Dec. 1, 2022

’Tis the season to be jolly... and the season to expect snow! That leads to the inevitable question about whether or not we will use snow (or emergency) days if needed. The short answer: Yes.

Whenever inclement weather is expected, I am in regular contact with our Transportation and our Plant Operations teams for updates. We continue to contract with a weather service that provides real-time alerts and updates for the entirety of U-46.

I encourage everyone to read our Emergency Closing Procedures. This provides additional guidance regarding who must work even when I call a “snow day,” and also provides the process we follow for communicating the decision.

In U-46, we have not applied to the State Board of Education to use e-learning days in lieu of using emergency days. I have written about this before, but wanted to remind you of my concerns in serving the needs of our most vulnerable students with specialized needs with “remote instruction.” In addition, there are implications for paying educational support professionals who do not get paid when an emergency day is taken because that day gets made up at the end of the school year.

I also still believe in the magic of snow days. If the weather requires to close, then I hope our students and staff would appreciate the ability to take a day to watch the snow fall, plow their drives, drink hot chocolate, read a book, and then return when streets are clear.

As always, I also look forward to the feedback that will inevitably come my way via Twitter!

All my best,

Tony
Calendar

Monday, Dec. 12: Board of Education meeting. Details here.

Did you know that you could add the District’s website calendar to your Google work calendar? Click here for instructions.

Community Advisory Council

The Community Advisory Council’s December meeting is reserved for the annual roundtable discussion with School District U-46 Board of Education members, Cabinet members, and Superintendent Dr. Tony Sanders. It’s being held in a virtual format this year at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 1. It will feature breakout room sessions in English and Spanish with rotating administrators and Board members. More information can be found at u46cac.org, and those who wish to attend are asked to register here to receive the unique Zoom link.

Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department

Voices from the Heart/Voces del Corazón

The MME Department and Dual Language Advisory Committee are pleased to announce the individual and school winners of the Voces del Corazón writing contest. The purpose of this writing and art contest was to nurture creative expression and to validate the diverse identities of all U-46 Dual Language and ESL students while promoting the importance and value of bilingualism in the District and the community at large. Learn more about the contest and the winners here.

Dual Language Parent Support Groups

New this school year, U-46 offers Dual Language Parent Support Groups for parents and guardians who have children in the District’s award-winning Dual Language program. These events are being held virtually, and the next one is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 15 at 6:30 p.m. Parents will connect with other Dual Language families, as well as members of the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department, and can ask questions and get tips for supporting their child's education. Support groups will be offered in English and in Spanish. Please help spread the word about this engagement opportunity. Downloadable flyers are available in English and in Spanish. Questions can be directed to Family Welcome Center Coordinator Brenda Escobedo.

Professional Development
The University of Massachusetts Global is looking for educators to participate in professional development and coach-guided implementation informed by the Looking at Student Work evidenced-based model. This two-part grant-funded opportunity allows participants to complete tuition-free coursework. Educators will be paired with a UMass Global grant-selected virtual educational coach and engage in three "cycles" of using a structured collaborative process with colleagues to improve instructional practices related to improving academic language development in English learners. Details can be found here and on this flyer.

U-46 Educational Foundation

Grants

Grants from the U-46 Educational Foundation fund our teachers' and staff's bright ideas, creating opportunities that expand student learning and well-being. For the 2022-23 grant program, the Foundation funded more than $23,000 in grants for 22 projects across the District. Funded projects include supplies for a drama club at Parkwood Elementary School; tablets and software to facilitate Elgin High School's wrestling team to score and film matches; child-sized shovels to expand and maintain the school garden at Horizon Elementary School; and technology that will allow students at Tefft Middle School to transform their computer-generated designs into actual products. You can see the full list of funded projects here, and follow the Foundation's Facebook page to see pictures and read more about the projects.

Assessment and MTSS

Reminder: Continuous School Improvement Plans (CSIP) will go to the Board of Education for their annual review in February. In preparation for public viewing, plans must be ready by Jan. 23 to be published by the Assessment Office.

MAP Winter:
- Nov. 21 - Dec. 22, 2022 (Grades 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12)
- Nov. 21 - Dec. 2, 2022 (Grades 3, 6, 8)
- MAP Winter 2022 Planning Checklist

ACCESS:
- Jan. 11 - Feb. 28, 2023 (Grades K - 12)
- Access 2023 Planning Checklist

Assessment Guides:
- 2022-23 Grades PreK-6 District Assessment Guide
- 2022-23 Grades 7-12 District Assessment Guide

MTSS Guide:
- 2022-23 MTSS Implementation Guide
Testing Dates:
- **22-23 Assessment Testing Windows**

**Weekly Data to Review**

**Taxonomy Level of Student Work**

The high school student work is 14 percent analysis or higher for November 2022. The goal is for 60 percent of student work to be at an analysis level or higher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Distribution by Month</th>
<th>No Student Work</th>
<th>Retrieval</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Knowledge Utilization</th>
<th>Classroom Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2022</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2022</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2022</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2022</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The elementary and middle school comprehension level is 39 percent for November 2022. The goal is for student work to be at a comprehension level or higher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Distribution by Month</th>
<th>No Student Work</th>
<th>Retrieval</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Knowledge Utilization</th>
<th>Classroom Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2022</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2022</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2022</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2022</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attendance**

Attendance continues to be a concern. Each network and school with less than 95 percent attendance must have an attendance goal and a 30-day plan as part of their Conditions pillar in their CIP. The plan must also include how schools will analyze and address chronic absences using the attendance reflection protocol.

**U-46 Board of Education**

Highlights from each Board of Education meeting, along with PDFs of the presentations delivered during the meeting, can be found here on the School Board portion of the website. The minutes from each meeting can be found here.

**State News**

The Nov. 29 Weekly Message from State Superintendent Carmen I. Ayala, Ph.D., is available online here. All editions of the Weekly Message are archived on the Illinois State Board of Education’s website here.
**Poster Contest**

To help celebrate Illinois Arts Education Week, March 13-17, 2023, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM) and Illinois State Board of Education are hosting a poster design contest with the theme of “Home Is.” As students create their art, they are encouraged to consider that home is what they make it and what it means to them.

The contest is open to all K-12 students and includes four entry levels divided by grades. A panel of judges will select a winner and two runners-up in each entry level. All winners and runners-up will have their work displayed by the ALPLM beginning March 13, 2023. The student whose work is chosen as “Best in Show” will be featured on a poster to celebrate Illinois Arts Education Week. They will also be recognized at an ISBE Board meeting, and their framed work will be displayed in the boardroom.

Entries must be postmarked by Jan. 12, 2023. More details, including how to submit entries, are available at [www.isbe.net/artcontest](http://www.isbe.net/artcontest).

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**Photos of the Week**

Staff at Fox Meadow Elementary School centered their Family Literacy Night around beloved children’s author Mo Willems. The event included a popular book swap.

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**Submit Your Kudos!**

Send Kudos directly by clicking above 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 Dolly Mandrelle, Social Worker, and Parul Bhatia, Homeschool Liaison, both at Liberty Elementary School, from Stephanie Sylvester, Principal at Liberty Elementary School
A special thank you to Dolly Mandrelle for connecting our families with 70 Thanksgiving meals! Also this amazing generosity couldn't have happened without Parul Bhatia, who organizes the 70 meals and contacts all the families. We appreciate both of you for always taking care of our Liberty Community! Thank you to Jewel and the Bartlett Church as well for their generosity!

Kudos to my Support Team from Colleen Koch, Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher at Kimball Middle School
Thank you to all of the U-46 middle school FACS staff and teachers who made my transition from Central to Kimball a smooth one. Thank you Kimball Middle School staff and colleagues for all that you do, day in and day out! I appreciate you!!

Kudos to Lynda Alagna, Principal’s Secretary at Glenbrook Elementary School, from Claire Ditchman, Technology Specialist, Information Services
Thank you Lynda for making me feel unquestionably welcome to the district and always being there to lend an ear for support or advice. Your small acts of kindness every day haven't gone unnoticed or unappreciated.

Kudos to Martin Porras, Custodian at Lowrie Elementary School, from Karen Rivera, 4th Grade Dual Language Teacher at Lowrie Elementary School
I want to recognize and give kudos to Martin Porras. One of my students lost his glasses and Martin went above and beyond his job description by rescuing the glasses from the drainage pipes outside. You are a superhero to that student and my whole class. In our Parents' Cafe, he helps us to be ready and collaborate, and he demonstrates his love for our school, our students, and our families. Martin, you continue to make a difference at our school. We are lucky to have you!

Kudos to the Staff at Willard Elementary School from Sara Henry, Rigor and Equity Instructional Coach at Willard Elementary School
I would like to take a moment to recognize the amazing staff that I work with at Willard Elementary. This is our second year of being a School for Rigor and Equity. I'm truly in awe of the work that you are doing. The passion and commitment towards this initiative is truly inspiring. Our students are so lucky to be able to learn and grow in this culture you have created. I'm fortunate to work alongside each and every one of you!

Kudos to Christine Neville, Custodian at Centennial Elementary School from Donna DeNeui, Special Education Paraeducator at Centennial Elementary School
Our school shines and is safe because of Christine. She is caring, dedicated, hard working and fearless. Yes, fearless. She cleans up messes no one dares to touch! You are our superhero. Thank you.

Kudos to Plant Operations from Brittney Mallen, Environmental Sciences Teacher at Elgin High School
I just wanted to share one more giant thank you to Luis, Brenden, Billy, and Jacob for spending the day with all of the environmental science classes at EHS in October! Our students loved learning
from them, and we really appreciate the time they took to do this! Special shout out to Nick Corn
for setting this up for us too! Thank you!

**Kudos to Rosita Mania, Senior Accountant - Student Activity, Financial Operations, from Kendra
Pingel, Principal's Secretary at Canton Middle School**
Thank you to Rosita for being so helpful all the time despite my many, many questions. She always
assists me promptly with patience and a smile, and she takes the time to make sure I truly
understand the processes. I would truly be lost without her guidance. Simply saying thank you falls
short of the gratitude I feel.

**Kudos to Lisa Arenson, Secretary at Ronald D. O’Neal Elementary School, from Maria T. Perez,
Districtwide Substitute Teacher**
Lisa Arenson is the first face and voice you encounter when you come into O’Neal Elementary.
Along with showing empathy and care to everyone that she greets, Lisa is always there for me,
checking to make sure I have everything I need to be the best substitute teacher for the school that
day. She is very resourceful, but none of that would matter without the school vision she shows
day to day. She is the biggest cheerleader and supporter of Ronald D. O’Neal. Any school would be
blessed to have her.

**Kudos to the Tactical Assessment Team (TAT) from Amanda Leatherby, Assistant Director for
Compliance, Specialized Student Services**
I want to share a sincere thank you to our TAT team! Genevieve Lukes is our School Psychologist
who excels at digging into the data to look at the complete picture of the student. Robert Kirch is
our Special Education Teacher Lead on the team. Rob was the flagship team member of TAT and
has excelled in moving the team forward ever since. Laura Smail is our School Social Worker on
the team. Laura's ability to communicate with students, families and building staff in a kind and
compassionate manner speaks to her integrity, professionalism, and her craft as a social worker.
Thank you all for the work you do Districtwide. It is often a big job with tough decisions, but the
three of you, working together, make it all happen!

**Kudos to Brooke McGrath, Teacher Leader, Specialized Student Services, from Kathleen Torquato,
Cross-Cat Reading Intervention Teacher at Eastview Middle School**
I’m so grateful and appreciative for all that you’ve done to help me so far this school year. Your
support has been invaluable! I couldn't have learned this much or been as good of a teacher for my
students if I didn't have your guidance and support. I took on a new role of Captain of this ship —
thank you for helping me learn my new navigation tools so my students can sail in the right
directions!

**Kudos to the Team Behind the Fox Meadow Family Literacy Night from Jason Gold, Principal at
Fox Meadow Elementary School**
Thank you to Marcia Thompson, Christa Gruenke, Wendi Smith, Liz Hanly, Deanna Ortscheid, Kelle
Brieger, Linda Carter, Lisa Mertinat, and Jen Stotlar for creating and running a fantastic Family
Literacy Night! The families absolutely loved the evening filled with fun activities and opportunities
to take books home to read as a family!

**Kudos to Dove Holecek, Instructional Learning Program Teacher Leader, from Amanda Leatherby,
Assistant Director for Compliance, Specialized Student Services**
Dove is our ILP teacher leader and has gone above and beyond to ensure growth of our ILP
class. In addition, she has expanded and enhanced our curriculum with additional learning opportunities.
the absences of our District Autism Behavior Consultant. Dove has a genuine love for students, in particular those with autism. Thank you for all of your continued support this year, Dove. You are always a pleasure to work with and I appreciate your depth of knowledge when discussing autism.

Kudos to the Staff at Sunnydale Elementary School from Brian Stark, Retired Principal
It was a pleasure supporting Sunnydale students and staff during the month of November. Special thanks to Andrea Gaitan, Cristina Martinez, Adrianna Miranda and Katie Bowers Everisto for welcoming me into the office with their Mustang hospitality and to Garrett Jefferson for openly sharing his office during his leave. I appreciate you all!

Kudos to Viviana Valdez, Home-School Liaison at Ronald D. O’Neal Elementary School, from Maria T. Perez, Districtwide Substitute Teacher
Ms. Viviana Valdez is a great asset to O’Neal Elementary. She is always there to take a chaotic situation and provide calming solutions with the urgency that a student may need. The other day, a kindergartner was supposed to go to his first Boys & Girls Club session after school, but they forgot to pick him up from the bench in front of the office. I went to the office and found Ms. Valdez and reported this issue to her. Right away she said she would take him, and I heard her consoling the student, who was crying at this point. Kudos to Ms. Valdez for relating to and empathizing with this student to help make his first time at the Boys & Girls Club a better experience.

Kudos to Melanie Patterson, Secretary, Specialized Student Services, from Amanda Leatherby, Assistant Director for Compliance, Specialized Student Services
Kudos to Melanie, my secretary! Without her, I would not be as effective at my job. Melanie always greets people with a smile and is always willing to assist her colleagues. In addition to the work Melanie does in special education, she volunteers at the schools mentoring young ladies. Thank you, Melanie, for everything that you do and for bringing positivity to the work environment! You are a secretary extraordinaire!

Kudos to Deb McMullen, Coordinator of K-12 Science and Planetarium, and Frankie Valenzia, Science Instructional Coach, from Brittney Mallen, Environmental Sciences Teacher at Elgin High School
I wanted to send a special shoutout to Deb and Frankie for taking the time to come to my AP Environmental Science classes to talk to them about water! The engaged 75 students in conversations about freshwater issues around the world and helped prepare them for their Water Issue PSA projects! The students absolutely enjoyed it! Thank you!