

# Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter

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**April 10, 2025**

Dear Colleagues,

It is wonderful to see our Strategic Plan almost complete as we continue to support our focus on standards-based learning and assessment, rigorous student tasks and assessments, and academic teaming.

Prior to Spring Recess, the Board of Education received two updates on the Strategic Plan. While the new Strategic Plan includes similar components as included in the current plan, the new plan also includes:

- Our U-46 Promise - We promise a safe, caring environment where every student experiences the joy of learning and is empowered and prepared for a successful future.
- Portrait of a U-46 Graduate, an outline of the attributes we want our graduates to have - Empowered Leader; Inquisitive Thinker; Collaborative Communicator; Tenacious Learner; and Global Change Agent.
- Goals and Measures of Student Progress, clearly defined goals for student success, each tied to measures of student progress.
- Signature Strategies, the building blocks and practices we're going to use as we proceed.

As a reminder, we have involved many partners in this work including students, teachers, parents, administrators, community members and local employers. These partners provided valuable direction and feedback to create this plan and support our student driven vision. Yet, we have much work to complete, once the Board of Education approves the Strategic Plan later this spring. That work will include:

- Reviewing and analyzing data trends to establish measurable goals for all areas.
- Completion of a Strategic Plan Dashboard to be accessible on the U-46 webpage.

- Drafting a communication plan to share our new Strategic Plan with our students, families, colleagues and community members.
- Establishing quarterly goals to be monitored and revised as needed.

To learn more about this work, please consider reviewing the [Board of Education Strategic Plan Update from March 10](#).

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

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

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## 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 the Office Staff, at Ridge Circle Elementary School, from Angela Bochte, District-Wide Substitute**

I just wanted to send a huge thank you to the office staff at Ridge Circle! They always set me up for success when substituting at Ridge Circle. I really appreciate Pam always having the lockdown key, map of the school, a charged laptop, lessons plans and attendance sheet all ready to go for me when I arrive! Truly they are always prepared for me to sub, which makes it so much easier for me! Pam, Brenda and Veronica are the best! I have felt so incredibly welcomed at Ridge Circle by all of the staff and I am so excited to sub many more times after spring break!

### **Kudos to Laura Fowle, from Sydney Zuhn, both at Larkin High School**

A huge congratulations to Laura Fowle for securing a sustainability grant from the City of Elgin for Larkin High School focused on carbon sequestration! This incredible achievement is a testament to your dedication and passion for protecting our planet. It's especially meaningful knowing that this grant comes from a former AP Environmental Science student, highlighting the lasting impact you've had on inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards. Your hard work and vision will undoubtedly create positive change for our environment and future! We're so proud of you! Keep leading the way toward a greener, more sustainable world!



**Kudos to Alberto, Bradley, Larry, Brian, Adam, Erik, Eliu, Lester, Robert, Tyler, Luz, Salvador, Diego, Sean P., Renae, Lauren, Paul, Mayra, Diana, David, Skyler, Sean F., Alex B., Tim, America, Mike, Tibisay, and Katrina, all in Information Services, from Cathy Pisarek and Christopher Lee, all in Information Services**

The Information Service supervisors would like to send out a huge congratulation to our Building Tech staff for spending Spring Break at ESC and repairing over 585 student chromebooks. We truly appreciate all that you do behind the scenes to make sure students have what they need to succeed.

**Kudos to Lisa Hall and Robert Green, from Cathy Pisarek, all in Information Services**

Cyber security is a critical priority for all of us, and a recent event has highlighted its importance. We want to extend our sincere gratitude to Lisa Hall and Robert Green for their quick and effective action in preventing a staff member's account from being compromised. Their vigilance and expertise directly protected our colleague and our organization's security. This incident serves as a reminder of the constant threats we face and the crucial role each of us plays in maintaining a secure environment. Thank you, Lisa and Robert, for your dedication and for setting a strong example.

**Kudos to Cassie Malhosky and Laura Patchin, from Sydney Zuhn, all at Larkin High School**

Thank you to our awesome chem teachers for creating such an innovative and interactive periodic table for both students and staff! It's been amazing to watch everyone engage with the table and explore how the elements impact our everyday lives. From teaching valuable lessons to sparking



curiosity, your hard work is truly making learning come alive! Keep up the incredible work — you've made science fun and accessible for all!



**Kudos to Mr. Mayfield and Ms. Trejo, both at Harriet Gifford Elementary School , from Natalie Jungo, an U-46 Parent**

Appreciation to these two remarkable teachers who create change and have a lasting impact on students' lives by going beyond their duties. I will forever be grateful.

**Kudos to Tim Sheahan, at the Educational Service Center, from Emily Sanchez, in Multilingual and Multicultural Education**

A huge thanks to our custodian, Tim, for always being super helpful and stepping in whenever we need something, even with so much on your plate. Your help never goes unnoticed, and I'm truly grateful for everything you do!

**Kudos to Tanya Casey and Darlynn Terry, from Dr. Jennifer Schwardt, all at Horizon Elementary School**

This National Assistant Principal Week, I want to take a moment to recognize and celebrate the incredible assistant principals at Horizon Elementary. The care and compassion Tanya Casey and Darlynn Terry have for students is unmatched, and their dedication to supporting our teachers and driving our school improvement goals makes a lasting impact every day. Thank you for your leadership, heart, and commitment to our Horizon school community! I am so grateful to be able to work alongside such a Sun-sational team.



**Kudos to Students at Hilltop Elementary School, from Carrie Westerman, at Hilltop Elementary School**

Students in Mrs. Chavez' 1st grade DL class truly embraced this week's library activity for Poetry Month by designing their own "pocket" for Poem in Your Pocket Day on April 10. Poem in Your Pocket Day is a nationally recognized day where individuals share their love and appreciation for poetry. Students in 1st and 2nd grade designed their pockets and filled them with a poem, some even in Spanish! They are eager to recite their poems on demand! Just look at those faces! Thank you Hilltop for your continued support!





**School District U-46**

