

## Press Clippings 1/23/2018

---Daily Herald--- 1/23/18

### **Elgin City Councilman Corey Dixon to speak at Feb. 2 ECC Black History Month Kickoff Breakfast**

SUBMITTED BY ELGIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Elgin Community College's celebration of Black History Month begins with a keynote address by Elgin Councilman Corey Dixon at the kickoff breakfast on Friday, Feb. 2. The event will be held from 8 to 10 a.m. in the Building E dining room at the college, 1700 Spartan Drive, Elgin.

In addition to his role as Elgin City Councilman, Dixon is a facilitator for **Elgin Area School District U-46's Parent Leadership Institute** and the board chair-elect of the Greater Elgin Family Care Center. Dixon has also volunteered extensively for various projects and roles in the community.

The breakfast will be led by Black Student Achievers, a student organization at ECC, and centered on the theme: "Never give in. Never give up. Always keep on going!"

Seating is limited and tickets for the breakfast can be purchased for \$5 for students and \$12 for community members at [tickets.elgin.edu](http://tickets.elgin.edu).

All events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. For information, call the Office of Student Life at (847) 214-7078.

Other events during Black History Month include the following.

#### **African-American Spring Connection:**

African-American students are welcome to connect with faculty, staff and peers during this informal networking event to learn about campus resources that support student success. Enjoy free food, music and raffle prizes. The event, which is open to all ECC students, will be 1:30 to 2:45 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 30, in Building C, Room C120.

#### **African-American Read-In:**

Listen as various students and community readers share selected works from African-American writers from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 6, in Building C, Room C120. Music and refreshments will be available.

#### **'Project 2-3-1' film screening:**

The film "Project 2-3-1" documents the presence, heritage and contributions of African-Americans in Elgin from 12:30 to 3 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7, in Spartan Auditorium, Building G, Room G100. Executive Producer Ernie Broadnax will be available for a Q&A session after the screening.

### **'Dollars and Sense':**

Being broke is a habit we can all afford to break. This seminar will empower you to keep and grow the money you make from 1 to 2:15 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 13, in Building B, Room B180/B181. It will be led by ECC Professor Clark Hallpike. It is part one of a four-part series.

### **'Coming From Where I'm From':**

Wisdom worth listening to! This week, they are bridging the gap and connecting with local African-American legends from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15, in Building B, Room B180/B181. The discussion will be led by ECC Professor Joyce Fountain. It is part of the Black Student Achievers' "Thirsty Thursday" discussion series.

### **'The One Drop Rule':**

Too black to be white, too white to be black. Where is the check box for mixed? Discuss a multicultural perspective about self-identity development in a world that tries to put people in boxes from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, in Building B, Room B180/181. It is part of the Black Student Achievers' "Thirsty Thursday" discussion series.

### **African Gala:**

To celebrate the culture and continent of Africa, join an evening full of live performances, music, food and speakers from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, in Building E, Dining Room. It is free for students, \$5 for non-students. Dress to impress. The event is co-sponsored by the ECC Global and International Students Taskforce.

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## **U46 leaders discuss racial equity, student discipline**

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

**Elgin Area School District U-46** officials Monday night discussed the state of equity within their schools, including data showing black students being overrepresented in all forms of student discipline.

Nearly 1,300 black students -- 51 percent of the district's overall black population of 2,535 students -- were involved in some form of discipline in the 2016-17 school year. Black students also represented 26 percent of all out-of-school suspensions that year.

"They are overrepresented in all categories of discipline," including in-school and out-of-school suspensions, arrests, and expulsions, said John Heiderscheidt, U-46 director of school safety and culture. "We are seeing a disproportionate number of referrals for African-American students. If our goal is behavior change, we need to be thinking about intervention differently."

U-46's total student population last year was 39,692 -- roughly 6 percent blacks, 28 percent whites and 53 percent Latinos. Overall student referrals for discipline went up slightly from 8,802 in the 2015-16 school year to 8,883 last year. Out-of-school suspensions increased from an all-time low of 874 in 2015-16 to 1,009 last year, data show.

Comparatively, 24 percent of the overall Latino population of 21,286 students and roughly 17 percent of 10,810 white students were referred for disciplinary issues. Latino students also represented 54 percent and white students represented 12 percent of out-of-school suspensions last year.

"Our interventions are working for some students, but not necessarily working for other students," Heiderscheidt said.

Bullying, threats and offenses involving drugs and weapons rose last year. Of those, bullying saw the most significant increase from 381 cases in 2015-16 to 570 cases last year.

"Our reporting methods online are being used more and more," Heiderscheidt said. "We are seeing a pretty significant uptick in physical contact and aggression."

Incidents of inappropriate physical contact between students went up from 317 the year before to 889 last year, and physical aggression went up from 1,763 to 2,463 last year. However, student fights without injuries went down from 589 to 317 last year, data show.

Administrators also updated the school board on efforts taken, under way and future plans for equity awareness and training for employees.

Recognizing that black males was the largest student group being referred for disciplinary issues, the district brought in a psychologist to work with elementary school administrators to identify reasons for those referrals.

In elementary schools, students were being called out for simply not being able to sit still for 50 minutes, said Terri Lozier, assistant superintendent of secondary schools instruction and equity.

"Sometimes students need to move, wiggle, respond in a certain way, and maybe those ways were being identified as disrespectful (by teachers)," she said. "For next school year, what we will be planning on is having the same equity group that's working with the elementary administrators to work with the secondary administrators."

Illinois' implicit racial bias training law went into effect last July. That requires districts to train employees on equity, which is about supporting students based on their individual needs, said Ron Raglin, U-46 assistant superintendent of support programs and alignment.

U-46 has provided equity training for more than 1,250 employees since the 2012-13 school year. The yearlong voluntary training involves improving employees' understanding of implicit racial bias, how to overcome it, and how to achieve cultural competency and proficiency.

Teachers, staff members and also some community members have attended U-46's equity training, Raglin added.

"As a district we have a lot to be proud of, but we also have a lot of work to do," CEO Tony Sanders said. "We can and will do better."

---Courier News--- 1/23/18

## Dozens protest religion-themed assignment in Elgin-area U46 school

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO



Members of the audience at a U46 board meeting spoke up against a homework assignment regarding religion Jan. 22, 2018. (Rafael Guerrero / The Courier-News)

Dozens of people spoke out Monday against a homework assignment in an **Elgin-area U46 school** that asserted the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths all believe in the same God.

One month after the homework assignment caught the attention of a U46 school board member and local religious leaders, people who identified themselves as part of the Christian community withstood more than two hours of the school board's regularly scheduled agenda Monday to voice their displeasure with the assignment.

Last month, a group representing the Coalition of Elgin Religious Leaders largely spoke out over board member Jeanette Ward's statements regarding her opinions on Islam. The group argued the importance of raising awareness and acceptance of all religions that night, even though they also had issues with the sixth-grade assignment in question.

On Monday, several Christians attacked the assignment, quoting Bible and Quran verses to support their argument that they did not follow the same God. Some of the public speakers also took offense to the group of religious leaders who had spoken last month.

"By bringing this matter to light, Ms. Ward has done great service for all the sixth-graders and their parents in School District U46," said L. Dean Hufsey, of Elgin.

Check back for more updates on Monday's U46 school board meeting.

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## **Superintendent's Scholarship to honor Class of 2018 graduates**

U-46 will award 25 to 35 U-46 Superintendent's Scholarships to Class of 2018 graduates who are the first in their family to attend college.

BY NEWS DESK

ELGIN, IL - School District U-46 is preparing to award 25 to 35 U-46 Superintendent's Scholarships to Class of 2018 graduates who will be the first in their family to attend college. Applications for students are now open until Feb. 23.

To donate to the 2018 Superintendent's Scholarship fund, visit the [U-46 Educational Foundation](#) page. Once on the page, please look for "Donate to the Foundation" on the left hand column. Where it says "special instructions (if any)," please type in SS 2018 and complete the form. You do not need to have a PayPal account.

The Foundation will ensure that your donation goes toward a \$1,000 scholarship for one of our winning 2018 graduates.

"I am grateful for the donors who contributed and helped support my education," said Eric Loera, a Streamwood High graduate and a 2017 Superintendent's Scholarship recipient. "I felt I had more support as the first in my family to attend college, and I could focus more on my studies and worry less about my financial stability."

The [Illinois 5Essentials Survey](#) is open for all parents, K-12 teachers, and sixth through 12th grade students to complete until Wednesday, Jan. 31.

Please take the [5Essentials Survey](#) to weigh in on the strengths of the culture and learning environment at your child(ren)'s school as well as those areas that could be improved. This 20-minute, research-based survey provides a unique opportunity for teachers, students and parents to have a voice in improving our schools. The mobile-friendly survey is completely confidential.

To take the survey, visit <https://survey.5-essentials.org/Illinois/> and select the appropriate survey. The survey is available in English and Spanish.

A school must receive completed surveys from at least 20 percent of its parent population in order to generate survey results and receive a report. Congratulations to the following 10 schools and their parent communities for meeting the parent participation requirement: Hawk Hollow, Hilltop, Horizon, Huff, Parkwood, Ridge Circle and Sycamore Trails elementary schools and Eastview, Kenyon Woods and Tefft middle schools.

For more information, go to [www.u-46.org](http://www.u-46.org) and click on the 5Essentials icon under the "Quick Links" section.

*Photo courtesy of School District U-46*