

Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter



Sept. 1, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

In my previous weekly messages, I mentioned using this opportunity to share our system's goals. This week, I am taking a break from this effort. Unfortunately, it's been a horribly tough week. It's been the kind of week that felt like a month. And, as educators know, sometimes we need to make the well-being of our students and each other the focus. This is that message.

Yesterday, I shared the heavy and devastating news about the passing of two South Elgin High School students. The loss of students is tragic, and impossible to comprehend. Four South Elgin High School students were involved in a car accident. One of the students is being treated at an area hospital, and the other student has been released from the hospital. At this time, we are still unable to share the student's names out of respect to the families and to allow for next of kin notifications. We continue to have school social workers and counselors available for emotional support for students, staff and families. Please continue to assist each other during this difficult time. Ask how your colleagues and students are doing and allow space and grace to process. Please direct each other to resources that are available or seek them out yourself via EAP. Thank you to our SEHS team for supporting our students, families, communities and each other during this time. Thank you also to our extensive U-46 team for assisting SEHS with these efforts. And, thank you to our community partners for your outreach and generosity.

While this horrific accident would be enough to process this week, sites have also had to respond to swatting calls and local school threats. I remind our teams that U-46 is committed to a safe learning environment for all our students and staff and does not tolerate threats of any nature, especially when they continually disrupt the school day. We must work together to keep our schools a safe place for learning. If you see or hear something, please continue to say something. We work closely with local law enforcement agencies to support these efforts. While students receive resolutions for these threats consistent with the Code of Conduct, the State's Attorney's

Office screens all cases and prosecutes all offenders to the fullest extent possible. While this can be upsetting, the State of Illinois also takes all threats seriously. Thank you to our teams at Canton Middle School and South Elgin High School for the quick response to the safety threats this week.

I hope everyone can enjoy Labor Day weekend and the opportunity to rest and recharge.

There will be more great days to learn in U-46, even if we have to take a break to mend some broken hearts.

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

Kudos

Kudos to the Transportation Department from Marcy Murphy, Director of the Transportation Department

I want to recognize the entire Transportation Department. Thank you for your dedication during the unprecedented heat wave. This team never ceases to amaze me how they come together to ensure our students are transported to and from school safely every single day. Always working together to keep each other safe as well. Thank you all for all you do each and every day!

Kudos to Superintendent Dr. Suzanne Johnson, Deputy Superintendent of Instruction Lela Majstorovic, Assistant Superintendent of Finance Dr. Frank Williams, Chief Legal Officer Trisha Olson, Assistant Attorney Erika Washington, and Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Mark Moore from Marcy Murphy, Director of the Transportation Department

The Transportation Team appreciates you all braving the hot temperatures to ensure our team stayed cool. The cold treats were perfect on this hot day. It is wonderful to be appreciated by this amazing team of dedicated officials.



Kudos to Taylor Concha, Preschool Teacher at Timber Trails Elementary School, from Colleen Pecucci, Early Learners Instructional Coach for the Elgin Network

Thank you, Taylor for making sure your students were prepared for an all-school fire drill on the second day of preschool. You helped them understand what a fire drill is through the use of a social story, short video and practice drill in the classroom. Your students did an amazing job walking out of the school in a quiet line and waiting patiently in their designated area until it was time to return to the classroom.

Kudos to Jill Cousineau, Custodian, and Roberto Lopez, Maintenance Technician, both at Clinton Elementary School, from Jonathon Miquelon, Principal at Clinton Elementary School

A huge shout out to Jill and Roberto for working diligently through the heat to keep our students, staff, and building cool and cared for during this recent heat wave. They both go above and beyond at Clinton to care for our school community. We are so lucky to have their support!

Kudos to David Borg, Social Sciences Teacher at Elgin High School, David Dybalski, Psychologist at Elgin High School

Besides being an excellent teacher and former coach, my colleague and friend David Borg is a wonderful person. He speaks to you with sincerity and a caring manner. He supported me in a time of need, and I am grateful to know him and work alongside him. I am thankful to know David Borg.

Kudos to the Lunch Supervisors at Sunnydale Elementary from Gloria Helin and Veronica Kernler, Teacher Leaders for TMP/Mentor Specialists

We wanted to thank Laura Muñoz, Lorena Martinez, Evelia Wald, Donna Phebus, Karen Remick, Maria Segura, Kerri Pilip, Debbie Bauer, and Jessica Reyna for all of their hard work, patience, and organization with the students on the first day. We were very lucky to have had the opportunity to support Sunnydale and the amazing lunch crew that day.

Kudos to the Channing Elementary School Team from Cassie Anson, Kindergarten Teacher at Channing

My colleagues need to be recognized for going above and beyond to support my kindergartners and me these past two weeks of school. It is taking an entire village but we're doing it! Please forgive me if I've forgotten anyone! Kudos, kudos, kudos to Rebecca Lunak, Principal; Rachel Pinkepank, Assistant Principal; Mayra Nunez, Resident Administrator; Megan Turner, Social Worker; Mario Flores, Social Worker Paraeducator; Kari White, Paraeducator for K-2; Jennifer Green, Cross Categorical Resource Teacher; Nicole Senn, Literacy Coach; Michele Seyller, Rigor and Equity Instructional Coach; Sarah Bird, Art Teacher; Rebekah Forester, Cross Categorical Paraeducator; Colleen Pecucci, Instructional Coach for Early Learners, and Joy Cutab, OT Practitioner. From a very tired but beyond appreciative Cassie Anson!

Kudos to Rob Luck, S.E.R.T. Specialist, and Richard Bosh, Coordinator of Safety, from Catherine Fletcher, Principal, and Angel Brooks, Assistant Principal, at Heritage Elementary School

Thank you to Rob, our tremendous Streamwood Network social worker, and Rich for their support on Aug. 25. Rob came just to drop off a CPI book and stayed to support us through an event. Rich stopped over to check on us and provide support as well. Thank you both! We appreciate you!

Kudos to Corinno Torres, Head Custodian, Larsen Middle School, from Veronica Ryan, Assistant Principal, Larsen Middle School

Thank you to Corinno for working very hard and collaborating with our building administration and teachers during our recent heat wave. He went out of his way to monitor the heat and humidity of rooms and areas of the building that were being reported as having issues cooling down. He took the time to troubleshoot problem areas and check in with staff who needed additional support. Thank you for all of your hard work and expertise this week and always, Corinno!

Kudos to the Larsen Middle School Student Services Team from Veronica Ryan, Assistant Principal, Larsen Middle School

Our student services team is amazing - social workers Janie McCutchen, Nicole Barder, and Alison

Marcia Riley-Harris, Gail Overton, and Edgar Figueroa; School Resource Officer Det. Kevin Sosnowski; and resident administrator Ziomara Gil. Kudos to all for their active participation in helping develop, organize, and execute a successful plan to welcome students to the new school year, and for following up with families and students who did not show up to school or had difficulties attending or staying in class. All of the phone calls, home visits, and in-person conversations make a difference! Larsen is a family, and you treat each child as if they are the most important child in the school. I admire you all and am honored to work alongside you.

Kudos to the Team at Central School Programs from Mandy Hanson and Kimberly Brogan, Teachers at CSP

Thank you to everyone at Central School Programs. As first-year teachers, we appreciate everyone's support and encouragement these past couple of weeks as we get to know the students and school. Each of you has helped out in countless ways and we are incredibly grateful.

Kudos to Chief Legal Officer Trisha Olson from Katelynn Mokry, Transition Teacher, Special Education, South Elgin High School

Trisha Olson was an amazing support on Monday and made sure to check in with staff about students who have disabilities. She continued to check in with staff and called buses to South Elgin for students who needed controlled temperatures while having to wait outside in the warmth and sunshine. Her continuous care and quick response to our students' needs allowed for our students to better handle a stressful situation that was out of routine and unexpected. Thank you, Trisha, for your support.

Kudos to David Steuer, Manager, Curriculum Applications, Information Services, from Tara Burghart, Communications and Media Relations Coordinator, School & Community Relations

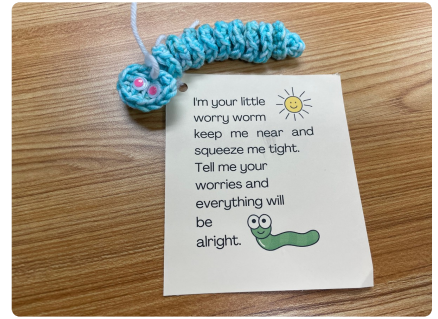
David - I always make a "Wizard of Oz" joke that you are the "man behind the curtain," but you are definitely someone who deserves plenty of attention ... and appreciation! As this school year gets underway, thank you for making the updates to accounts in our mass notification system and resolving issues promptly. You are a vital part of the process that helps ensure our families receive prompt communication from the District and their individual schools.

Kudos to Wendy Witt, World Languages Teacher, Elgin High School, from John J. Lewis, Social Sciences Teacher, Elgin High School

Wendy, thank you so much for your cool head and generosity! Thank you for covering my class when a family emergency arose and making sure that my classes were covered. It takes a village. Thank you.

Kudos to Debbie Conquest, Paraeducator at Washington Elementary School, from the Washington Administrative Team - Principal Lori Brandes, Co-Principal Ryan Corcoran, and Resident Administrator Maria Martin-Bowman

Debbie, your efforts in sprucing up our school haven't gone unnoticed. From giving our little library a fresh face to spicing up our bulletin boards, crafting thoughtful gifts for the teachers' welcome back meeting, and the creation of "worry worms" have added a unique touch— you've truly gone above and beyond. Thanks for making our school a more welcoming and vibrant place for everyone. Your hard work is much appreciated!



School District U-46

