

Press Clippings 05/30/20 to 06/01/20

---Daily Herald---06/01/2020

How U-46 plans to overcome challenges of virtual summer school

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Elgin Area School District U-46 for the first time will offer virtual summer school to students. *Rick West | Staff Photographer*



Josh Carpenter, Elgin Area School District U-46's assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, says smaller class sizes and daily live instruction will be part of virtual summer school. *Courtesy of Elgin Area School District U-46*

Educators have a hard enough time keeping students engaged in learning during the summer, when kids would rather be outside playing with friends.

An added challenge this year is that summer school will have to be virtual due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements.

That's not stopping officials at Elgin Area School District U-46, which for the first time is offering virtual summer school for more than 2,000 elementary students and an undetermined number of high school students needing credit recovery classes. Summer school starts June 8 and will run in multiple three-week sessions through the end of July.

"We haven't provided virtual summer programming in the past," said Josh Carpenter, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning.

Carpenter said officials are tapping into lessons learned from implementing distance learning since March 31 after schools statewide closed due to the pandemic.

U-46 bridged the technological divide by utilizing personal Chromebooks and available portable devices to deliver instruction to nearly 38,400 students this spring. Officials surveyed families in early May about community needs and how distance learning worked out.

"Now we know how to do it," Carpenter said. "We are able to pretty seamlessly transition to programming over the summer that is virtual."

Teachers will identify elementary students who require help or weren't engaged enough in distance learning and invite them to participate in summer school. It's up to parents to sign up.

Carpenter said the plan is to keep class sizes small -- 12 students instead of about 24 for elementary grades during the regular school year -- and more daily contact with teachers through live or recorded sessions. Classes will be focused on reading, writing and mathematics.

"Daily live interaction is critical," Carpenter said. "Summer school program needs to be engaging, authentic, and it needs to be fun to an extent. We do know that we're pulling kids away from other things."

The district will provide training for the more than 200 teachers who have signed up for summer school on how to be more engaging, he added.

High school students who received an incomplete on coursework will focus on achieving proficiency on standards this summer instead of retaking the entire course to earn credits.

U-46 also will make its suite of online curriculum resources, such as math practice games, reading materials, library books and Khan Academy, available for all students to access during the summer, Carpenter said.

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There are no U-46 related news stories.

Elgin News Digest



The annual Elgin Valley Fox Trot will be run as an individual virtual race because of the dangers posed to large groups during the coronavirus pandemic. (Gloria Casas / The Courier-News)

Masks available for Elgin-area seniors thanks to donation

Mayor David Kaptain coordinated the donation of 4,800 face coverings to be distributed to senior citizens in Elgin through Senior Services Associates.

Elgin police officers and firefighters delivered the masks May 26 to Senior Services Activity Director Minnie Vasquez, according to a city of Elgin news release. “We are very excited to have the ability to provide masks to the seniors we serve and we thank the city of Elgin for this caring donation,” Vasquez said in the release. In addition to being able to provide masks to anyone who needs one, they’ll also be including them in the 100 activity bags the agency plans to distribute in June, she said.

Elgin Police Chief Ana Lalley and Fire Chief Robb Cagann said they were grateful to Kaptain for helping secure the mask donation. The mayor obtained them through the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which received the donations from Bella+Canvas.

“We need to take care of all our residents,” Kaptain said. “I’m happy we are able to provide face coverings to those seniors in need and that we have dedicated partners like Senior Services Associates to help connect seniors to such resources.” To obtain a face mask, call Senior Services at 847-741-0404.

Grosser, Martinez honored by U-46 for volunteer work

School District U-46 has named Jeff Grosser as its 2020 Volunteer of the Year and Nicole Martinez as its Helping Hands Award winner.

Grosser is the longtime TalentFest coordinator, the U-46 news release said.

“In its tenth year, TalentFest has grown to be an event where students can showcase their many gifts and skills as they compete against their peers from our five high schools” U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders said in the release.

TalentFest invites students from the five U-46 high schools to enter a performance contest in which the winners receive a cash prize and a commemorative plaque.

The Helping Hands Award recognizes the work of a volunteer at the school level.

Martinez, a volunteer at Glenbrook Elementary School in Streamwood for more than five years, has helped launched the school’s Adult/Daughter Dance, been part of the parent-teacher organization and School Improvement Planning team and worked on committees for the U-46 Citizens’ Advisory Council.

“With her friendly personality and personal touch, Nicole’s service and commitment to Glenbrook has brought a higher attendance to school events, a stronger communication between the staff and families,” Principal Cheryl DeRoo said.

Elgin Valley Fox Trot now a virtual event through June 14

The 43rd Annual Elgin Valley Fox Trot 10-mile and 5K will be held as a virtual event because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Runners can complete in either event between Sunday, May 31 and June 14, a post on the event’s elginfoxtrot.com website said.

Registration deadline is Sunday, May 31.

“We understand how disappointing this may be, as many of our runners have trained very hard and are looking forward to participating in this event,” the post said. “But the safety our runners, volunteers, friends, families and sponsors is of paramount concern to us. Our goal is to provide a great and safe experience for all.”

Goodie bag items will be mailed to participants’ home, the post said. Once the run is completed, the participant logs on to the Fox Trot Athlinks page, athlinks.com/event/2260, to enter their time and download a personalized 43rd Annual Elgin Valley Fox Trot Finisher’s Certificate.

Everyone who registers will receive a 20% off code for the 2020 Halloween Half-Marathon & 5K Chicago, the 2021 F3 Lake Half-Marathon & 5K and next year’s 2021 Elgin Valley Fox Trot.

June 5 opening date set for Downtown Elgin Farmers Market

The Downtown Elgin Farmers Market will open for the summer season June 5, the Downtown Neighborhood Association said.

Held from 1 to 8 p.m. every Friday through Oct. 2, the market will have a new location and different look because of the coronavirus pandemic, market Manager Christina Gonzales said in a news release.

“Some people may be hesitant of shopping inside a crowded grocery store,” Gonzales said. “At an outdoor open air market, we’ll try to eliminate that fear while still supporting our local vendors and bringing some life into our downtown.”

The open-air market is being relocated to Spring Street, between Chicago Street and Grove Avenue, so there is adequate space between vendor booths and for social distancing, the release said. to observe a minimum six feet of distance between one another, the news release said.

Face masks will be required for admission, only vendors will be allowed to handle products until they’re sold and food samples will not be allowed. Live music, chef demonstrations and on-site food vendors will be scaled back but could be expanded as the season progresses, the release said.

Fresh local foods, pet products, baked goods and body care items will be sold, but “nonessential” goods like crafts, jewelry and art objects will be restricted until regulations allow them to be reintroduced, the release said.