

Press Clippings 11/10/2017

---Courier News--- 11/10/17

Enrollment decline continues in School District U-46

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO



The marquee outside School District U46's main building in Elgin, Ill., in a file photo from July 24, 2017. (Rafael Guerrero/The Courier-News)

Enrollment at School District U46 schools dropped by 506 students from September 2016 to the same point this year, district officials said.

The drop in enrollment continued for another year at the state's second-largest school district. At the end of September, enrollment was at 39,205 students, below the 39,711 reported at the same point last school year. In fall 2015, enrollment was over 40,000 students.

At the elementary school level, K-6 enrollment dropped by 503 students, said U46 Chief Operations Officer Jeff King. Some schools did see an increase in students, such as Otter Creek Elementary School in Elgin, which grew by 47 students from one fall to the next.

King said the enrollment growth is largely attributed to its dual language program. The growth over the past decade at Otter Creek — whose enrollment has grown by 202 students in the last decade, according to the district — has turned the school into one of the few in danger of overcrowding.

"We're in every nook and cranny in the building," King told board members at Monday night's school board meeting. "We even use the teachers lounge for music because we don't have any space in the building."

Data presented by King showed Otter Creek is one of seven elementary schools utilizing between 82 percent and 100 percent of its available space. The majority of the schools operate at between 66 percent and 81 percent capacity, according to the data. Two of the schools — Wayne Elementary and Spring Trail in Carol Stream — are less than half full, King said.

In middle schools, enrollment increased slightly, up 14 students. The largest enrollment growth occurred at Tefft Middle School in Streamwood, up 93 students. The increase is attributed to moving dual language services from Streamwood's other middle school, [Canton](#), to Tefft, King said. As a result, Canton's enrollment decreased by 60 students from this fall compared to last fall.

High school enrollment, meanwhile, dropped 50 students from fall 2016 to 2017, according to data. Bartlett and South Elgin high schools both reported decreases of more than 50 students.

Most classrooms are at or below class size caps in the grade schools, according to the data. About 12 percent of K-6 classrooms are over the class size standard for their respective grade, or 104 classrooms. Meanwhile, 81 percent of classrooms — or 715 — are below the standard, the data reported.

Class size in K-6 general education rooms is trending down. While the average class size in kindergarten went up from 20 in 2015 to 21 in 2017, the other average class sizes ranged from 22-26 in grades 1-6 and were all below 2015 levels.

King did not calculate average class sizes at the secondary schools.

"I would be interested in knowing do we have 40 students in a high school geometry class or English class or history class," said board member Traci O'Neal Ellis. King said he would look into it, but said the biggest class size he heard of was 34 students.

---Courier News--- 11/10/17

U-46 schools lauded for behavioral support

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO



Representatives from six schools in District U46 receive recognition at a Nov. 6 meeting from district officials and school board members for implementing a behavioral support system. (Rafael Guerrero/The Courier-News)

Six schools in School District U46 attained the highest implementation level of a behavioral supports system used district-wide.

The schools — Century Oaks, Highland, and Washington elementary schools in Elgin, Laurel Hill and Ontarioville elementary schools in Hanover Park, and Larkin High School — attained platinum level for their use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

or PBIS after being reviewed by the Midwest PBIS Network, according to a district news release.

Seventeen schools have earned gold level and another 26 have received bronze or silver status, the release said. All U46 schools have adopted PBIS.

"PBIS helps us create learning environments where all students know what is expected of them. It promotes positive behavior in students and schools, improving social, emotional and academic outcomes for all students," said U46 CEO Tony Sanders.

The system has been credited by many participating schools with helping reduce the number of in-and-out-of-school suspensions.

To earn platinum level, PBIS must be implemented at three levels/tiers, the news release said. The first tier requires schools provide core instruction on social and emotional well-being to all students. At the next level, the school must have behavioral and social skill interventions for students who need more support. The third and final tier requires the school to provide individualized, child-centered plans for some students.

At Century Oaks, for instance, tickets are handed out by staff to students when they observe behavior aligning with expectations, such as picking up trash on the floor and walking quietly down the hallways.

"We set the standard for school-wide expectations," said Principal Andrea Erickson. "We use common language, what that behavior looks like and sounds like in all areas of the school. We proactively teach those behaviors. When a child doesn't do well or forgets, we will re-teach, review and remind."

---Daily Herald--- 11/10/17

Cooking up quite a feast

Elgin High culinary students prepare and serve fall meal

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

Students in Elgin High School's Clumsy Chef culinary program prepared and served a Fall Day Feast Thursday.

Culinary arts students put their skills to the test by creating a meal including salad, carved ham and turkey, a variety of side dishes and a dessert bar. A limited number of patrons dined in, and high school staff members were able to order for carryout.

Elgin High's culinary arts program allows students to practice principles of food science, nutrition and wellness. Courses offer training in advanced techniques in safety and sanitation, menu planning, management skills and strategies necessary for hospitality and catering.

---Daily Herald--- 11/10/17

U-46 seeks to reduce utility costs

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY



Elgin Area School District U-46 is looking to save millions on utility costs. *Rick West | Staff Photographer*

Elgin schools' officials are considering contracting with an energy conservation company to save on utility costs.

Elgin Area School District U-46 spends nearly \$5 million yearly on natural gas, electricity and water. The proposed five-year contract with Cenergistic is expected to result in more than \$4.4 million in savings over the contract term.

Cenergistic delivers customized, comprehensive energy conservation programs focusing on changing human behavior to reduce energy and water consumption without equipment upgrades. It serves roughly 1,400 clients in 48 states, including school districts, large churches, community colleges, universities, hospitals, and local governments. On average, clients saved 26 percent on utility costs, documents show.

"This is basically an efficiency type of contract," U-46 Chief Operations Officer Jeff King told the school board this week. "They are supplying the expertise."

U-46 would pay \$59,988 for Cenergistic's energy accounting software, which is the only expense. The company would provide three employees to monitor the district's 53 campus buildings nightly for usage.

"They are looking at all of our buildings," King said. "All the other energy companies are equipment based. I have not seen any others that offer a similar program. We will update the board as to how we progress."

Last year, the district budgeted \$3.2 million for electricity costs, and \$1.8 million for natural gas, though no amount was specified for water usage.

If Cenergistic does not generate savings, it won't get paid, officials said. The contract proposal will be voted on at a future board meeting.