

## **Press Clippings 03/11/2019**

**---Courier News---03/10/2019**

### **Stadium to get lights, new track**

School District U46 OKs improvements for South Elgin High

**By: Rafael Guerrero**

South Elgin High School opened its outdoor stadium in 2011 with the inability to host night games, matches or meets — but that is soon to change.

School District U46 officials approved a nearly \$1.5-million bid to install lights, a new track, and press box at the South Elgin venue. As a result, Friday night football, track and field meets and other events will become more common as early as this fall.

Construction is expected to start in April and continue into the summer. The stadium will be ready for South Elgin's first night football game Sept. 13 against Elgin, said Mike Jezioro, the school's athletic director.

The project addresses three areas of concerns. Workers will install LED lighting to illuminate the playing field and bleachers.

Jezioro said officials and South Elgin supporters long coveted lights since the stadium's 2011 opening. The stadium itself was years in the making, opening six years after the high school. It remains a work in progress, as the venue still doesn't have built-in concessions or bathrooms.

"I think under-the-lights activity...it just brings the community together," Jezioro said. "Historically, most schools play Friday night football, and it's a great experience for everyone. You get people from the community, you get the youth in the community, you get them to see what the high school experience is all about."

"More people attend Friday night games, the weather is cooler and the sun is set," added head football coach Dragan Teonic. "Friday nights are more convenient than Saturday afternoons."

Teonic said he believes homecoming games can become a "great new tradition" on Friday nights instead of Saturday afternoons, similar to other schools.

Workers will also replace the small, temporary press box at the top of the main bleachers. Jezioro said the current press box was meant to be installed for only a couple of years. The new box will be larger, fully enclosed, and feature space for home and visiting team coaching staff, announcers, and news media.

Workers will also resurface and resettle the track. Jezioro said additional work will be done on a portion of the track plagued with poor soil conditions below it. A new and level running surface, along with the lights, means South Elgin can host track and field meets in the near future, he said.

"I feel that being able to host more meets at home, not have to fight to the finish for sunlight, and selling football tickets under the lights will elevate school spirit, the

community's excitement, and parent involvement," said Tushebra Crump, South Elgin's head girls track and field coach.

**---Daily Herald---03/11/2019**

## **Elgin Area League to host 8 candidate forums in March**

**By: League of Women Voters of the Elgin Area**

The League of Women Voters of the Elgin Area invites the community to attend the moderated candidate forums before the April 2 consolidated election. A half-hour before each forum starts, voters will have the opportunity to talk informally to the candidates in a "meet and greet."

- The league's Rutland-Dundee Townships Committee will host the first forum with candidates for the Sleepy Hollow Village Board from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, March 7, at the Sleepy Hollow Village Hall, 1 Thorobred Lane. The race has four candidates for three trustee seats.
- On Saturday, March 9, the Elgin candidate forum will be 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Meadows Community Room at Gail Borden Public Library, 270 N. Grove Ave., Elgin. Two candidates are running for Elgin mayor, and there are seven city council candidates for four 4-year terms, and the three city council candidates for one 2-year seat.
- On Tuesday, March 12, the Dundee area candidate forum will be 7 to 9 p.m. at the Rakow Senior Center, 665 Barrington Ave., Carpentersville. There are six candidates for three seats on the Rutland-Dundee Fire Protection District board. Four candidates are vying for three seats on the East Dundee Village Board.
- On Wednesday, March 13, the Gilberts candidate forum will be 7 to 9 p.m. at the Gilberts Village Hall, 87 Galligan Road. Five candidates are vying for three seats on the Gilberts Village Board.
- On Thursday, March 14, the West Dundee candidate forum will be 7 to 9 p.m. at the West Dundee Village Hall, 102 S. Second St. Four candidates are vying for three seats on the West Dundee Village Board.
- On Tuesday, March 19, the candidate forum for District 300 and ECC will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. at Rakow Senior Center, 665 Barrington Ave., Carpentersville. The Community Unit District 300 school board has five candidates for four seats. Five candidates are vying for two seats on the Elgin Community College District 509 board of trustees.
- On Thursday, March 21, the library candidate forum will be 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Elgin Room at Gail Borden Public Library, 270 N. Grove Ave., Elgin. There are six candidates for four seats on the Gail Borden Public Library board.
- On Saturday, March 23, a candidate forum for U-46 and ECC will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Meadows Community Room at Gail Borden Public Library, 270 N. Grove Ave., Elgin. Eight candidates are running for four seats on the Elgin Area

School District U-46 board, and five candidates are vying for two seats on the Elgin Community College District 509 board of trustees.

For information, visit [lwvelginarea.org](http://lwvelginarea.org) or [www.facebook.com/LWVElginArea/](https://www.facebook.com/LWVElginArea/).

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, issue-oriented political organization that holds voter education as a primary mission. This is why the League sponsors these forums. The league does not endorse or recommend candidates for office and it is neutral with regard to the candidates who are the focus of this forum.

The League is not responsible for the accuracy of statements made by the candidates. The candidates will be requested to address a specific question(s) in their opening remarks.

Audience questions will be written and collected by League members. Questions are to address issues, not personalities. The League reserves the right to screen questions, and there should be only one question per card. The audience is asked to remain silent and in their seats during the forum. The audience is not permitted to respond in any audible way to the candidates.

## **Real estate professionals invited to learn more about Elgin U-46**

**By: Elgin Area School District U-46**

Real estate agents, brokers, trainers, property managers and appraisers are invited to a Real Estate Professionals Breakfast to learn more about the state's second largest school district before the busy spring home buying season.

The breakfast is being co-hosted by Elgin Area School District U-46 and the Citizens' Advisory Council's Family and Community Engagement Committee. It will be held from 9 to 10 a.m. Monday, March 18, at the U-46 Food and Nutrition Wellness Center, 1150 Bowes Road, Elgin.

Those who work in the real estate industry and who want to attend the free event are asked to RSVP at [www.u-46.org](http://www.u-46.org) by March 13.

"Our school district serves all or part of 11 communities in Chicago's northwest suburbs, and those of us who work in U-46 know that this area is a great destination for potential homebuyers," said CEO Tony Sanders. "Through this breakfast gathering, we will share many of our District's strengths, unique attributes and future plans. We're excited to continue partnering with real estate professionals and welcoming new residents to our schools and communities."

CEO Sanders will speak at the event, and attendees also will be able to tour the Food and Nutrition Wellness Center, which opened in June 2018. The new 40,000-square-foot facility has allowed U-46 to serve a more diverse and healthier range of food options.

Attendees will learn about the district's award-winning Dual Language program, its successful play-based, full-day kindergarten model, and the specialized academies located within its five high schools.

They also will get an update on the district's plan to expand these smaller, focused learning communities, called Educational Pathways, to all high school students starting with freshmen in the 2021-22 school year.

Real estate professionals will leave with a toolbox of strong selling points for potential buyers considering a home purchase in U-46.

**---Daily Herald---03/10/2019**

**Endorsements: Devereux, Kerr, Thommes, Porter for U-46 school board**

**By: Daily Herald Editorial Board**



John Devereux



Susan Kerr



Eva J. Porter



Kate Thommes

We have long believed that education is the great equalizer and that as citizens, we have an obligation not only to our youth but also to the community to invest in good schools.

It is through education that we uplift underprivileged communities while also realizing the potentials of all children.

With that as an underlying philosophy, it is easy to choose our endorsements in the April 2 election of four school board members in Elgin Area Unit District U-46.

With a change in Illinois' school funding formula, the Elgin area school system will receive an additional \$54 million from the state this year. Permit a little shorthand here: Four of the eight candidates in this race -- maverick incumbent Jeanette Ward of West Chicago, retiree Daniel Hancock of Hanover Park, airline industry employee Tina Rio of Bartlett and translator Ina Silva-Sobolewski of Hanover Park -- seem to think this is a windfall that should be used to cut property taxes.

Don't get us wrong. We think a big part of a school board member's job is to be a disciplined steward of taxpayer dollars. But these candidates miss the point. The state isn't increasing state funding for U-46 as a way to provide property tax relief. The state is increasing U-46's share of the funding because it recognizes the schools are underfunded and as a result, its students are being shortchanged.

Yes, school board members must be fiscally responsible. But they also must recognize their charge to provide every student with access to the best education possible. That is a

sacred obligation and one that cannot be discharged with wishful thinking -- disproved by the facts -- that funding levels somehow don't matter.

School board incumbents John Devereux and Sue Kerr, both of Bartlett, as well as educator Kathleen "Kate" Thommes of Elgin and retired teacher Eva Porter of Hanover Park embrace this obligation and understand the connection between resources and educational opportunity.

We strongly endorse the candidacies of Devereux, Kerr, Thommes and Porter.

The future of the younger generation in U-46 depends on their elections. The long-term health and vibrancy of the community does too.

## **U-46 board candidates talk issues**

**By: Daily Herald Report**

Eight candidates vying for four seats on the Elgin Area School District U-46 school board are divided on whether raising taxes is necessary to maintain programs and provide quality education.

Incumbents Jeanette Ward of West Chicago and Sue Kerr and John Devereux, both of Bartlett, face newcomers Tina Rio of Bartlett, Kathleen Thommes of Elgin, and Eva Porter, Daniel Hancock and Ina Silva-Sobolewski, all of Hanover Park, seeking 4-year terms on April 2.

What are the most important issues facing your district and how do you intend to address them?

**John Devereaux.** The success and well-being of our nearly 40,000 students form the foundation of what we expect from School district U-46. Accordingly, we need to see growth in academic progress across the district, improvements in early education, and broader/equitable access to programs.

Some of these can be achieved through upgrades to facilities, additional focus on class sizes, further investments in student and teacher supports, and enhanced community engagement and outreach efforts. Ultimately, we need to explore and invest responsibly in proven and creative strategies. As ideas are researched, presented, and implemented, we (the U-46 board members) need to establish clear goals and metrics for success. Progress must be routinely monitored and measured and our investments and programs subjected to continuous evaluation. Finally, we need to do all of this in a disciplined manner, mindful not to increase the property tax burden on our area residents.

**Daniel Hancock.** Academic performance and property taxes. The state report card continues to decline – we need to look at the curriculum. Common core has been a failure, and the teachers need to be given control of the classroom. They should not be overruled by the school administration.

**Susan Kerr.** New Funds: One of the most important issues is determining how best to apply the new funds that the district has received from the state through the new funding formula. I believe the funds should be used to improve student achievement and to reduce dependence on bonds for capital improvement.

Old or Under-utilized Facilities: At least four of our elementary schools were built in the 19th century and a few of our schools are less than 50% utilized. There are a number of

ways to deal with this issue. As a board member I would consider cost savings, community impact, and public opinion before making a decision.

Career Pathways and Magnet Schools: As I board member I would expect there to be a variety of programs to meet the needs of all students, not just high-achieving ones. I have attended some of the listening sessions on career pathways and will continue to listen to the concerns and comments of parents and teachers.

School Safety: I support funding the SROs in our middle schools and high schools, and the district's cooperation with local law enforcement agencies. I also believe we need to take a proactive approach to violence and bullying so I support the district's introduction of social-emotional learning and its cooperation with community groups.

**Eva Porter.** How satisfied are you that your school district is adequately preparing students for the next stage in their lives, whether it be from elementary into high school or high school into college or full-time employment? What changes, if any, do you think need to be made?

In the past few years U-46 has done much to better prepare students for life after high school. I have supported the introduction of new AP courses and the Dual Credit program with ECC. I believe the district is considering expanding that program to 60 additional students (juniors) and I would support that. I have supported enhancement to our career and technical education programs which enable our students to receive professional certifications in various fields.

There are still students we need to reach. I am hopeful that the proposed career pathways will offer new opportunities and interests to high school students who too often seem disengaged.

I supported the hiring of middle school counselors this year, and will carefully evaluate the proposed middle school career survey classes when they come before the board. Any such classes must spark interest in future careers and fields of study.

I supported the introduction of all-day kindergarten and the new science and math curricula in the elementary schools. Elementary schools, however, face other challenges including a shortage of para-professionals (teachers' aides) and substitutes. Perhaps the biggest challenge is a generation of students who have grown up in a world of smart devices. Finding a way to engage these students whose attention spans and interests may be different from students of 20 years ago is a challenge that, quite frankly, I don't have an answer to. I believe that the district needs to see how other districts address this and listen to the ideas of our teachers.

What budgetary issues will your district have to confront during the next four years and what measures do you support to address them? If you believe cuts are necessary, be specific about programs and expenses that should be considered for reduction or elimination. On the income side, do you support any tax increases? Be specific.

The biggest budget issue confronting Illinois school districts in the next four years is whether the state of Illinois can maintain funding (or increase funding, as it has promised) for the new Evidence Based Funding model. I believe the district must continue to work with our legislators on this.

Two other issues that could impact school district finances are the possibility of moving pension payments to local school districts and a property tax freeze (proposed in HB 317). If these were to occur U-46 would have to make adjustments to its budget as needed. I would prefer that any cuts be kept as far from the classroom as possible.

I have supported the abatement of property taxes that the district has done for the past few years and I will be voting for the abatement of \$9.6 million in property taxes at our February 25th meeting. I will continue to support abating property taxes as long as the state reliably keeps up with its payments.

Are you currently employed by or retired from a school district, if so, which one? Is any member of your direct family -- spouse, child or child-in-law -- employed by the school district where you are seeking a school board seat?

No to all of the above.

As contract talks come up with various school employee groups -- teachers, support staff, etc. -- what posture should the school board take? Do you believe the district should ask for concessions from its employees, expect employee costs to stay about the same as they are now or provide increases in pay or benefits?

We have settled contracts with a number of our employee groups in the past 18 months and are currently in talks the teachers and food service employees. Because of that, and because I am currently a board member, I cannot go into any more details.

If your district had a superintendent or other administrator nearing retirement, would you support a substantial increase in his or her pay to help boost pension benefits? Why or why not?

No, I do not support end-of-career salary boosts to increase pension benefits. Most people in the private sector no longer receive pensions and I do not think taxpayers should be asked to fund such pay increases.

**JeannetteWard.** In my first term as board member I was involved in many positive changes. I worked to ensure board members had access to closed session recordings, resulting in a bill passed unanimously in the General Assembly. I consistently supported the first charter school, offering parents increased educational choice. I advocated for increased transparency through the release of closed session minutes, and elevated dialogue regarding academic freedom and diversity of thought. I see many challenges remaining. Pathways must be implemented in a manner that prepares students for college or career after high school, while preserving a well-rounded general education option. Budgets and tax levies continue to increase regardless of declining enrollment and increased funding by the state, and this cannot continue. Curriculum resources purchased by taxpayers continue to restrict academic freedom, diversity of thought. This must change. Finally, privacy and safety for all students and teachers must be secured.

How satisfied are you that your school district is adequately preparing students for the next stage in their lives, whether it be from elementary into high school or high school into college or full-time employment? What changes, if any, do you think need to be made?

Academic performance, particularly in math, is decreasing. The district needs to return to more traditional math instruction; the de facto national Common Core curriculum "Eureka Math" (or "Engage NY") is failing our students. It frustrates teachers, parents, and students alike. In particular, it demotivates talented math students by presenting math as English, with complicated paths for solving simple problems.

On a higher level, "Pathways," U-46's vision for preparing students for college OR career (to be fully implemented in 2022), is a good concept in that it prepares students for a career direction ("pathway") of their choice, to go into the workforce immediately, or to



college. U-46 administration has also been responsive to my and other board members' insistence that a general education option also be available for students.

What budgetary issues will your district have to confront during the next four years and what measures do you support to address them? If you believe cuts are necessary, be specific about programs and expenses that should be considered for reduction or elimination. On the income side, do you support any tax increases? Be specific.

U-46 is expected to receive \$43 million in additional funding from the state this year based on the "Evidence Based Funding" model. I have repeatedly stated U-46 property taxes should be decreased correspondingly, and I have also voted no on every increasing budget and tax levy. The board majority, including one school board member running for re-election, voted yes. Administration, with agreement from the majority of the board, correspondingly expanded operations this year by adding 54 new positions. Meanwhile, enrollment continues to decline, and is projected to decline into the future. At the very least, U-46 should not have expanded operations. I voted no and, if re-elected, will continue to vote no on future tax levy and budget increases.

Are you currently employed by or retired from a school district, if so, which one? Is any member of your direct family -- spouse, child, or child-in-law -- employed by the school district where you are seeking a school board seat? No to both questions.

As contract talks come up with various school employee groups -- teachers, support staff, etc. -- what posture should the school board take? Do you believe the district should ask for concessions from its employees, expect employee costs to stay about the same as they are now or provide increases in pay or benefits?

I believe pay increases for teachers, who are public sector union employees, like the private sector, should be tied to merit. Pay increases should be contingent on excellent performance, and not automatically granted, as they are currently (e.g., "step and lane"). Given that U-46 has added 54 new positions (which I did not support) there is no way costs will be reduced unless a significant change in direction is taken.

If your district had a superintendent or other administrator nearing retirement, would you support a substantial increase in his or her pay to help boost pension benefits? Why or why not?

I do not support pension spiking in any form and I voted against two employee contracts that included 6 percent pension spikes as provisions in the contracts. The board majority, including another board member seeking re-election, voted for them. The private sector does not enjoy this kind of perk. It is entirely unsustainable fiscally and is one of the reasons Illinois is in the financially disastrous situation it is.

At the state level, the Illinois budget was presented to voters as balanced, but a different, more truthful story was presented to bond investors. There is a "structural imbalance," which means deficit, in this year's state budget of at least \$1.2 billion. There is \$129 billion in unfunded pension liability. This imbalance at the state level cannot continue forever. Eventually there will be stark consequences. Local school boards cannot continue the practice of pension spiking.

**Ina Silva-Sobolewski.** As a minority, immigrant, black, mother, and widow myself, I understand the challenges and uncertainty the parents of the U-46 school district face daily. They need a voice to address their insecurity as they look to the future of their children. Since I moved from Palatine to Streamwood in the summer of 1997, I have heard consistent concerns regarding the curriculum. Many parents I know have doubts

about whether their children are receiving the best education that prepares them for the future. Most of the concerns are about the lack of integration between schools in the district and the fact that, overall, U46 has very low PARCC and SAT scores when compared to other Illinois school districts. Let's compare the overall SAT proficiency with D211 for example. The Palatine schools overall proficiency rating is 49%, while U-46 is only 29%. Not to mention that 59% of U-46 students belong to low-income families and don't have the necessary resources to excel in the future, and 53% of the students are minorities. Parents are rightly concerned about the chances of their children being accepted at a good college coming from a school district where only 21% of the students meet the proficiency level and demonstrate an adequate understanding of the knowledge and skills needed relative to the Illinois Learning Standards. The School Board plays a vital role in the democratization of education and the school. As a U-46 School Board member, I will strive for more transparency and legitimacy, releasing more control to the parents for the implementation of educational policy by active participation in the administrative and pedagogical management of the school. Together we can contribute to the actions of the school leaders to ensure the quality of teaching our children receive.

How satisfied are you that your school district is adequately preparing students for the next stage in their lives, whether it be from elementary into high school or high school into college or full-time employment? What changes, if any, do you think need to be made?

Based upon a 21% proficiency level at U-46, it is likely that a low percentage of students will finish college. We need to keep in mind that students who earn college credit are more likely to be employed and stay employed. The U-46 students of today are the citizens and taxpayers of tomorrow. If they don't complete their education, there will be no progress for the next generation. We need to invest in their future today. We need more involvement from immigrant parents. U-46 has great teachers with 66% having a Master's degree or higher. They are well prepared to teach but burdened by unfunded mandates, state and federal standards for testing that have little to do with classroom learning, and the challenge of students who are not well prepared to learn. U-46 offers the Parent Promise and the Parents as Teacher programs. Both programs can be of great help to immigrant parents, but many parents can't speak English. As an experienced translator in my business and the ability to speak three languages, the first step would be to ensure that parents get English lessons online or at the schools. Once the parents understand the importance of helping their children succeed, they will strive to learn English and help their children. The most important responsibility of the school board is to work with the community to improve student achievement in their local public schools.

What budgetary issues will your district have to confront during the next four years and what measures do you support to address them? If you believe cuts are necessary, be specific about programs and expenses that should be considered for reduction or elimination.

On the income side, do you support any tax increases? Be specific. If you drive in the streets of Hanover Park you will easily notice the poor conditions of the streets that are potholed and eroded for lack of maintenance. I pay an average of \$500 per month in property taxes. The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the Village of Hanover Park for 2017 indicates on page MD & A8 that the village took in \$15,741,338 in Property Taxes in FY2017 or 38.73% on their revenue. \$6,368,070 was spent on Public Works or 40.5% of the property taxes Residential property taxes now eat up an

average of 6.7% of a typical household income in Illinois. In 2000, that share was 4.3 percent, therefore, I do not support any tax increase.

Are you currently employed by or retired from a school district, if so, which one? Is any member of your direct family -- spouse, child or child-in-law -- employed by the school district where you are seeking a school board seat? No.

As contract talks come up with various school employee groups -- teachers, support staff, etc. -- what posture should the school board take? Do you believe the district should ask for concessions from its employees, expect employee costs to stay about the same as they are now or provide increases in pay or benefits?

As a trustee elected by the constituents of U-46 the posture of the school board should be to negotiate the best contract terms that fairly address and balance the needs of the employees and the community. As I have yet to be directly involved in U-46 contract negotiations, I will need to consider the current environment regarding pay and benefits. Typically increases in pay or benefits in any sector is based on merit.

If your district had a superintendent or other administrator nearing retirement, would you support a substantial increase in his or her pay to help boost pension benefits? Why or why not?

No. This practice has resulted in absurd payouts to Superintendents in various districts and higher education institutions throughout Illinois, including in the past in U-46. Current compensation and benefits are more than adequate.

**Eva J. Porter.** Closing the achievement gap affecting all students, which includes acknowledging the diverse makeup of our student population, which is over 60% minority and over 50% low income is an important issue in the district. We have a broad spectrum of students to educate that require a lot of resources to assist them in achieving their fullest educational potential.

Equitable funding for all schools to maintain access to resources and sound infrastructure is another major issue. Performance outcomes vary greatly throughout the district. With two buildings dated back to the 1800's the age of the infrastructure is of critical importance. When I worked in the District, I worked at Garfield Elementary School and at Grant Elementary School, which has since been demolished. Being in an older building we faced challenges of maintaining a comfortable room temperature and being able to adapt the classroom to technology. All facilities should be evaluated to determine the cost of maintenance and repair, assuring our students a safe and comfortable environment to learn in and adaptability to the latest technology.

Sustainable and fair contracts with the Elgin Teachers Association and Bus Drivers is a third critical issue. As a former member of the NEA/IEA teacher's union and a retired teacher of the IL Retired Teachers Assoc. (IRTA) teacher's union I am aware of the importance of working with a fair negotiated contract in order to attract and retain the best qualified teachers. A fair negotiated contract with the bus drivers in order to retain the current employees with many years of training and commitment to this community and district is a high priority.

**Tina Rio.** One of the most important issues facing U-46 are that students are not taught how to think critically. Critical thinking is one of the most sought after skills in almost every workplace. The curriculum in many cases does not offer enough

information or facts for students to be able to analyze or evaluate what's being taught. American History is not being emphasized enough. Knowledge of American History among students is rapidly declining. Polls and reports find college students fail basic civics and American History tests.

Students should graduate with a sense of gratitude for the former generations who made great sacrifices for our freedom. Another issue is constant tax increases while enrollment declines.

The district should not look for ways to spend money and must find ways to stop mounting pressure on taxpayers. As a board member I intend to govern by engaging the community, advocating for students and teachers while monitoring curriculum and budgets. Also, I would bring a fiscally responsible voice to the process and stand against tax increases. There is much work to be done in allocating the funds that are already available.

**Ina Silva-Sopbolewski.** As a minority, immigrant, black mother, and widow myself, I understand the challenges and uncertainty the parents of the U-46 school district face daily. They need a voice to address their insecurity as they look to the future of their children. Since I moved from Palatine to Streamwood in the summer of 1997, I have heard consistent concerns regarding the curriculum. Many parents I know have doubts about whether the lack of integration between schools in the district and the fact that, overall, U-46 has very low PARCC and SAT scores when compared to other Illinois school districts. Let's compare the overall SAT proficiency with D211, for example. The Palatine schools overall proficiency rating is 49 percent, while U-46 is only 29 percent. Not to mention that 59 percent of U-46 students belong to low-income families and don't have the necessary resources to excel in the future, and 53 percent of the students are minorities.

Parents are rightly concerned about the chances of their children being accepted at a good college coming from a school district where only 21 percent of the students meet the proficiency level and demonstrate an adequate understanding of the knowledge and skills needed relative to the Illinois Learning Standards. The School Board plays a vital role in the democratization of education and the school.

As a U-46 School Board member, I will strive for more transparency and legitimacy, releasing more control to the parents for the implementation of educational policy by active participating in the administrative and pedagogical management of the school. Together, we can contribute to the actions of the school leaders to ensure the quality of teaching our children receive

Kathleen Thommes. School District U-46 has a diverse population by every measure, with many strengths but some challenges too. As a results, the major issues are a bit of a moving target. We need to ensure that we continue to push for inclusion for our special education students to the fullest extent possible. We need to be sure that our use of Chromebooks and other technology is done well and is never a replacement for excellent teaching. We need to be good stewards of the money from taxpayers ensuring that we find a balance of program and student needs versus the need to fund our schools sufficiently.

**Jeanette Ward.** In my first term as board member, I was involved in many positive changes. I worked to ensure board members has access to closed session recordings, resulting in a bill passed unanimously in the General Assembly. I consistently supported

the first charter school, offering parents increased educational choice. I advocated for increased transparency through the release of closed session minutes, and elevated dialogue regarding academic freedom and diversity of thought.

I see many challenges remaining. Pathways must be implemented in a manner that prepares students for college or career after high school, while preserving a well-rounded general education option. Budgets and tax levies continue to increase regardless of declining enrollment and increased funding by the state, and this cannot continue.

Curriculum resources purchased by taxpayers continue to restart academic freedom, diversity of thought. This must change. Finally, privacy and safety for all students and teachers must be secured.

**Q.** What budgetary issues will your district have to confront during the next four years and what measures do you support to address them? If you believe cuts are necessary, be specific about program and expenses that should be considered for reduction or elimination. On the income side, do you support any tax increase? Be specific.

**Deveraux.** Contributions to U-46 from local sources already exceed the local capacity and, as a longtime area resident, I understand the impact of property taxes on our community. As a result, I recognize that there is no appetite for growth in the local property tax burden. To address concerns over property taxes and inequities in school funding across the state, in 2018 the state of Illinois increased funding to local schools, including U-46, using an evidence based funding method.

I applaud this progress and will support continued efforts to pursue equitable and adequate school funding from the state of Illinois. With these developments, the financial position and economic outlook for U-46 is markedly improved over recent years and we are presently well-positioned to make wise investments that can move U-46 forward. Yet, as financial constraints will always be present, I will encourage and support responsible use and allocation of resources.

My career as an actuary has largely been in a governance function – I've had a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that my organizations are acting with due care in their processes and financial activities and I will bring that sense of stewardship to the U-46 Board.

**Hancock.** One of the biggest issues is that the student populations is dropping. As result the budget should not be increased. The school board has to do all it can to hold the budget steady or possibly reduced. I prefer to do everything possible to prevent cuts in any programs. I do not support any tax increases.

**Kerr.** The biggest budget issue confronting Illinois school districts in the next four years is whether the state of Illinois can maintain funding (or increase funding, as it has promised) for the new Evidence Based Funding model. I believe the district must continue to work with our legislator on this.

Two other issues that could impact school district finances are the possibility of moving pension payment to local school districts and a property tax freeze (proposed in HB317). If these were to occur U-46 would have to make adjustments to its budget as needed. I would prefer that any cuts be kept as far from the classroom as possible.

I have supported the abatement of property taxes that the district has done for the past few years and I will be voting for the abatement of \$9.6 million in property taxes at our Feb. 25 meeting. I will continue to support abating property taxes as long as the state reliably keeps up with its payments.

**Porter.** During the 2018-19 years the district will be operating on a proposed \$558 million budget that earmarks \$20 million for capital projects. Many of the budgetary issues will continue to cover a four-year implementation process with a new and ongoing budget each year. Some of the budgetary issues will include the following:

- New technology update. Providing the best resources available to the students for a better achievement and success rate.
- Hiring new staff and teachers. Development of high-quality trained teachers and administration to better understand the curriculum and social needs of the students that are being served.
- Transportation. New and safe buses and a fair contract for drives.
- Facility maintenance. Infrastructure improvements and repairs.
- Early education interventions. The earlier students are identified and given more educational support the greater the opportunities for their success.
- Class size. At every grade level, allowing for more individualized instruction enhances the student-teacher educational relationship for a more successful outcome.

My recommendations would be made to support the District's short term and long terms priorities according to the Strategic Plan. Recommendations should be made to see where additional funds would be best utilized, considering the current budget, along with reconsideration of any previous cuts that were made from the budget due to lack of funds or increased funds. In concert with the board and the staff, it would be necessary to critically revisit the consequences of the prior cuts, to determine if those items should be reinstated, and if so how. I believe we would use this same process to review and determine our current status related to short and long terms goal, as well as our strategic plan to determine the best way to spend and save, with great consideration to all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and taxpayers while keeping student success in the forefront of all budgetary decisions.

With all things in consideration, necessary changes would be made to support the goals. I understand the burden that increased taxes could have on the community so careful considerations will be made.

**Rio.** One of the biggest budgetary issues are dropping enrollment. Difficult choices may have to be made on where money is spent. Many facilities may be underutilized and may need to be combined or condensed. Services may need to be scaled back accordingly. I do not support tax increases.

**Silva-Sobolewski.** If you drive in the streets of Hanover Park you will easily notice the poor conditions of the streets that are potholed and eroded for lack of maintenance. I pay an average of \$500 per month on property taxes. The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Village of Hanover Park for 2017 indicates on page MD & A8 that the village took in \$15,741,338 in Property Taxes in FY2017 or 38.73 percent on their revenue. \$6,368,070 was spent on Public Works or 40.5 percent of the property taxes. Residential property taxes now eat up an average of 6.7 percent of a typical household income in Illinois. In 2000, that share was 4.3 percent, therefore, I do not support any tax increase.

**Thommes.** Right now, School District U-46 has a balanced budget and a solid strategic plan. My role as a board member would be to move forward with the strategic plan, adjusting as needed. I would be reluctant to cut any programs within the district. I am not in favor of outsourcing. I would not be in favor of any property tax increases, beyond the CPI. With the new revenue from the Equitable Funding Model, the district has a solid outlook.

**Ward.** U-46 is expected to receive \$43 million in additional funding from the state this year based on the "Evidence Based Funding" model. I have repeatedly stated U-46 property taxes should be decreased correspondingly, and I have also voted no on every increasing budget and tax levy. The board majority, including one school board member running for re-election, voted yes. Administration, with agreement from the majority of the board, correspondingly expanded operations this year by adding 54 new positions. Meanwhile, enrollment continues to decline, and is projected to decline into the future. At the very least, U-46 should not have expanded operations. I voted no and, if re-elected, will continue to vote no on future tax levy and budget increases.

## **SPORTS**

**---Daily Herald---03/09/2019**

### **Rockford East ends South Elgin's best season**

**By: Jerry Fitzpatrick**

ROCKFORD -- A 15-second sequence changed the complexion of the Rock Valley College sectional title game and helped propel top seed Rockford East to a 64-54 victory over South Elgin Friday.

No. 3 South Elgin led 21-18 after a quarter, thanks to a great start by 6-foot-7 forward Vince Miskiewicz.

The senior scored 10 first-quarter points on 5-of-8 shooting, including three thunderous dunks, and he had the Storm brimming with confidence.

However, Miskiewicz picked up his second foul chasing a loose ball with 5:36 left in half and the E-Rabs went right at him on the ensuing possession.

"My coach pulled me aside and said to attack him," said Rockford East senior guard Chris Burnell, who drove the lane against the South Elgin big man. "He said give him his third so we can get him out of the game."

Miskiewicz was whistled for his third foul with 5:21 to play and forced to take a seat.

"I just went straight up and he went into me," he said. "I did my best not to foul him, but I just had to deal with it."

With South Elgin's catalyst on the bench, Rockford East went on a 14-5 run over the next three minutes. Junior guard Sincere Parker scored 8 points to fuel that push via an alley-oop dunk and a pair of 3-pointers.

Sensing the game slipping away, South Elgin coach Brett Johnson put Miskiewicz back in the game on offense with two minutes left and subbed him out on defense when possible. That stabilized the Storm. They finished the half on a 7-2 run and remained within 38-32 at halftime.

South Elgin drew within 40-36 on a pair of Miskiewicz baskets midway through the third quarter, but Rockford East closed the period with an 8-0 run, sparked by a Markarious Luster 3-pointer.

Six-foot-six senior Sha'den Clanton capped that spree with an inside bucket against Miskiewicz for a 48-36 lead.

South Elgin (25-9) made a fourth-quarter push. Senior guard Jace Warrick sank a 3-pointer. Then senior guard Drake Montgomery caught fire, sinking three straight 3-pointers. His triple from NBA range drew the Storm within 57-54 with 2:29 left. Montgomery scored 10 of his team-high 20 points in the fourth quarter.

"The energy came to me," he said. "I felt the vibe much better."

However, the E-Rabs counterattacked after Montgomery made it a 3-point game. They broke the press for a left-handed dunk by Clanton against Miskiewicz, who picked up his fourth foul in the process with 2:22 left.

Trailing 60-54, Montgomery misfired on his next 3-point attempt. The Storm got the ball back after a Rockford East missed shot, but Montgomery was called for traveling while attempting to find room for a 3-point try.

The E-Rabs finished the game off at the free-throw line. Burnell led the way with 16 points, Clanton finished with 14 points and Parker added 13.

Rockford East (33-2) advances to face Geneva (33-1) at the Northern Illinois supersectional on Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

"They threw everything at us and we battled and we played as hard as we could," Johnson said. "That's all you can ask of a team at this point in the season. Rockford East is a great team. They just got it from us but we played really hard. I'm proud of my boys for the effort."

The loss ended the best season in South Elgin history. The Storm won a school record 25 games and tied the 2014 squad for the deepest postseason run in school history.

"I love my guys," Montgomery said. "This was the best team I've ever been a part of. It was a brotherhood from the start. We did some good things. We're the best team in South Elgin history and we set some records for our school. Even though it didn't end how we wanted, there are a lot of things we can look back on that are positive."

Miskiewicz, who never fouled out, finished with 18 points on 7-of-12 shooting, 11 rebounds and 2 blocks.

"It was a great run," he said. "I'm sorry we couldn't get the win, but, man, setting the record for most wins in school history and beating some of the top teams in the state and making it here is pretty special."



"The brotherhood has been there since day one, since the first morning practice and I've seen it grow every single day. It's sad that it's over, but we're brothers for life."