

Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter



Feb. 6, 2025

Dear U-46 Colleagues,

We are aware that there have been reports of federal authorities conducting operations in the communities that U-46 serves, including in neighborhoods near some of our school buildings. **As of today, no federal authorities have approached our school property, and we have not been contacted directly by anyone associated with a federal agency.**

School District U-46 follows and adheres to strict security practices to maintain the safety of our students and staff. Through this Weekly Message, I am writing to affirm that School District U-46:

- **Requires a judicial warrant** before enforcement officials may access U-46 schools. *The law affirms U-46's right to require a judicial warrant.*
- **Requires a judicial order** or parent consent before releasing student records/disclosing information to enforcement officials. *The law requires this level of records protections.*
- **Does not** ask for a student's or their family's immigration status during enrollment. *The law does not permit schools to ask for this information during enrollment.*
- **Never** asks for social security information from students. *The law does not permit schools to seek social security information from students.*

Simply put: School District U-46 complies with the law and safeguards students' civil rights.

No student or family should face discrimination, harassment, or bullying because of their race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, or immigration status. Our commitment to creating inclusive and safe schools focused on providing developmentally responsive instructional programming for all U-46 students is unchanged and unwavering.

Our approach to this matter is long-standing, and our practices to address the safety of students and staff are still in place. We are prepared to respond and support our sites if or when officials or agents arrive at schools.

We remind our community of available resources on the U-46 webpage:

- [Immigration Resources](#)
- [School Safety and Bullying Resources](#)
- [Let's Talk](#) - Please note that dialogues submitted anonymously cannot receive a response. If you want to shield your identity, but receive a response, please enter your name and email, but click the box that says "Hide your contact information from the district." U-46 will not receive your name or contact information, but the Let's Talk system will still let us respond to your message.

Finally, we ask that all families or households make sure their contact information is up to date in Infinite Campus and that you have designated multiple emergency contacts. Keeping this information current allows us to reach you quickly if needed and ensures that we can connect students with their trusted contacts in any situation. Please contact your school's front office to make these updates, which can also be made during the [registration process for the 2025-2026 year](#).

Thank you for your understanding and support as we seek to maintain our schools as learning environments where our students can reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

Kudos

Note: We enjoy seeing the recognition and respect among our U-46 Team through the [Kudos submitted](#) in each issue of the Superintendent's Weekly. In an effort to further recognize our team members, we will be sharing select Kudos on social media each week under the hashtag #U46StaffKudos. When entering Kudos in Let's Talk, please note if you would prefer to not have your kudos shared on social media. We look forward to continuing to receive your kudos and celebrating them in this new way.

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 Melissa Genz, at McKinley Elementary School, from Stacey Purdy, a U-46 Parent

Last August I wasn't sure what to expect when my 2nd grader came home announcing he had a new science class several times a week. This class is taught by Ms. Genz. She has been a blessing to our family. He looks forward to class each week and comes home enthusiastic about the various experiments he participated in. I often see him searching our house for the needed materials so that he can show his pre-k sister the wonder of science. (This week he was sad to

learn we don't own a hot plate. Ha!) Thank you Ms. Genz for incorporating more content into the curriculum. And for taking the time to plan lessons that are engaging and rigorous. You have sparked his curiosity and increased his love of learning.

Kudos to all U-46 School Counselors from Dominique Zewde and the Postsecondary Success Team

You are superheroes! With capes of compassion and the power of empathy, you guide, empower, and support our students through thick and thin. You see their potential, navigate their challenges, and help them discover their own inner superpowers. Thank you for your dedication and unwavering commitment. You're making a real difference. Happy National School Counselors Week!

Kudos to the Coleman Family Engagement Committee from Marisol Reyna and Katie Stan, the Coleman Elementary Administrative Team

Thank you to Amarillys Vazquez, Zelma Frohlich, Liz Aguilar, Nitza Flanagan, Mary Anderson along with the many Coleman helpers Katie Kamenjarin, Daisy Cintora, Kayla Jones, Henry Leon, Belen Patino, Sarah McMillan, Sarah Ortiz, Madison Pingel, Emma Sempstrott, Abby Nachtman, Olivia Warren, Alondra Ayala, Georgie Camacho, Raul Marquez, Elizabeth Nystedt, Gabby Wesseler, Jovita Villanueva, Karen Lloyd, Nereida Rosas, Leslie Rivera, Tanjala Schumacher- and whoever we forgot.

Thank you for planning, prepping, supporting and cleaning up the very well-attended Winterfest! Without everyone's help we would not have had such a great night for our students and families. The smiles and laughs among them were so endearing.



Kudos to our MTSS Tier 2 and 3 team - Carolyn Rodgers, Brittany Smith, Heather Flick, Ashley Hebert, Rachel Giordano, and Melvin Caldwell, from Kristen Johnson, all at Eastview Middle School

I want to give a shout out to our MTSS Tier 2 and 3 teams. People have been putting in really hard work to make sure that our students are getting the interventions they need for their academics. These are little things that will help our students in academics but also build important relationships along the way. I am very proud of our team. Great job!

Kudos to Cecilia Rodriguez, Brenda Gomez, Teagan Pompa, and Alec Barlow, from Tara Burghart, all in the Communications and Community Relations Department

Thank you, all, for your hard work in making the third phase of our Unite U-46 community engagement sessions a success. Over three weeknights and two Saturday mornings, you supported our efforts to allow families and community members to better understand the new attendance boundaries being suggested and provide their feedback. Alec - you devoted so many hours to creating the detailed videos. Cecilia - your prep work behind the scenes was vital for making the events run smoothly the day-of. Teagan - your talent with social media and graphics helped spread the word. Brenda - you made sure that all our Spanish-speaking families felt welcome and included. You all do amazing work every day, but Unite U-46 has required additional thought, planning, creativity, and hours.

Kudos to Each and Every Staff Member at Huff Elementary School, from Erin Hart, at Huff Elementary School

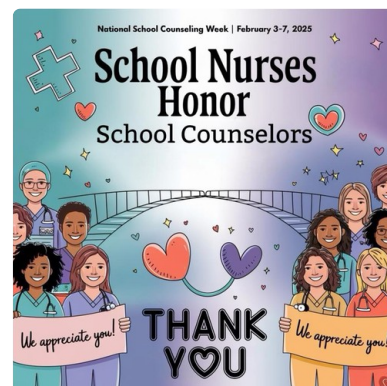
I wanted to thank each team member at Huff Elementary School for their drive, determination, and joy that is shared daily with our students! I have been so blessed to be part of this inspiring team.

Kudos to Jennifer Hensley, at Sycamore Trails Elementary School, from Stephanie Hopkins, Early Learners Coach

As the primary MLP teacher at Sycamore Trails, thank you, Jen, for generously opening your classroom to so many visitors. Your flexibility and openness are invaluable to our district, creating opportunities for all of us to learn and grow. Your willingness to share your insights, resources, and expertise makes a lasting impact, and I truly appreciate your role as a thoughtful and collaborative partner. Thank you for all you do!

Kudos to All School Counselors, from Amy Gamberdella, in Health Services

Happy National School Counseling Week! We are incredibly grateful for the dedication, compassion, and guidance you provide every day. Your support makes a lasting impact on students, helping them navigate challenges, set goals, and achieve their dreams. Thank you for your hard work and for being such a positive force in our school community!



Kudos to Cindy Salas, Jennifer Williamson, and Katy Hoekstra, from Andrea Gaitan and Cody Papp, the Sunnydale Elementary Administrative Team.

A huge thank you and heartfelt appreciation to Jennifer, Cindy, and Katrina for your incredible support during our SIP day! Your dedication and hard work made a meaningful impact, ensuring that our teachers had a valuable and enriching experience through targeted and differentiated professional development. Your efforts did not go unnoticed, and we are truly grateful for all that you do. Thank you for your kindness, support, and commitment to our team!

Kudos to all of the District Leaders who Showed Up for the Ladies of I Am LEAD, from Tiffany Mikhail, in Equity and Inclusion

I am incredibly thankful for all the district leaders who showed up and showed out by joining the young ladies of I Am LEAD at their Black History Month Kickoff event at Feed My Starving Children on Feb. 4.

When they heard we were in need of chaperones, they signed right up, and our young ladies had such a wonderful time with them! Several students shared that they can't wait to see them again and even invited them to our next big event on Feb. 25.

A heartfelt thank you to Ashlee McHaney (Assistant Director of Plant Operations), Kevin Seal (Family Engagement Specialist, Specialized Student Services), Pamela Daffin (Speech Therapist, Specialized Student Services), Linda Taylor (Administrative Assistant, DEI), Lisa Hall (Support Center Agent, Information Services), Sharon Berger (5th Grade Teacher, Lords Park Elementary), Brenda Sayre (Clerical, Ridge Circle Elementary), Libertad DeLeon and Patty Briones (Coordinators of Project Access).

We are so grateful for your support! With your help, along with a few incredible parents and our amazing LEADing ladies we packed 101 boxes, equaling 21,816 meals, which will feed 59 kids for an entire year. Thank you all for your kindness, generosity, and dedication to our students!



Kudos to Audrey Etheridge, in Food & Nutrition Services, from Brenda Gomez, Cecilia Rodriguez, and the Communications and Community Relations Department

A big thank you to Audrey for all your incredible support. We truly appreciate all your help in providing refreshments for all of our Unite U-46 meetings these past months. Your collaboration and contribution are greatly appreciated. Thank you for all you do!

Kudos to the Sunnydale Primary ILP Team, from Jessica Harrison and the Behavioral Specialists

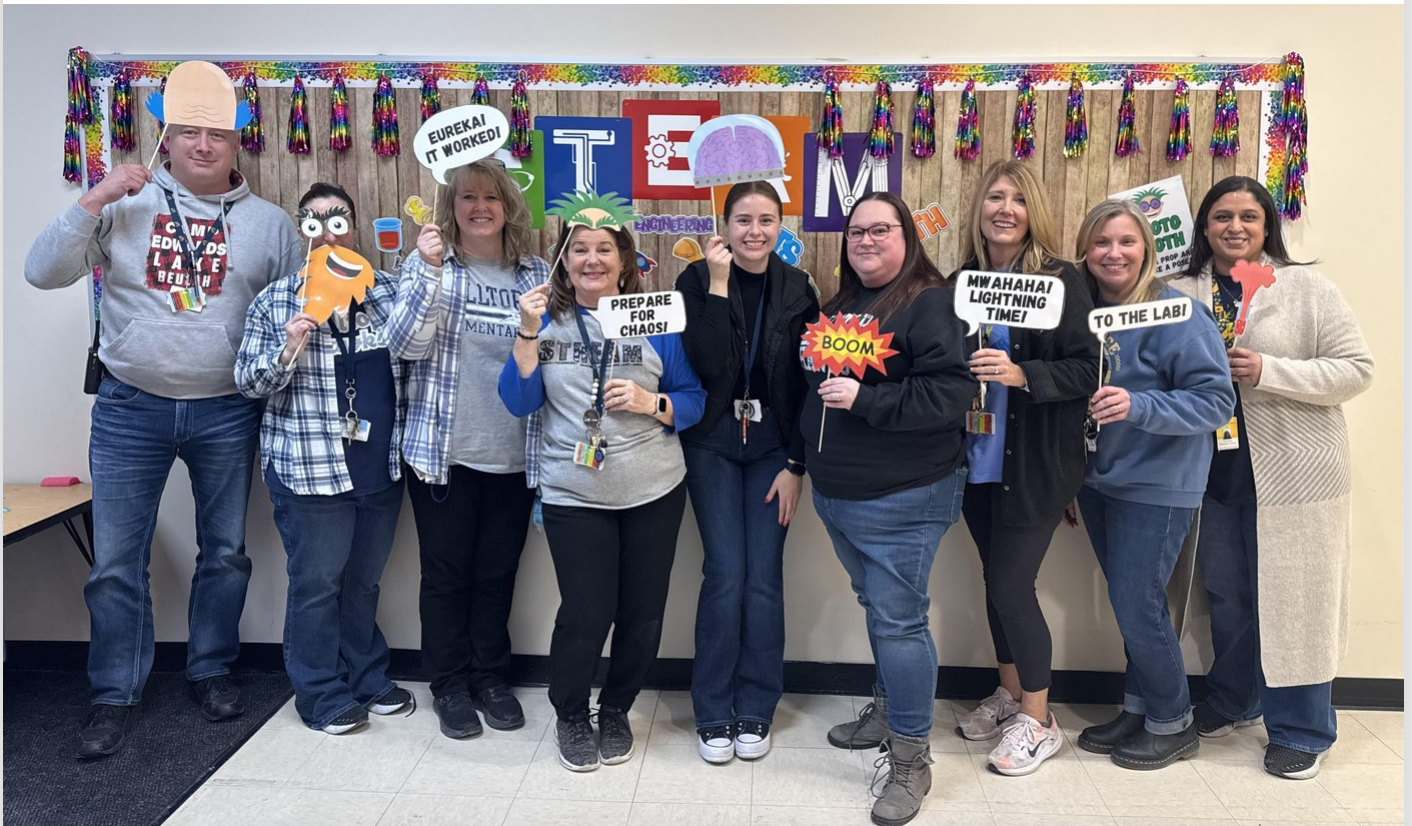
I want to thank Kimberly Donile, her wonderful paraeducators, Emy Bacheller, PIT Nadia Valdez, Teacher Leader Sam Colando, and Administrators Andrea Gaitan, Cody Papp, Yamil Javariz, and Executive Director Teresa Winters, for their constant collaboration and willingness to support students in successful behavior plans. Your efforts aren't unnoticed. Thank you!

Kudos to all who helped during Hilltop Elementary's Annual STREAM Night, from Carrie Westerman, at Hilltop Elementary School

A huge thank you to all who jumped in to help during the annual STREAM Night! Families and students engaged in a winter-themed night of creativity, collaboration and fun as they built marshmallow igloos, designed paper circuit Valentine's Day cards, engineered snowball launchers, created pipe cleaner snowflakes, built light-up snowmen, and mixed up some glitter slime. This event couldn't happen without your help, so here's a tremendous thank you to Missy Ross, Lisa Schnaedter, Erika Aoki, Amanda Reynolds, Fatima Cisneros, Sarah Siddiqui, Tricia Kraft, Sarah Rangel, Kelly Miedwig, Audrey Leaver, and Leslie Flatter (my partner in this chaos) to make this evening a success!

We also had high school students from Streamwood High School along with three former Hilltop Elementary students helping and joining in this event!

Thank you to the administrative staff, Dr. Kyle Vonschnase, Beverly Britton, and Asima Bhatti, for encouraging my craziness! It's a great day to be a HAWK!



School District U-46

