

## Press Clippings 5/19/2018

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### **Union assembly votes no on U-46 teachers contract**

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

A proposed new contract for **Elgin Area School District U-46** gradually would streamline the traditional compensation model that rewards teachers for their years of experience and level of education.

The new contract would continue to value teachers' experience and career development, but also recognize their contributions outside the classroom, including working on committees and performing curriculum review, officials said.

Negotiations began in January on a new contract for the district's 2,448 teachers represented by the Elgin Teachers Association. The union and U-46 administration reached a tentative agreement this month on the new multiyear contract for the 2018-21 school years.

Though supported by the union board, the tentative agreement was rejected this week by the ETA's representative assembly by 88-63 votes. Both votes are advisory. The agreement goes before the full membership for a vote May 24.

The contract calls for pay increases averaging 2 percent for 2018-19, 1 percent for 2019-20, and 1 percent for 2020-21.

However, the biggest change would involve reducing the multiple step and lane increases available to teachers. Step refers to years of experience, while a lane refers to a level of education.

ETA President Richard Johnson said the new compensation model will be phased in over the next three years for all teachers.

"The traditional salary model goes away with the end of the contract," he said.

The new compensation model includes 12 steps and one lane -- the current compensation model has 10 lanes -- and teachers would move up to the next level based on the number of career credits they earn.

"Teachers will need to acquire 150 credits to move to the next step," said Suzanne Johnson, U-46 deputy superintendent of instruction. Salary increases for experience remain, but the career credits model would reward teachers for seeking higher education, such as earning a master's degree or taking graduate classes, professional development and other training, and community engagement through committee work.

"Our interest was how do we create some additional flexibility to be able to recognize and value the work that our teachers are doing," Suzanne Johnson said. "We have a lot of people who work to improve the system for our students, colleagues and sites."

In addition, the new contract provides first-year teachers an annual \$5,000 bump to make salaries more competitive in the region and attract quality teachers. It also addresses school safety, classroom culture and environment, and teacher workload, which can differ by site, grade level and program.

Employees' share of health insurance premiums -- now at 10 percent -- would rise to 15 percent effective July 1, 2021, per the deal. New hires for this fall would be put on the new health premium plan. Teachers rehired without a break in service can still be on the 90/10 split.

In March 2017, the school board granted a one-year extension to the previous three-year contract granting a base salary increase of 0.94 percent with a step increase of 3.1 percent on average. That extension expires Aug. 10.

For more details on the tentative agreement, visit the union website [theeta.org](http://theeta.org).

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## **U-46 to honor Parent Leadership graduates**

SUBMITTED BY ELGIN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT U-46

This weekend, Elgin Area School District U-46 will recognize African American and Hispanic parents who have completed two years in the District's Parent Leadership Institute.

The program, now in its eighth year in U-46, is designed to give parents the knowledge and confidence to become more involved in their children's education.

Past graduates have gone on to assume top roles in a variety of community organizations, including the City of Elgin and U-46 Board of Education.

"Over their two years in this program, the participants have learned about public education overall, the U-46 system, and the ways they can lend their voice on behalf of critical issues," said U-46 CEO Tony Sanders. "We appreciate their commitment to becoming informed and engaged parent leaders."

The African American Parent Leadership Institute (AAPLI) and the Hispanic Parent Leadership Institute (HPLI) will host a graduation ceremony at 9 a.m. Saturday, May 19 at South Elgin High School, 760 E. Main St., South Elgin, to honor those completing the program. The event will also recognize 10 U-46 parents who have completed the first year of the program.

Enrollees in the institutes commit to meeting 16 times over two years. They attend meetings of the Board of Education and Citizens' Advisory Council, meet with members

of the U-46 administration and community organizations, and get lessons in improving their public speaking, networking and leadership skills. They also must complete a family engagement project.

More than 100 parents have graduated from AAPLI and HPLI since the institutes were established in 2010.

Some graduates have gone on to become elected officials; they include Board of Education Secretary Pro-Tem Veronica Noland; Corey Dixon, a member of the Elgin City Council; and Carlos Chavez, who served as a trustee for the Gail Borden Public Library District.

The program received a “Reflecting Excellence” award from Reflejos Publications in the fall of 2017.

“The graduates of our Parent Leadership Institutes serve as an extension of the District’s own outreach efforts,” said Karla Jiménez, U-46 coordinator of family and community engagement who developed the program and has led classes since its inception. “They are eager - and have the knowledge - to help other parents become more involved in our schools.”

The following parents will graduate from AAPLI: Jasmine Beck, Stephanie Belk, Jacki Hartley, Andrea Johnson, Jennifer Rodgers, Farrah Stephen, Marisha Telemaque.

The following parents will graduate from HPLI: Mireya Contreras, Corina García, Edith García, Ana Garnica, Cilia Gerena, Leticia González, Zinya Melero. María Moreno, Rubén A. Moreno, Raquel Róbelo, Noemí Rodríguez.

The district will host informational meetings this summer for those interested in joining the next AAPLI or HPLI class. The dates are still being finalized, so anyone interested in learning more should write [KarlaJiménez@u-46.org](mailto:KarlaJiménez@u-46.org)