8. It was a beautiful evening, where 80 of our retiring colleagues and their guests were honored and recognized for their many years of service to our students. Melinda, Lori, Tara, and the Communications team made it a very special celebration, and we want to recognize their efforts. Thank you for the many hours and attention to detail it takes to make this event a successful celebration.

Kudos to Tina O'Farrell and all of the Drivers in Transportation, from Joe Kellenberger at the U-46 Planetarium

A huge shout-out and a massive thank you to everyone at Transportation, especially Tina and the drivers, for all their work in getting students to the Planetarium for their lessons and back again safely and on time. Their tireless effort allowed us to host over 700 classes at the Planetarium this year, totaling more than 14,000 students. Thank you, we could not have done it without you!

Kudos to all the Speech and Language Pathologists in U-46, from Anabela Largo, in Special Education

Congratulations to all our awesome Speech and Language Pathologists! Thank you for all your hard work to support our students.

May is BETTER HEARING & SPEECH MONTH!

LET'S CELEBRATE!



Better Hearing & Speech Month

HELPING PEOPLE COMMUNICATE

Kudos to Ryan Reed, Long-Term Substitute Teacher, from Dr. Jennifer Schwardt, both at Horizon Elementary School

Thank you Ryan for stepping in to support Horizon's 3rd grade this year! We value your work and dedication to our students and your consistency and support as you covered this grade all year. You have been a welcome addition to the Horizon team, and we are thankful for you.

Kudos to Demetrius Composano, Rhonda Wright, Stefan McGee, Davy Santos, Arkeya Hall, Liz Lewis, and Tim Allen, all in Transportation, from Margaret Boghossian, at Harriet Gifford Elementary School

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to our outstanding bus drivers for their exceptional service in transporting all Harriet Gifford students and staff to the Kane County Cougars game last week. Their professionalism, reliability, and support helped ensure the day ran smoothly and allowed our staff to focus on creating a fun and memorable experience for our students. Thanks to their efforts, we enjoyed a beautiful day at the ballpark—an outing that would not have been possible without their dedication. Thank you once again for helping to make the day a great success!

Kudos to Renee Sweeney, at Centennial Elementary School, from Margaret Boghossian, at Harriet Gifford Elementary School

A heartfelt thank you to Renee for spearheading the DUEA end-of-year celebration last week at Moretti's. From organizing ticket sales to coordinating the raffle baskets, your attention to detail and dedication made the event a tremendous success. We truly appreciate your efforts in supporting and recognizing our members. It was a wonderful day, and your leadership played a key role in making it so memorable. Thank you!

Kudos to Larsen Middle School Staff, from Marc Spacone, Principal at Larsen Middle School

As I reflect on the past nine years serving as your Assistant Principal and Principal, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride. Your passion, your unwavering dedication to doing what's right for kids, and your daily commitment to excellence have not only made Larsen a beacon of strength for our community, but have also made my work here a true joy. Each of you brings something unique and irreplaceable to this school. You've shown up, stood up, and never given up, no matter the challenge. Together, we've created an environment where students feel seen, heard, and supported. Please, never lose that passion for kids. It's what defines you. It's what defines us. Thank you for nine remarkable years. I will carry the spirit of Larsen with me always.

Kudos to Patty Kenyon, in Health Services, from Amanda Leatherby, in Specialized Student Services

A big thank you to Patty for holding down the fort in Health Services with the staffing shortages that impact the Health Services department. Patty always has a positive attitude and smile to offer. I appreciate how you are on top of ensuring both staff and students in U-46 remain as healthy as they can be!

Kudos to Cheryl Romeo, and all of the Exceptional Needs 2 (EN2) Teachers, from Amanda Leatherby, in Specialized Student Services

A big shoutout to Cheryl Romeo, EN2 teacher at Canton Middle School, for planning and leading a fantastic Motor Day 2025! This special event is filled with fun and movement, designed especially for some of our most significantly impacted students with disabilities. It was truly a joy to attend a day that highlights and celebrates the many gifts our students bring to our school communities.

To all of our EN2 teachers — Dorian Ross, Mary Beth Erickson, Tracy King, Cheryl Romeo, Christopher Baum, Julia Vida, Carrie Farmer and Julie Heneghan — thank you for working with all of the students in the EN2 program and making Motor Day fun for everyone! Your dedication and advocacy of students with exceptional needs is noticed and appreciated.



School District U-46

