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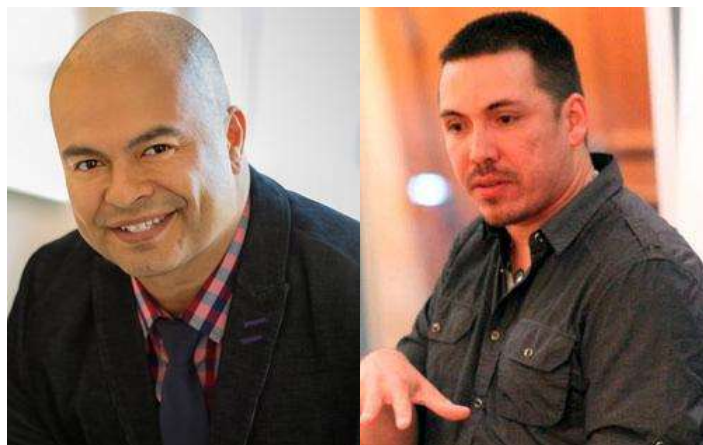
**Contact:** Mary Fergus

Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2018

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## **U-46 Schools Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month**

*District's English Language Learners Department and schools host student and parent events*



*Ernesto Mejía & Joaquin Zihuatanejo*

ELGIN – School District U-46 will shine a light on the culture of its Hispanic students in September with the District's annual Hispanic Heritage Month, featuring appearances from special speakers at middle and high schools and a Districtwide presentation for parents.

The annual celebration is sponsored by the District's English Language Learners (ELL) Department, in cooperation with Cool Speak, A Youth Engagement Company.

"More than half of our student body is of Hispanic descent so this month is another great opportunity to recognize the culture that is such a large and vibrant part of the District," School District U-46 CEO Tony Sanders said. "We encourage all students to enhance their learning experiences by taking part in the activities throughout the month."



Tony Sanders, Chief Executive Officer

School District U-46  
Educational Services Center  
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U-46.org

This year, two special guests, poet Joaquín Zihuatanejo and motivational speaker Ernesto Mejía, will be visiting select U-46 schools to inspire and inform student and parents in special assemblies on Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 18-19.

Zihuatanejo is an award-winning teacher, poet and spoken word artist who grew up in the barrio of East Dallas. His work explores the duality of culture for Americans of Hispanic origin, and how Zihuatanejo found refuge in a world of stories and poems. His presentations have been described as forthright and honest, but filled with compassion and nuance, which focus on topics like leadership, teamwork and self-expression.

Mejía, who is the son of Mexican immigrants, is a motivational speaker and expert on parental engagement. He has a compelling life story that stresses inner drive and the value of education. At 16, he was temporarily paralyzed with Guillain-Barre Syndrome, but overcame the rare condition to become a college administrator. His speeches stress the opportunities presented through education and importance of persevering against hardships and obstacles.

In addition to speaking to students, Mejía will speak to U-46 parents at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 19 in the auditorium at Elgin High School. The talk, which is being presented by McDonald’s and the United States Hispanic Institute (USHLI), will be in Spanish, with simultaneous translation into English. Childcare will be available for children ages 5 to 10 only.

On Thursday, Sept. 20, McDonald’s and the United States Hispanic Leadership will present a student leadership summit at the auditorium at EHS.

The schedule for the speaking appearances are as follows:

School	Address	Time/Date	Event
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Kimball Middle School	451 N. McLean Blvd., Elgin	9 a.m. to 10:34 a.m. Tuesday, September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejia
Abbott Middle School	949 Van St., Elgin	11:27 a.m. to 1:01 p.m. Tuesday, September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejía
Larsen Middle School	665 Dundee Ave., Elgin	1:48 p.m. to 3:21 p.m. Tuesday, September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejía
Larkin High School	1475 Larkin Ave., Elgin	8:35 a.m. to 10:20 a.m. Tuesday, September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Joaquin Zihuatanejo
South Elgin High School	760 E. Main St., South Elgin	2:05 p.m. to 2:55 p.m. Tuesday, September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Joaquin Zihuatanejo
Ellis Middle School	225 S. Liberty St., Elgin	9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Wednesday September 19	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejía



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Abbott Middle School	949 Van St., Elgin	11:27 a.m. to 1:01 p.m. Wednesday, September 19	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejía
Tefft Middle School	1100 Shirley Ave., Streamwood	1:48 p.m. to 3:21 p.m. Wednesday, September 19	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejía
Streamwood High School	701 W. Schaumburg Rd., Streamwood	8:35 a.m. to 10:20 a.m. Wednesday, September 19	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Joaquin Zihuatanejo
Bartlett High School	701. W. Schick Road, Bartlett	2:05 p.m. to 2:55 p.m. Wednesday, September 19	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Joaquin Zihuatanejo
Elgin High School Auditorium	1200 Maroon Drive, Elgin	6:00 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday, September 19	Hispanic Institute Parent Presentation, open to all U-46 parents. Presenter: Ernesto Mejía
Elgin High School Auditorium	1200 Maroon Drive, Elgin	Thursday, September 20	USHLI Student Leadership Summit presented by McDonald's. (All-School event)

**Note:** Members of the Media: Please RSVP to Mary Fergus at [MaryFergus@u-46.org](mailto:MaryFergus@u-46.org) if you are planning to attend any of the above events.