

Press Clippings 04/09/2019

---Daily Herald---04/09/2019

U-46 inches closer to striking deal with teachers union

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy

The Elgin Area School District U-46 school board is inching closer to voting on a new teachers contract after nine months of protracted negotiations.

The district administration and the Elgin Teachers Association announced they have made "significant progress" reaching a tentative agreement on compensatory items -- salary, health insurance, retirement and rates of pay -- and issues related to early learners, parent-teacher conferences, safety, professional development, technology, supervision and support systems for behavioral needs. A comprehensive tentative agreement is expected this week, according to a joint statement from union President Barbara Bettis and Suzanne Johnson, U-46 deputy superintendent of instruction.

The school board Monday night continued discussions on contract negotiations in closed session. No action was taken afterward.

The district's more than 2,400 teachers have been working without a contract since the previous one-year extension expired on Aug. 10. The terms of that contract remain in effect until a new agreement is signed by both parties. It granted a base salary increase of 0.94 percent with a step increase of 3.1 percent on average.

In May, the union and U-46 administration reached a tentative agreement on a new multiyear contract for the 2018-21 school years that would have provided raises to all teachers. It proposed switching teachers to a new compensation model with an average yearly increase of 3.88 percent over three years and offered some teachers the ability to move to the new model over time, remaining under the current compensation system while accruing career credits. Union membership overwhelmingly rejected that deal.

In January, the union filed an unfair labor practice complaint against U-46 with the Illinois Education Labor Relations Board "to ensure that withholding of the step does not set contract precedent."

U-46 hosting information sessions about kindergarten

Daily Herald report

Elgin Area School District U-46 will host informational sessions this month for parents and guardians of current and incoming kindergarten students.

The sessions, called U46Engage, are designed to help parents confidently navigate their young learner's educational journey through the state's second-largest district. Parents will learn about the various academic programs, services, and opportunities available in the district's K-12 schools, such as dual language education and gifted programming, as well as ways they can support their child's education at home, school or at the district level.

The 90-minute English-language sessions will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 10, in the cafeteria annex at Bartlett High School, 701 W. Schick Road, Bartlett. The Spanish-language session will be offered at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 17, in the library of Elgin High School, 1200 Maroon Drive, Elgin.

Parents do not need to register, but they can direct questions to the Coordinator of Family & Community Engagement Karla Jiménez at karlajimenez@u-46.org.

---The Courier-News---04/09/2019

U46 food service workers to receive annual 3% raises in first two years of new three-year contract

By: Rafael Guerrero

Food services employees in School District U46 will receive raises of 1.38% to 3% annually over the next three years under a new contract approved 5-2 last week by the school board.

The deal covers about 140 district cooks, employees who prepare and distribute food, bakers and other food service staff members, U46's Chief Operations Officer Jeff King told school board members at last week's meeting.

New hourly wages range from \$14 for an elementary school food assistant to \$17.50 for a district cook.

All U46 food service workers will receive 3% raises for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years and between 1.38% and 2.75%, depending on their performance evaluations, in the third year.

Contract talks began in July 2018; raises will be retroactive to the start of the 2018-19 school year.

Leslie Jones, a material expediter in the district's commissary kitchen, said the pay raises will help some food services employees avoid the need for second jobs in order to support themselves and their families. While Jones would not disclose how much she makes as a material expediter — she stages the food for packaging and helps route the food to schools — someone starting new in that position would make \$17 an hour under the new contract.

“We have an important job, and in our district it is to give kids nutritional meals,” said Jones, a steward for the food services union.

The district's food services team prepares about 13,000 lunches and 5,000 breakfasts every day, she said.

Board members Phil Costello and Jeanette Ward voted against the contract.

Ward said she supported some aspects of the agreement, such as the performance-based pay raises, but had concerns over other items, such as the amount employees will be paying for health care insurance premiums.

"It doesn't go far enough for me," she said. "It is very rare in the private sector to receive guaranteed raises not based on performance."

SPORTS

---Daily Herald---04/09/2019

Softball: Larkin pulls away from Elgin

By: Allen Oshinski

With the arrival of warmer temperatures, the softball bats have come out of hibernation.

Larkin and Elgin combined for 24 hits in their Upstate Eight opener Monday at Elgin. The Royals smacked only 10 of those hits, but they used them to maximum effect in a 12-4 victory.

Larkin broke the game open by scoring 8 times in the last 2 innings.

Kaitlin Turner had 3 of Larkin's hits while scoring twice and driving in 3. Audriana Escobar had 2 hits, and leadoff hitter Kiara Villa walked 4 times and scored 3 runs for Larkin (2-3, 1-0).

"It feels really good," said Turner of winning the conference opener against their crosstown rivals. "Last year we weren't as confident playing Elgin as we were this year. But today we just came out ready to win."

Larkin freshman pitcher Kailey Cronin worked out of trouble all day to post the complete-game victory. She didn't issue a walk while striking out 3.

Elgin, which hadn't had more than 2 hits in any of its first 3 games, knocked out 14 but, unfortunately for the Maroons, 8 of them came with 2 outs.

Caitlyn Keith and losing pitcher Abby Sensor each had 3 hits for the Maroons (0-4,0-1), while Aaliyah Morales and Loanis Charneco had 2 each.

Cronin sailed through 6 innings, allowing just 1 run, before appearing to tire in the seventh. The Maroons plated 3 runs in their final at-bat, keyed by back-to-back doubles by Keith and Sensor. But Cronin induced 2 groundouts sandwiched around a Sandra Gomez Herrera single to end the game.

"I'm really happy for Kailey," said Larkin coach Anne Vogt. "She's a freshman and she really kept her composure out there. She did a nice job. We knew during that last inning that we were going to see a couple of their big hitters and we let her ride through it. We were confident that we were going to get to the bottom of the inning and wrap it up."

Larkin jumped ahead with 3 runs in the third. Kathy Garcia and Turner each had run-scoring hits. The Royals added 1 more in the fourth on Liz Bowman's RBI double.

Elgin kept picking away against Cronin, getting at least one hit in every inning but the fourth.

"It's the first 7-inning game for us, the first time we didn't get 10-runned, and the best we've looked defensively," said Elgin coach Dr. Nick Bumbales. "Overall, I see improvement every game. They're coming along, it's just going to take a little time. We've got a couple of young kids