

# U46Engage: The Newsletter

## September 2019

*Dear U-46 Families: Welcome back! We hope everyone has enjoyed a great start to the 2019-20 school year. In addition to District emails, texts and app alerts, we offer this monthly bilingual parent newsletter. This year, we've updated the newsletter name to better align with our U-46 family and community events.*

### Calendar

- **Monday, Sept. 9 and Monday, Sept. 23:** U-46 Board of Education Meeting, 5:15 p.m. Board to convene and open meeting but will go into closed session until the 7 p.m. scheduled open session. Also available to watch on [YouTube](#). Room 140, Educational Services Center, 355 E. Chicago St., Elgin.
- **Tuesday, Sept. 10:** Preview for 8th grade parents of Explore 2019, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Sears Centre, 5333 Prairie Stone Parkway, Hoffman Estates.
- **Wednesday, Sept. 11:** Explore 2019 for 8th grade students, Sears Centre, 5333 Prairie Stone Parkway, Hoffman Estates.
- **Wednesday, Sept. 11:** Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m., Gail Borden Public Library, 270 N. Grove Ave., Elgin.
- **Thursday, Sept. 12:** Citizens' Advisory Committee general meeting, 7 p.m., Elgin High School, 1200 Maroon Drive, Elgin.
- **Monday, Sept. 16-Thursday, Sept. 19:** Open houses held for U-46 Magnet Academies on various days this week. Visit [u-46.org/academies](http://u-46.org/academies) for a detailed schedule.
- **Wednesday, Sept. 18:** Inspirational speaker Ernesto Mejía delivers presentation for parents as part of the District's Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Gail Borden Public Library, 270 N. Grove Ave., Elgin.
- **Friday, Sept. 27:** No classes for students. Institute Day. U-46 offices open.

## **Ten Facts to Know about U-46 in 2019-20**

With the 2019-20 school year just underway, it seemed a good time to share some fun facts and figures about School District U-46:

1. It is the second-largest school district in Illinois, behind Chicago Public Schools. We proudly serve more than 38,000 students and there were 2,738 graduates in the Class of 2019.
2. With the purchase of 26,000 Chromebooks over the past two years, every student in 5th through 12th grade now has their own device.
3. Of the Class of 2019 graduates, 166 earned the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy, demonstrating their high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English.
4. The award-winning U-46 80:20 Dual Language program model serves more than 11,000 students in kindergarten through 10th grade. It will eventually serve students through 12th grade.
5. High school students can select from among 22 Advanced Placement courses at our five high schools. Twenty-three percent of the District's high schoolers take early college coursework.
6. Each of our five schools house one specialized academy, and we are planning to offer smaller learning communities to all our high schools students in the coming years.
7. The District has earned national accreditations in our Career and Technical Education programs, including automotive, precision manufacturing, and welding.
8. U-46 was honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation in 2019 from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.
9. U-46 has about 2,500 teachers, and their average teaching experience is 13 years. The percentage of teachers with a master's degree or above is 66 percent.
10. The U-46 Planetarium provides a unique experience under the stars with 16,000 students passing through its doors each year.

## College Fair Featuring Historically Black Colleges and Universities Being Held in Elgin



U-46 high schoolers are invited to meet representatives from Historically Black Colleges and Universities at a fair on Saturday, Sept. 28 in Building B at Elgin Community College, 1700 Spartan Drive. This free event is being held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. HBCU representatives and alumni from Alcorn University, Spelman College, Grambling University, South Carolina State University, Morehouse College and more plan to attend to share their experiences and guidance, as well as information about scholarships and community resources. There will be music, door prizes and raffle giveaways. Students can receive scholarship and transfer information, as well as on-site FAFSA assistance. There will be a live step show and Black Greek Yard Experience, with performances starting at 11:30 a.m. School District U-46 is one of the sponsors of this event, now in its 3rd year.

ECC will also host a “College Night” on Tuesday, Oct. 1 with presentations at 6:15 p.m. and 7:15 p.m. on choosing a career, researching college options, and how to navigate admission criteria, application processes, and timelines. More info can be found at [elgin.edu/collegenight](http://elgin.edu/collegenight).

### Parent Leadership Institutes Seek Next Class of Participants

The 2019-20 U-46 African American and Hispanic Parent Leadership Institutes are accepting applications. Candidates must be interested in learning how to be a stronger advocate for their students and in helping involve more parents of African-American and Hispanic students in the District and school activities. The

sessions are held once a month, for eight months during the school year, and are delivered by guest speakers including CEO Tony Sanders, administrators, panels of principals, and others working to increase parental involvement. New this year, age-appropriate activities will be offered to the children of the participants in the Parent Leadership Institutes.



Parents who want to learn more about the program can [view the online informational video](#) and then complete an online application. Questions can also be directed to the Coordinator of Family and Community Engagement Karla Jiménez at 847-888-5000 ext. 4211 or via email at [karlajimenez@u-46.org](mailto:karlajimenez@u-46.org).

## Let's Talk During the 2019-20 School Year



Let's Talk is the District's customer service tool that makes it easy for you to submit questions, comments, concerns, suggestions, and kudos. It's available when you are — from any computer, tablet, or smartphone. Head to our website, [u-46.org](http://u-46.org), and click on

the red Let's Talk! pop-out tab to get started.

How can we help our students succeed this school year? Want to learn more about our curriculum or extracurricular activities? Know a staff member who should be recognized? Let's Talk!

You can choose to remain anonymous or leave your contact information for a direct response within about two business days.

## Alumni Feature: Chris Sumner of Mama Lee's Gourmet Popcorn

When you ask Chris Sumner how he's doing, you'll get a quick reply. "Oh, I'm pop-tastic," he says.

And what other answer would you expect from the founder and driving force behind Mama Lee's, Elgin's homegrown source for gourmet popcorn?



Sumner, an Elgin High School Class of 2006 graduate, opened his first store in downtown Elgin in 2015. Since then he has added locations in Spring Hill Mall and Ford City Mall, where customers can sample the 70 different flavors Sumner has created.

His mother, Leticia, would make caramel corn and pass it out to friends at church. Sumner said he tried to convince her to make and sell the treat full-time, but his mom had a job she didn't want to leave. So she taught her son how to make her special popcorn.

*To read more about Sumner, and other interesting and accomplished U-46 alumni, visit the [Alumni section of the website](#) or follow the #U46AlumniSunday hashtag on the [U-46 Facebook page](#). If you have the name and contact info for a graduate you think we should feature, please let us know via Let's Talk, our customer service tool, by using the [School and Community Relations button](#).*

### U-46 In the News ...

The Daily Herald updated readers about [construction projects that occurred in the District over the summer](#) and about [U-46's participation in a regional veterinary](#)

[science program](#) for high school students, part of a growing regional career pathways cooperative. The newspaper also wrote about [the Family Welcome Center](#) and detailed the work it takes to [open school building doors to 38,000 students](#).

## **Video of the Month**

The first day of school on Aug. 14 was full of smiles, high fives, and fresh beginnings. Watch a video documenting this important day on the [U-46 YouTube channel](#).