

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mary Fergus

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Phone: 847-888-5000, ext.4160

U-46 Schools Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

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



Ernesto Mejía



Joaquín Zihuatanejo

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

The annual celebration is sponsored by the District's English Language Learners (ELL) Department & Bilingual Parent Advisory Council (BPAC), in partnership with the Gail Borden Public Library.

"We appreciate this opportunity to celebrate the culture of more than half of our student body," said School District U-46 CEO Tony Sanders. "We encourage all students and families to enhance their learning experiences by taking part in the activities throughout the month."

This year, two returning guests, poet Joaquín Zihuatanejo and motivational speaker Ernesto Mejía, will be visiting select U-46 schools to inspire and

inform students and parents in special assemblies on Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 17-18.

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, with a 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. His compelling life story stresses the inner drive and value of education. At 16, he was temporarily paralyzed with Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a rare disorder in which your body's immune system attacks your nerves. He overcame the condition to become a college administrator. His speeches stress the opportunities presented through education and the 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. 18 in the Meadow Community Room at Gail Borden Public Library - Main Campus. The presentation will be in Spanish, with simultaneous translation into English. Childcare will be available for children ages 5 to 10 only.

Hispanic Heritage Month runs from from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 and recognizes the contributions made and the important presence of Hispanic and Latino Americans to the United States.

The schedule for the speaking appearances are as follows:

School	Address	Time/Date	Event
Kimball Middle School	451 N. McLean Blvd., Elgin	9 a.m. to 10:34 a.m. Tuesday, September 17	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Joaquín Zihuatanejo



Tony Sanders, Chief Executive Officer

School District U-46
Educational Services Center
355 E. Chicago Street, Elgin, IL 60120-6543
Tel: 847.888.5000 x5007
Fax: 847.608.4173

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Abbott Middle School	949 Van St., Elgin	11:27 a.m. to 1:01 p.m. Tuesday, September 17	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Joaquín Zihuatanejo
Larsen Middle School	665 Dundee Ave., Elgin	1:48 p.m. to 3:21 p.m. Tuesday, September 17	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Joaquín Zihuatanejo
Larkin High School	1475 Larkin Ave., Elgin	8:35 a.m. to 10:20 a.m. Tuesday, September 17	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejía
Elgin High School	1200 Maroon Dr, Elgin	1:10 p.m. to 2:55 p.m. Tuesday, September 17	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejía
Ellis Middle School	225 S. Liberty St., Elgin	9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Wednesday September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Joaquín Zihuatanejo
Abbott Middle School	949 Van St., Elgin	11:27 a.m. to 1:01 p.m. Wednesday, September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Joaquín Zihuatanejo
Tefft Middle School	1100 Shirley Ave., Streamwood	1:48 p.m. to 3:21 p.m. Wednesday, September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Joaquín Zihuatanejo



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Streamwood High School	701 W. Schaumburg Rd., Streamwood	8:35 a.m. to 10:20 a.m. Wednesday, September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejía
South Elgin High School	760 E Main St, South Elgin	11:20 a .m. to 12:10 p.m. Wednesday, September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejía
Bartlett High School	1200 Maroon Drive, Elgin	2:05 p.m. to 2:55 p.m. Wednesday, September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejía
Gail Borden Public Library - Meadows Community Room	70 N Grove Ave, Elgin	6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday, September 18	ELL Latino Leadership Assembly, presenter: Ernesto Mejía Open to all U-46 Parents

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

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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](#).



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