

Press Clippings 01/24/20

---Daily Herald---01/24/2020

Student referrals for bad behavior up in U-46, report shows

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Elgin Area School District U-46's annual curriculum and career pathways expo for eighth-graders is among the strategies to help students transition to ninth grade more prepared.

Elgin Area School District U-46 officials are reporting a rise in student referrals for bad behavior in school over the last two years.

Overall student referrals for behavioral infractions at the state's second-largest school district increased from 34,939 in 2017-18 to 38,574 in 2018-19, and is on track to stay the same this school year, according to a district report on school culture and climate.

Defiance and disrespect of authority figures continues to be the top disciplinary offense - - representing 18,152 referrals in 2017-18, 20,922 referrals in 2018-19 and 10,215 referrals so far this year. Referrals involving physical offenses have risen from 7,394 in 2017-18 to 8,016 in 2018-19, and 4,468 this year.

To tackle the problem, officials have been using more restorative interventions than punitive measures. One such online tool, Third Millennium, teaches students in sixth through 12th grades strategies for conflict mediation and resolution.

It's a new emphasis for a service that provides schools with prevention and intervention courses for alcohol, marijuana, nicotine/vaping, illicit and prescription drug use, trafficking, shoplifting, bullying, domestic and partner violence, sexual assault and sexting.

"It teaches kids about their own behavior ... how to work a situation differently ... alternate strategies of conflict resolution," said John Heiderscheidt, U-46 director of school safety and culture. "Now, we are going to be using it as an intervention for students more often in situations where defiance and disrespect (occur)."

More than 180 students took the conflict resolution course in the first semester of this school year. They can access the online program at home or during in-school suspension.

"At the end of the school year, we are going to take a look at the data to see how it affected student recidivism," Heiderscheidt said. "There's typically a relational issue going on that would lead to that defiance and disrespect."

Other techniques to mend student-teacher bonds include using mentoring, coaching and restorative circles aimed at helping students understand the harm they caused and creating a plan for repairing it. Earlier this school year, all secondary school administrators were trained in restorative practices.

Officials also have been training administrators, teachers and staff districtwide on cultural competency, de-escalation tactics, trauma-informed practices, social-emotional learning, and dealing with mental health crises.

Data shows black, Latino and multiracial students continue to be disproportionality represented in discipline referrals. Black students make up roughly 6% of the district's overall population of more than 38,000 students and about one-fourth of all discipline referrals. Latino students make up nearly 55% of the student population and roughly 49% of all referrals.

U-46 revised its student code of conduct three years ago to address this disproportionality.

"We have seen an impact in the use of out-of-school suspensions," Heiderscheidt said.

Previously, the average number of out-of-school suspension days for black students was significantly higher than Latino and white students, but now that is leveling off, he added.

Most referrals are seen in ninth grade -- 5,410 so far this school year -- which typically is a difficult transition year for students.

This year, U-46 is trying out having an administrator assigned to freshman success at Streamwood High School to help students over the hump.

Adding counselors in middle schools, early career exploration for eighth-graders, and creating new high school pathways programs promoting smaller learning communities are part of the strategy to help freshmen students be successful.

"That ninth grade jump is indicative of a disengagement from the school environment," said Robin Barraza, coordinator of student discipline and alternative school options. "Kids have more freedom, less supervision and more responsibility. Ensuring that we are providing them enough support so that they can grow into that responsibility and be able to handle it and have better outcomes during that ninth-grade year is absolutely our goal."

---The Courier-News---01/24/2020

City attorney rules official violated code

Elgin's Gavin breached ethics by using city email to answer election questions

By: Gloria Casas

Elgin City Councilman Terry Gavin violated local ethics codes when he responded to a constituent's question about city candidates he supported using the city's email system, City Attorney William Cogley said.

However, Councilwoman Rose Martinez did not act inappropriately when she voted on issues that benefited her employer, Cogley said.

Both issues were raised in ethics complaints filed Jan. 8 by former city council candidate Anthony Ortiz and Josue Bosque, a political activist.

Cogley, who serves as the city's ethics officer, investigated the questions raised in the complaints and issued his findings Tuesday night.

The charge again Gavin accused him of electioneering when he responded to two residents' questions about the city election using his city email address.

The first occurred in March 2019 when he responded to an email asking for his opinion on the candidates running in the April 2019 election. In it, he said he supported Mayor Dave Kaptain and council members Martinez and Toby Shaw for reelection and commented on the other candidates running.

In the second, dated April 28, 2019, he offered his opinion on the election results.

Cogley wrote in his ruling that he found the first email "constituted the misappropriation of any city property or resources for a prohibited political activity for the benefit of any campaign for elective office" in violation of the city's ethics act.

However, he wrote, "Gavin has also stated that his sending of the March 28, 2019, email through the city email system was inadvertent," Cogley said.

It appears to be an isolated incident, he said, and "could be considered a further mitigating factor in evaluating the severity of this matter."

Cogley wrote that he will consider that when making a recommendation "as to what prosecutorial action and associated penalty, if any, should be pursued."

In the complaint against Martinez, Cogley said he found she did not have a conflict of interest when she voted on issues related to **School District U-46**, where she was employed as a school bus driver until December 2019.

SPORTS

---Daily Herald---01/24/2020

Streamwood's big 2nd half trips up South Elgin

By: Allen Oshinski

Streamwood's boys basketball team started slowly against South Elgin. Perhaps the Sabres still had thoughts of a last-second defeat on Tuesday rattling around in their heads.

If so, they banished such thoughts at halftime and came back to beat the Storm, 72-63.

Lorenzo Coney scored 19 points and Jakobe Strong scored 10 of his 18 in the fourth quarter for the Sabres in the Upstate Eight matchup in South Elgin.

"I think in the first half they were still stinging from that East Aurora loss," said Streamwood coach Kent Payne. "In the second half, we challenged them, and then we were a different team. The press worked. We made a little adjustment and then made it work."

The Sabre comeback actually started just before halftime with Streamwood down 31-23. The pressure led to a couple of steals by Strong that he converted into layups that helped get the visitors within 4 points by halftime.

Streamwood then opened the second half with a 12-2 run to take the lead for good. A layup by Kyle Maybrun capped the run and left the Sabres with a 44-38 advantage.

Strong hit a pair of 3-pointers in the fourth quarter to keep the Storm at bay.

"I felt like the crowd was giving it to us and we needed to get our energy back," said Strong. "I felt like I could hit the shots."

Strong also grabbed 10 rebounds. Coney added 7 rebounds and 3 assists. Maybrun finished with 15 points for the Sabres (12-8, 7-3), while Zach Marquez contributed 12 points and 9 rebounds.

The fifth Streamwood starter, Darrell Luce, chipped in 8 points,

Kendis Wiley scored 16 points to lead South Elgin. Lane McVicar added 13 points, and John Aaron Wafford and Josh Genz scored 11 apiece.

Streamwood outscored the Storm 17-8 in the third quarter and never trailed throughout the fourth.

"We did not get back on defense, we didn't get defensive rebounds, and then we didn't take care of the basketball," said South Elgin coach Brett Johnson. "Those three things are like the perfect storm against any team. But the biggest thing for me is they're not

communicating with each other, because that's the one thing I can't control. But Streamwood does a great job of making you feel uncomfortable and speeding you up."

With the Sabres clinging to a 57-53 lead, Strong hit the second of his 3-pointers. After a layup by Drew Cwik at the other end, Luce drained a 3. Strong added a free throw for a 64-55 lead. South Elgin cut the deficit to 5 points several times but could get no closer.

Marquez hit 10 of 12 free throws as Streamwood made 22 of 31 attempts as a team.