

# Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter

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**Dec. 12, 2024**

Dear Colleagues,

On Monday, December 9, the Board of Education received preliminary recommendations to update attendance boundaries for U-46 schools and the transition plan for the middle school model. During the presentation, we provided an [overview of the preliminary boundary shifts](#) and the transition plan for middle school as sixth grade is added to middle schools in 2026-2027.

This work is directly connected to our goal that "U-46 will establish and operate equity-focused, inclusive, efficient, and safe learning environments." To help achieve this goal, the Board of Education will continue to review feedback on the boundary recommendations as we host several community sessions at the Welcome Center and at U-46 high schools.

Thank you to our Unite U-46 participants for providing guidance as we begin to make the facility changes needed to support our focus on standards-based learning and assessment, rigorous student tasks and assessments, and academic teaming. Your voice throughout this process has been critical.

To continue to learn more about this work, please consider attending one of our upcoming ["Mapping Our Future" Unite U-46 sessions](#). Your voice matters and can help shape our work going forward. Please bookmark the [Unite U-46 site to stay informed on this important work](#). You can watch our recent update to the Board of Education via our YouTube channel [here](#). The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2024.

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

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

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*The final Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter before the winter recess will be shared on Thursday, Dec. 19. The next newsletter will be published on Thursday, Jan. 9.*

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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 Kristen Gac and Student Council at Bartlett High School from Katie de Swardt, at Bartlett High School**

Thank you for doing an amazing job with the giving tree and helping those in the BHS community. In addition, kudos to my own students who have brought in their own money to purchase gifts. You guys are amazing and I am so grateful to work with you!

### **Kudos to Nicholas Capaccio, at Bartlett High School, from Dawn Wyszynski, Districtwide Substitute**

I recently met Nick, who works in Information Services at Bartlett High, because I was desperate for help on Red Rover. I've never met anyone so determined, knowledgeable and kind. It took my whole free period, but with his calming nature and persistence, I was able to log in. I have been trying for months, on the phone, emails and texts with others, but to no avail. Nick is a huge asset to Bartlett High School, and they are very lucky to have him.

### **Kudos to Sarah Rabe, Executive Director of the Larkin Network, from Patty Cardenas, at Century Oaks Elementary School**

Thank you for always supporting our staff at Century Oaks. We truly appreciate your support, your time, especially during our difficult times. Thank you for all you do.

### **Kudos to Steven Tracey, Carrie Farmer, Annette Sweeney, and Megan Johnson, at Larkin High School, from Mary Perkins, Middle School Athletics**

The Larkin High School staff who supported the Middle School boys' basketball championship were amazing! The two games went smoothly and our students had the opportunity to experience playing on a high school floor, which just made it special. Thank you for your consistent support of our schools. Without people like you we would not get these opportunities. Thank you!



### **Kudos to Salvador Zamora, in Information Services, from Vanessa Rosales, at Larsen Middle School**

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Zamora for his dedication and persistence in setting up the Smartboard in the classroom. Despite the challenges, he never gave up and worked tirelessly to identify and solve the problem, a task that many might abandon after the second attempt. His time, effort, and commitment to ensuring everything runs smoothly are truly appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Zamora, for going above and beyond!

### **Kudos to Tim Adam, in Transportation, from Jenny Lopez and Angie Miller, both at Hillcrest Elementary School**

Tim, on behalf of everyone involved in our shoe event, we want to thank you for stepping in on such short notice to pick up our students and staff. Your willingness to adjust your schedule and assist us with transporting the students and staff truly made a difference and ensured the success of the event. We deeply appreciate your flexibility, professionalism, and the care you showed to our students and staff. Thank you for being such an essential part of making everything run smoothly!

### **Kudos to Abigale King, at Heritage Elementary School, from Melanie Patterson, U-46 Parent**

My son's 4th grade teacher, Mrs. King is new to U-46, and I was nervous about how the school year would turn out. She is amazing. She truly cares about her students' education and well being. Thanks for all you do at Heritage, Mrs King.

### **Kudos to the Special Education Teachers at Elgin High School, from David Dybalski, at Elgin High School**

As the father of an Autistic son (now 27) I know a good teacher when I see one. It's not

how you write IEP's, FBA's or BIP's. It's the compassion, patience, empathy and sensitivity shown by the teacher. I say: "Treat my child with care and dignity, he's struggling." The special education teachers I work with at Elgin High School are remarkable in this capacity.

I must name them all: Mrs. Adan, Mrs. Testo. Mrs. Crane, Mrs. Paquette, Mrs. Fisher, Mrs. Ramos-Perez, Ms. Sankey, Mr. Camacho, Mrs. Cooper, Mrs. Gdula, Mrs. Saucedo, Dr. Martinez, Mr. Gallegos, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Kling, Mrs. Sanchez, Mr. Zaragoza, Ms. Siemon, Mrs. Kuzyk, Mr. Karbowski, Mrs. Waichunas, Mrs. Wilkins, Mrs. Ghostone, Mr. Rattana, Mr. McKavanagh, Mrs. Remblake, Mr. Massey and John Wensel.

These teachers are truly special, and it is an honor to work alongside them on a daily basis and some for many years.

**Kudos to Gary Holmes, at Heritage Elementary School, from Melanie Patterson, U-46 Parent**

Gary is an amazing noon lunchroom supervisor. He plays, coaches and monitors the students at recess at Heritage. When students face hard challenges, Gary takes his time and cares for the students with compassion and assists them.

**Kudos to Tina O'Farrell, in the Transportation Department, from Jenny Lopez and Angie Miller, both at Hillcrest Elementary School**

Thank you Tina, for your prompt and efficient help arranging the bus for the ATT Pioneers and Hoffman Estates Links shoe event. Your quick response and attention to detail ensured everything went smoothly, and we truly appreciate you. Your support made all the difference, and we are grateful for your dedication and hard work.

**Kudos to Elisabeth Ferril and Zehra Tahir, both in Culture and Climate, from Patty Cardenas and Staff at Century Oaks Elementary School**

Thank you for coming to Century Oaks and offering your support. We truly appreciate all your help!

**Kudos to LaTrisha Williams, from Kathryn Thompson, both at Streamwood High School**

I want to take a moment to recognize my co-worker LaTrisha, for creating real-world, engaging projects for our business students. Her MGMG and ENTREP class did a Crumbl Cookie "case study" which included a marketing campaign. Students created four new Crumbl Cookies. One of the groups went all out and their cookie was beyond impressive. Their presentation and product was top notch! And to top it off, they actually made the cookies to go along with the presentation! The group even named one after her - Miss W, which featured her favorite candy! These are the types of projects and teachers they will remember forever. I submitted their new concept for a cookie to Dirty Dough and Crumbl Cookie. How fun, especially during the holiday season!

**Kudos to Cynthia Marrero, in the Literacy and Libraries Department, from Jacqueline Scafidi, at Bartlett Elementary School**

Thank you, Cynthia, for all your work in these last few months as you process all the elementary school library orders. From book vendors, to STEM materials, to Amazon, you've done a great job tracking, ensuring processing and keeping us updated. Now we are seeing all these wonderful books and STEM items come in. You are appreciated! The Bartlett Elementary Bulldogs say thanks!

**Kudos to Lauren Meilahn, at Ellis Middle School, from Erin Brumfield Grima, U-46 Parent**



Mrs. Meilahn, an 8th grade math teacher at Ellis Middle School, is truly an asset to the school and district. She is engaging, compassionate, and able to inspire students to realize their full potential in a subject that is not always an automatic area of confidence. She is invested in her students and demonstrates this in many different ways. As a parent, I appreciate that her expectations remain high but she builds an inspirational context for the students to want to meet those expectations. I wish there was a way to clone her to teach every subject for my student. Our experience with Mrs. Meilahn has been delightful.

**Kudos to Heather Rocen, from Marc Spacone, both at Larsen Middle School**

I want to extend a heartfelt gratitude to Heather for her incredible leadership and compassion in organizing this year's Winter Clothing Drive. Thanks to her vision and dedication, many students and families in our community will stay warm and cared for during the colder months.

Your efforts remind us of the power of kindness and the impact one person can have in making a difference. Thank you for going above and beyond for our students and for being a shining example of service and generosity! You've warmed more than just bodies - you've warmed hearts!

**Kudos to Matthew Quezada, at Larkin High School, from Erica Kowalski, at Clinton Elementary School**

A huge round of applause to Mr. Quezada and his students for their performance last week. All of the orchestras did a fantastic job. The performance of the full orchestra, where they played a compilation of songs from "The Lord of the Rings" movie, was absolutely amazing! The dedication of Mr. Quezada and his performers were very apparent. Mr. Quezada deserves a huge shout out! It was our favorite concert to date!

**Kudos to Kim Neilson, in Specialized Student Services, from Patty Cardenas and Staff at Century Oaks Elementary School**

Thank you, Kim, for coming to Century Oaks and offering your support to our staff and students. We truly appreciate your support. Thank you!

**Kudos to Valerie Albuck, Katie Mucha, and the entire ELA Team at Tefft Middle School, from Mary Perkins, at Tefft Middle School**

We just can't say enough about the ELA team and their work with implementing the new pilot curriculum. They go above and beyond and are taking strides at increasing student learning with each step. Thank you for all your hard work collaborating, developing, planning, and implementing the curriculum. Our students' growth will be amazing. Thank you for all you do!

**Kudos to the Kimball Middle School Competition Cheer Team, from Kristen Rosenberg, at Kimball Middle School**

Congratulations to the Kimball competition cheer team for their accomplishments this past weekend. They placed third at the Pontiac competition and first at the Rockford competition! They also qualified both days for the championship in Springfield, which is in January.



School District U-46

