

Press Clippings 01/18/2019

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U46 upgrading classroom door locks

School district also conducting surprise security checks

By: Rafael Guerrero



- School District U-46 is in the process of equipping all classroom and staff bathroom doors with lockdown locks and keys.

School District U46 will be upgrading door locks, conducting surprise security checks and planning more safety drills this year in an effort to step up building safety, the district's director of safety and culture told the school board this week.

John Heiderscheidt said U46 already has 100 panic buttons and more than 600 surveillance cameras spread throughout the district, and police have 24/7 access to all U46 buildings in the case of emergencies.

The district is also in the process of equipping all classroom and staff bathroom doors with lockdown locks and keys, Heiderscheidt said. The project is in its last phase, with work being done at the five high schools, he said.

Surprise security compliance checks to test staff knowledge of procedure protocols for entering schools are done on a consistent basis, Heiderscheidt said.

Once a semester, his department sends interns to schools to ensure main doors are locked and main office staff uses the intercom prior to letting them in and issues identification tags, among other checks.

In the latest compliance check in September, 98 percent of schools had the main doors locked upon arrival, 98 percent used the intercom, 98 percent asked the visitors to sign in and 100 percent issued visitor tags, Heiderscheidt said.

Beginning this year, all school districts in Illinois must conduct active shooter drills, he said. U46 already conducts these drills — the last was at Elgin High School last year — and was in compliance before the new law went into effect.

Heiderscheidt said the district and its police partners are considering a larger-scale active shooter drill in the near future, possibly with helicopters, hospital staff and law enforcement from outside the U46 boundaries.

“I don’t know if it will happen that way, but that’s the discussion,” he said.

The district continues expanding trauma-informed care in the schools in an effort to better understand what students may be going and that affects their behavior, Heiderscheidt said. More than 20 schools already have resiliency teams in place.

“The actions of our teams, we’re asking them to focus on raising the awareness of adverse childhood experiences, grow in the expertise of trauma-informed care and develop a plan to address caregiver compassion fatigue,” he said.

“If we’re not ready to be before kids and we’re drained, we’re going to be no good in front of everybody.”

U46 officials also discussed recent 5essentials survey results regarding overall perception of safety in the schools. The Illinois State Board of Education survey is taken annually by students, staff and families and gauges attitudes and opinions on a number of topics, including school safety.

Heiderscheidt said among the safety issues raised by teachers in the survey was disrespect toward teachers in the classrooms and student disorder in the hallways. Officials will be looking at ways to curb both, he said.

‘Language in the Laundromat’

Second location opens in Elgin, promoting early childhood learning

By: Rafael Guerrero

A second Elgin laundromat has installed a bookcase, books and signs urging families to make the wait of washing and drying clothes also a learning and literacy experience for younger children.

The second “Language in the Laundromat” opened at the Blue Kangaroo laundromat on Summit Street this month. The project — made possible by School District U46, the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning, Blue Kangaroo and a St. Charles girl scout — is a sign of things to come, as officials hope to have similar sites in other nontraditional locations to promote constant learning opportunities for children.

“We want for people with their own businesses to think ‘what can we do to put an early learning spin where children can learn while they’re here,’ ” said Amber Peters, collaboration director of the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning.

In spring 2018, JetXpress Laundry on Dundee Avenue opened the first such location. Reading materials are available to families while they wash and dry, and posters were hung throughout the laundromat to provide tips on how to make the visit more educational.

A similar setup went up at the Summit Street location. Workers installed a small bookcase in one of the corners of the laundromat.

Ultimately, between 200 and 300 books will be moved to the bookcase, said Peggy Ondera, U46’s early learners initiatives director. The books are mostly targeted toward younger children, and the material is in English and Spanish.

Posters were placed in other parts of the laundromat, also in English and Spanish. The signs suggest activities for the families to do with their children while they wash and dry, like learning colors, counting and improving their reading and communication skills.

Officials said valuable learning is lost during daily chores like laundry, with children often staring at a smartphone screen to pass time.

“Families typically spend about 2 1/2 hours in laundromats,” Ondera said. “We want them to use that spare time as best as they can.”

Several hundred books were collected for the laundromat by Peyton Smith, a St. Charles 15-year-old. Smith undertook the project to obtain books and building the bookcase as part of a project for her Girl Scout troop. The book collection — aided by her Girl Scout troop and social media — went from the summer through the fall, she said.

“If (reading material) is not readily available at home, let’s make it available wherever they may go,” said Smith, a freshman at St. Charles East High School.

The project was funded by U46, while the original site was funded through an Elgin Township grant, said Peters. Her organization was established to provide communitywide initiatives in early learning readiness. Dozens of local institutions make up the group, including U46, Gail Borden Public Library, United Way of Elgin, among others.

Plans are underway to expand the concept to other well-visited locations. Peters described “While you Wait,” which would take place in waiting rooms of doctors’ offices or clinics. Ondera added the district is currently working on a grant application to get the funding to advance the project.

No specific date has been set yet for the potential project, but both Ondera and Peters are optimistic it will happen. Peters listed even more potential sites: cafes, supermarkets, banks.

“We still have so much work to do for our children,” she said.



- Workers installed a bookcase, books and posters at the Blue Kangaroo laundromat on Summit Street in January. It’s the second “Language in the Laundromat” in Elgin, an effort to promote early learning activities while families do laundry.

U46 to celebrate legacy of Martin Luther King

By: Rafael Guerrero



- Students at Kimball Middle School discuss Martin Luther King Jr. and nonviolence Thursday at the Elgin school.

School District U46 will honor the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. this week and next in a number of ways.

The events and activities regarding the civil rights leader range from the recognition of scholarship winners, collecting food and donations, and student-led seminars once classes resume next week.

Monday marks the eighth annual Dr. King Youth Leadership Conference, held at noon at the Ed Schock Centre of Elgin. Inspirational speaker Jeron Shelton will give the keynote address.

At the conference, six U46 students will be awarded scholarships ranging from \$600 to \$1,000. According to a U46 news release, the students are:

Jacqueline Zarate, Bartlett High School, \$1,000.

Elisa Arce, Larkin High School, \$1,000.

Andres Dominguez, Larkin High School, \$1,000.

Patrick Stephen, Bartlett High School, \$800.

Travis Farley, Larkin High School, \$600.

Maritza Renteria, Larkin High School, \$600.

Multiple schools are participating in the Elgin-area Dr. King Food Drive. Schools and other businesses and organizations continue to collect food and donations through the end of the week. The food drive is a yearslong annual tradition in the Elgin area, collecting supplies that get distributed on Martin Luther King Jr. Day to eight local food pantries.

It is part of the district's efforts to promote community service on the holiday, which is often used as a day of service. District officials listed potential service projects on its website.

Members of the Chicago Bulls' G League affiliate, the Windy City Bulls, will attend several of the Socratic Cafes that Kimball and Abbott middle schools students will conduct at their respective schools on Wednesday and Friday. The events are also known as Socratic seminars, group-led dialogue discussions on a text or topic that allow for open-ended questions. According to a U46 news release, next week's cafes will focus on Dr. King's sermon "On Being a Good Neighbor."

Four Socratic sessions will be held at Abbott Middle School on Wednesday, all of them during school hours. Kimball students will lead four sessions Friday, also during school hours. District officials said members of the community who wish to attend one of the sessions can contact Ronald Raglin, U46's assistant superintendent of educational support programs and alignment, at ronaldraglin@u-46.org.

SPORTS

---Daily Herald---01/18/2019

Montgomery leads South Elgin over Streamwood

By: Craig Brueske

Playing against each other for the third time in 41 days, the basketball teams from South Elgin and Streamwood have fast become familiar foes.

However, South Elgin added a "new" wrinkle during Thursday night's rubber match.

Senior point guard Drake Montgomery, who missed the first game between the teams (South Elgin won 71-63) with an injury and rolled his ankle in the first quarter of the rematch at the Jacobs Holiday Tournament (Streamwood won 70-58), successfully made it through the third meeting and the Storm (16-6, 9-2) reaped the benefits.

Montgomery poured in a game-high 25 points and added 7 rebounds, 6 assists and 3 steals while helping lead South Elgin to a hard-fought 59-55 Upstate Eight Conference victory over Streamwood (8-14, 4-7) in South Elgin.

"It was fun and exciting to play against them," said Montgomery, who connected on his first 6 field-goal attempts while accounting for half (15) of his team's first-half points as the Storm led 30-27 at the intermission.

"They beat us down last time (we played) so I knew my team needed me this game."

Montgomery scored a good portion of his points on drives to the basket in addition to knocking down a pair of 3-pointers and 5 of 7 free throws.

"Drake was an offensive difference maker because he was aggressive," said Storm coach Brett Johnson. "He's able to get to the basket and attack."

Using a starting lineup that included sophomores Zach Marquez, Jakobe Strong and Darrel Luce to go with senior veterans Keenon Cole and Nikola Sinik, the Sabres got off to a fast start.

Streamwood extended its lead to 18-9 late in the first quarter on Cole's layup before Montgomery answered at the other end with back-to-back buckets as the Storm pulled within 18-13.

South Elgin took its first lead at 26-25 late in the second quarter on the first of 4 thunderous slam dunks by 6-foot-7 senior center Vincent Miskiewicz, who just missed a rare triple-double with 23 points, 14 rebounds and 8 steals.

After the Storm stretched the lead to 40-33 midway through the third quarter, the Sabres went on a 9-2 run to tie the game at 42-42.

The comeback included a steal and layup from Marquez (6 points, 4 rebounds), a 3-point basket by freshman Richard Santiago (6 points) and a nifty spin move from NIU-bound Cole (24 points, 19 rebounds, 4 blocked shots).

"I thought our kids battled," said Sabres coach Kent Payne. "They'd get in a hole and fight back but that's part of playing younger kids now. Darrel (Luce), Jakobe (Strong) and Kyle (Maybrun) -- this is their second varsity game.

"We put in a freshman, Richard (Santiago), and he did the best job on Montgomery plus he hit a couple big 3-pointers. He had a fearless mindset. That's what we want to see."

Cole's 3-point play gave the Sabres a 50-48 lead with 6 minutes remaining before the Storm went on an 11-1 surge over the next 5 1/2 minutes to seal the decision.

Miskiewicz drained a 3-pointer from the wing with 4:02 left to put South Elgin on top to stay at 52-50.

"I'm proud of him," said Johnson. "He's not afraid to shoot that shot. It went in and then we executed down the stretch."



- South Elgin's Drake Montgomery gets around Streamwood's Zach Marquez in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



Streamwood's Keenon Cole blocks South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



- Streamwood's Keenon Cole slaps away the shot of South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



- South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz dunks against Streamwood in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



- Streamwood's Keenon Cole dunks against South Elgin in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



- South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz gets a hand on the shot of Streamwood's Keenon Cole in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



- South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz stretches for a rebound against Streamwood's Keenon Cole in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



- South Elgin's Lane Mcvicar lays up a shot against Streamwood's Darryl Luce in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



- South Elgin's Trace Ashby passes against Streamwood in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



- South Elgin's Jace Warrick drives into Streamwood's Keenon Cole in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



- Streamwood's Keenon Cole gets a rebound against South Elgin's Drew Cwik in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



- South Elgin's Drake Montgomery breaks up a rebound by Streamwood's Keenon Cole in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.



- Streamwood's Nikola Sinik reaches for the ball as teammate Darryl Luce and South Elgin's Lane Mevicar fight for possession also in a boys basketball game in South Elgin Thursday.

Fast start sends Larkin past West Chicago

By: Allen Oshinski

Slow starts have been a problem for Larkin recently. But not so Thursday night against West Chicago.

The Royals led 21-7 after one quarter while coasting to a 64-48 win in Elgin.

A change in the starting lineup helped jump-start the Royals, who stretched the lead to as many as 30 points in the third quarter in the Upstate Eight matchup.

Victor Perez scored 20 points and freshman Fernando Perez, who got the start, added 13 for Larkin (8-14, 5-6). The pair combined for 6 of Larkin's 9 3-pointers.

"It's about time," said Larkin coach Deryn Carter. "We hadn't started out very well. We kind of changed up our starting lineup, inserted a guy who brings a lot of energy and effort and maybe it made a difference."

The Royals' tenacious defense held the Wildcats to 26 points through three quarters. West Chicago shot 24 percent from the floor in the first half while committing 12 turnovers.

"We got our energy from the defensive end," Carter said. "We played really well defensively and that's obviously a staple of our program. We're trying to get our guys to understand that's our identity. The more we can work at it, the better we can get."

Jashon Johnson-Neals added 9 points and 8 rebounds, while Damari Wheeler-Thomas had 8 points and 5 boards for Larkin.

Raed Haroon scored 7 of his 12 points in the fourth quarter as West Chicago cut a 51-21 deficit to 58-43 in the fourth, but the Wildcats could get no closer.

Jordan Wilkins and Isaac Nelson scored 7 points apiece for the Wildcats.

Chris Rose scored on 2 transition layups sandwiched around a pair of Wildcat free throws, and Johnson-Neals made 4 straight from the foul line as Larkin opened up a 17-4 lead early.

A 3-pointer by Nelson made it 17-7, but Fernando Perez answered with a layup and later a free throw, and Wheeler-Thomas added 2 free throws to make it 21-7 after a quarter.

When Victor Perez opened the second quarter with a 3-pointer, the rout was on in earnest.

Victor Perez scored 10 points in the third quarter as the Royals continued to stretch the lead.