

# Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter

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**Sept. 7, 2023**

Dear Colleagues,

Last week, I shifted my message to share the devastating news about the passing of two South Elgin High School students and a reminder of our commitment to a supportive and safe learning environment.

This week, I want to bring back our second goal that "School District U-46 will maximize resources available to accelerate student growth in alignment with the U-46 instructional clarity framework." This goal clearly aligns with the environment and support we must offer for all students at all times.

With the Beginning of Year Rigor Assessments, we officially begin measuring this effort by establishing this crucial baseline data. It was wonderful to see our school-based teams establishing their 45-day goals and establishing action steps to achieve them.

How is this specific goal aligned to "Making Each Day a Great Day to Learn in U-46?"

Students spend the majority of their day focused on learning. Therefore, if we can ensure our goal is met, the student's day will be meaningful, productive, enjoyable, and most importantly academically enriching. Students will want to come to school and will be consistently engaged in coursework.

To realize this goal, we will:

- Analyze current resources allocated to schools, alignment to evidence-based funding, and the return on investment.
- Review existing audits (equity, early childhood, specialized student services, etc.) to identify immediate next steps and develop a plan of action.

- Determine baseline data for implementing instructional clarity.
- Gather data on teacher understanding of instructional clarity
- Develop a 3-year comprehensive professional learning plan for all student-facing roles.
- Design a comprehensive assessment system.
- Build a robust multi-tiered system of support for all schools.

This goal is our focus as we work to enhance learning and student outcomes. We want to provide rigorous instruction to align with the updated learning environment our students need to be college and career-ready.

Next week, my message will highlight the launch of the #U46Voice Employee Engagement Survey. This survey and our actions after the survey are crucial to making sure every day is a great day to learn and work in U-46!

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

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## 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 Wendy Witt, World Languages Teacher at Elgin High School, from John J. Lewis, Social Sciences Teacher at 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 Luz Figueroa, Technology Specialist, Information Services, from Alexandru V. Luca, Resident Administrator, Kimball Middle School**

I was trying to connect my laptop to a TV screen and was having difficulty utilizing the HDMI connection ports. I contacted Luz, and she promptly arrived. She was able to get HDMI Port 3 to work but then we found out that I was unable to extend screens and have two screens working at the same time with an HDMI cable connection. Luz could have given up and said, "Well that is all we can do." But instead, she continued to explore the TV settings and tried different things. After about 10 minutes of problem-solving, she was able to get my laptop to project to the screen and enable the two-screen setting. Instead of giving up or not taking my problem seriously, Luz tried to find a solution by continuing to think about the problem, brainstorm solutions, and see what worked. Thank you for your help, Luz!

### **Kudos to Amanda Higgin, Para Professional at Century Oaks Elementary School, from Patty Cardenas, School Social Worker, Century Oaks Elementary**

Thank you, Amanda, for always lending a helping hand to our students in crisis. You are always willing to help and never shy away from big or small problems. Thanks for all you do!

### **Kudos to Cathy Miller, Math Teacher; Rachel Wehrle, Science Teacher; Mary Powers, Secretary - Sub Caller; and Milena Nedeljkovic, Assistant Principal for STEM, all at Bartlett High School, from**

**Colleen K. Brandner, Science Teacher at Bartlett High School**

It has been an interesting beginning to the school year for me. My colleagues need to be recognized for all they've done to support my students, my tennis players, and me these past few weeks of school. A special heartfelt thank you to Cathy Miller who has gone above and beyond by sacrificing much of her own time to make sure everything ran smoothly. Additionally, thank you to my students and their families for being so patient.

- "Always be yourself unless you can be a hawk, then ALWAYS be a Hawk!"

**Kudos to the Otter Creek Service Team from Katie Stan, Assistant Principal at Otter Creek Elementary School**

Way to go, team! Our school had a student who needed support and ensured safety. The team really stepped up to get data, support the family, and make sure that the student had a great first school experience. The team plans to continue to support that family and new school as the student transitions.

**Kudos to David Steuer, Manager, Curriculum Applications, and Helen Song, DBA and App Programmer, both in Information Services, from Joan Riedel, Associate Principal, Larkin High School**

I want to send a giant shout-out to David and Helen for helping our schools, LHS especially, with tools to improve our effectiveness! I reached out and asked for a report to be generated, and Helen asked for a few days to get it completed. She had it done the next day and her programming eliminated at least six hours of manual labor on our end! Thank you for continuing to listen to our needs and help us when we ask! Thank you for all you do!

**Kudos to Dan Youngerman, Physical Education Teacher; Misa Edwardsen, 1st Grade Teacher; and Mandy Byrne, Art Teacher; all at Heritage Elementary School, from Catherine Fletcher, Principal, and Angel Brooks, Assistant Principal, at Heritage Elementary School**

We want to send a huge shout-out to the members of Heritage Elementary's 1st annual Team Day Planning Committee. You took an idea around student team building and classroom culture and ran with it! Dan, Misa, and Mandy - you are appreciated!

**Kudos to Denise Williams, 6th Grade Teacher at Liberty Elementary School, from Mary Slowinski, Long-Term Substitute Teacher, Sycamore Trails Elementary School**

I reached out to Denise regarding some curricular materials that I remembered her using during the Ancient Civilizations Unit. Denise took the time to share all of the materials that she had with me and has been kind enough to answer any questions that I've had about them. Many thanks, Denise!

**Kudos to Jennifer Hensley, MLP Teacher at Sycamore Trails Elementary School, from the Service Team at Otter Creek Elementary School**

Jen, and her team, made the transition of one of our students feel amazing, not just for us, but for the family. They were well prepared for our student to become theirs. Thank you!!

**School District U-46**

