

Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter



Oct. 3, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

This past week, I had the pleasure of attending the [Explore](#) expo on Thursday, Sept. 26, at the Now Arena in Hoffman Estates. Explore is hosted in collaboration with Alignment Collaborative for Education (ACE) and supports another essential student learning goal for "U-46 to update and enhance the wide range of college and career and technical education (CTE) pathways and magnet school programs."

The Explore event is a foundational experience for our middle school students exploring Educational Pathways, Magnet Academies, Career and Technical Programs, and the high-wage, high-demand careers that these programs lead to for students.

Our priority in School District U-46 is to ensure that every student **graduates college and career ready**. Two structures that support this work in different ways are Educational Pathways and the Magnet Academies. Students may choose to follow an Educational Pathway at their home high school starting in 9th grade or they may apply to attend a Magnet Academy for their time in high school.

To prepare for this learning event:

- Students completed a pre-lesson with school counselors and a post-lesson after attending the Explore expo
- Within each pathway students learned about:
 - Careers showcased by local industry partners
 - U-46 Magnet Academies
 - U-46 Career and Technical Education programs.

Then, during Explore, over 2,400 students from all eight middle schools visited the NOW Arena to see more than 60 exhibitors across 5 Career Pathways including: Arts and Communications; Finance, Business, IT and Culinary; Healthcare; Human and Professional Services; Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology and Trades. Thank you to ACE, our extensive U-46 team and the exhibitors and volunteers who made this event possible. To learn more about Explore and ACE, please visit [Alignment Collaborative for Education](#).

Explore provides important resources to assist U-46 in addressing our Career and Technical Education goal specifically including:

- Engaging in outreach and communication to students and families to encourage participation in pathways and magnet school programs.
- Increasing collaboration with local business/industry.

The proposed middle school changes will also support this goal by providing students with updated and varied exploratory offerings to introduce pathways and magnet school programming; enhanced instructional spaces to support flexible learning needs specific to STEM, technology, and PLTW courses, among others; and teaming structure inclusive of teachers in various content areas to provide cross-curricular and problem-based learning opportunities in support of 21st-century learning skill acquisition.

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

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

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 Felicia Ellis and Katie Cox, in Early Learner Initiatives, and Brian Tennison, in Teaching and Learning, from Lynn Reuter, in Early Learner Initiatives

Felicia is one of our Parents as Teachers home visitors, and I would like to thank her for arranging a home visit that both Brian and Katie could attend to learn more about our district home visiting program. Additionally, thank you to Brian and Katie for showing an interest and curiosity in how our home visiting program supports and serves families. All three of you made mom feel seen and valued with your presence. Thank you!

Kudos to Jeff Bral, at Bartlett High School, from Mary Perkins, at Teff Middle School, Julie Shumaker, Middle School Executive Director, and the Colleagues Who Support Middle School Athletics

Jeff has done an extraordinary job putting together not only the BHS Cross Country meet, but also allowing the Middle School athletes to utilize the course to host the Middle School District cross country meet. Thank you, Jeff, for all your work and the time it takes to put this together. Each year it runs efficiently and the students truly enjoy the opportunity. Thank you!

Kudos to Luz Figueroa, in Information Services, from Idamaris Figueroa, at Abbott Middle School

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Luz, our computer technician at Abbott Middle School, who went beyond her regular duties. Not only did she assist me in downloading the necessary programs to support one of my students, but she also reached out to someone who has agreed to come to Abbott and offer further guidance. Her support has been invaluable.

Kudos to Jeff Hartje, Jeremy Bilger, Mark Anderson, and Corinno Torres, in Plant Operations, from Rod Ash, at Channing Elementary School

Jeff, Jeremy, Mark, and Corinno are part of the maintenance team, and as the custodian at Channing, I want to thank all four of them for always going above and beyond for Channing Elementary. They are always helpful and have a positive attitude. You guys are Awesome!

Kudos to Allison Williams, from Lisa Bergbreiter, both at Independence Center for Early Learning

Thank you for all of your direct and compassionate work with our littles since you joined our family as a social worker. We appreciate your resources and willingness/eagerness to jump in and provide support! YOU ROCK!

Kudos to Deanna Micaletti and Lea Russelle, from Karen Rivera, all at Ronald O'Neal Elementary School

I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to both of you, Deanna and Lea, for your leadership and support. Deanna, I deeply admire how you lead by example, creating an environment where not only do we feel valued, but also right at home. Your ability to foster trust and respect among us teachers makes it a pleasure to work here every day.

Lea, I am thankful for the support and approachability you always show. Together, you have created a space where I feel encouraged and motivated to grow professionally. It is an honor to be part of this team under your leadership.

Kudos to those who made Heritage Elementary's Hispanic Heritage Celebration possible, from Catherine Fletcher, at Heritage Elementary School

Heritage Elementary had the most incredible Hispanic Heritage event last month. Thank you to those who worked to make this such an outstanding evening celebrating our cultures! Thank you to Iliana Gonzalez, our chief! Thank you to Corina Morales, our incredibly talented Kindergarten teacher/t-shirt designer! Thank you to Mandy Byrne and Dan Youngerman for their talents and always being part of our team! Thank you to Mrs. Lori Rosengarten and her family for making the awesome piñata's! Thank you to Ms. Arnieri, Mrs. Perez, Mr. Ortiz, Mrs. Mendoza, Ms. Cedeno, Ms. Tato, Ms. Samira Sanchez, Mrs. Sandra Morales, and the incredible dancing team inspired by our 5th grade teacher Ms. Sanchez! Thank you to our office elves who always lend a hand - Rosa, Tanya and Jessica!

Kudos to Marcy Murphy, from Janis Thompson and Shelly Sadowski, all in Transportation

We would like to shout out to Marcy who not only is an awesome director, but she also goes above and beyond to make sure that the continuing education classes for the bus drivers are set up and ready for the instructors to teach the classes. She also helps the attendees to sign in and get comfortable before she leaves. The demands of a director are never ending, but she finds the time to make sure that everything runs smoothly. Thank you, Marcy.

Kudos to Ruth DeJesus and Iraida Camacho Rivera, from Lynn Reuter, all at Early Learner Initiatives

Ruth is a diagnostician and Iraida provides secretarial support for Early Learners First Steps. I want to thank these two amazing team members for supporting two screening families during a team member's absence last week. Ruth quickly made herself available to complete the screenings, and Iraida did the file prep to ensure that we were able to complete the screenings without having to reschedule these families. I am proud to work alongside both of you.

Kudos to Alicia Malczewski, at Ellis Middle School, from Sandra Hancock, at Huff Elementary School

Alicia went out of her way to help me! She is always so helpful and kind. I appreciate you very much, Alicia!

Kudos to Naomi Chavez, Onyx Gonzalez, Sean Phelan, Nelly Trujillo, Araceli Welsh, and Jodi Widderski, from Kimberly Nechvatal, all at Ellis Middle School

I wanted to give a special shout-out to our special education teachers. Considering many of them are teaching more co-taught classes this year, they deserve recognition for their performance. Our teachers are focused on creating a rigorous environment that is mindful of their students' needs and accommodations. Each time I have been present, I have witnessed great collaboration with their co-teacher, walking around the room to ensure that students receive support, and being partners with the social work team when students require social-emotional support. Our students, staff, and community members are blessed to have an amazing team.



School District U-46

