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U-46, Alignment Collaborative for Education to Host 5th Annual Curriculum and Career Expo

*Explore 2019 gives 8th graders up-close view
of career options*

ELGIN - More than 3,000 U-46 8th graders will get the opportunity next month to talk with local professionals who will share their journey from post-secondary education to the workforce. The District's annual curriculum and career expo aims to show students the connection between academics and future careers at a time when they are beginning to recognize their interests and, together with their parents, teachers, and guidance counselors, plan for high school and beyond.

As in recent years, the Alignment Collaborative for Education is partnering with U-46 to organize the event, and for the second year, it will be held at the Sears Centre, 5333 Prairie Stone Parkway, Hoffman Estates. Eighth grade students will attend during the school day on Sept. 11 with their teachers. More than 90 local companies and organizations will showcase their careers at the event which will run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

New this year, parents and guardians of U-46 8th grade students are invited to attend a special "preview" of Explore 2019 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 10 at the Sears Centre.

"Explore offers students a unique opportunity to learn first hand about various professions and to think about what college or career path they might want to follow," said U-46 CEO Tony Sanders. "I'm excited that this year we can offer parents a chance to experience our expo as well and to meet some of the inspiring professionals who are volunteering to talk with students and explain how their education and career path led them to their current roles."

The Citizens' Advisory Council helped the District launch the first expo. The Alignment Collaborative for Education, a non-profit local organization that brings together community resources and initiatives to support District priorities, has since helped expand the expo in the past four years, first as a weekend event at Elgin Community College and starting in 2018, as a weekday event at the Sears Centre. The new location was necessary to accommodate both the growing exhibitor demonstrations and equipment and 8th grade students from all eight U-46 middle schools. U-46 buses will be used to transport the students to the event.

"We are thrilled to see so many local businesses invest in our future workforce," said Nancy Coleman, executive director of Alignment. "We look forward to hosting parents on the 10th and giving them the opportunity to experience the expo and become better equipped to discuss the event as well as future college and career options with their children."

Explore 2019 supports the District's ongoing efforts to improve college and career readiness. The first aspiration outlined in the District's Strategic Plan focuses on student achievement and educating the whole student by providing an enriched, high-quality experience that empowers graduates to be competitive members of the global society.

Another part of that effort is Naviance, a web-based college and career readiness platform that helps middle and high school students explore their strengths and interests. Before Explore 2019, school counselors will visit 8th grade classrooms, helping students use the Naviance tool to determine the career cluster they want to focus on at the event. Also before the event, students and parents will be provided with tips about how they can discuss the student's career interests at home, as well as an expo map so that students can plan their route.

At both the school-day Explore 2019 and the parent preview the night before, U-46 faculty and staff will be present to explain core classes, electives, and popular course sequences that are based on students' career interests, such as courses in automotive, welding, healthcare science, and manufacturing, as well as additional college and career preparatory



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curriculum. Representatives from the District's five magnet academies, which require an application process, will be present at both events as well. Children can attend the preview night with their parents.

Exhibitors, which include businesses, hospitals, local governmental organizations, industry partners, universities, and non-profits, in total representing about a dozen career clusters, will be provided with suggestions for how to best interact with students.

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School District U-46 serves families in 11 communities: Bartlett, Elgin, Hanover Park, South Elgin, Streamwood and Wayne, as well as portions of Carol Stream, Hoffman Estates, St. Charles, Schaumburg, and West Chicago. In total, the District encompasses 90 square miles within the Fox River Valley, approximately 45 minutes west of downtown Chicago, and includes communities within Cook, DuPage and Kane counties. More than 39,000 pre-K through twelfth graders attend the 57 District schools and programs. To learn more, Visit the U-46 [website](#), or like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).