



Tony Sanders, Chief Executive Officer

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U-46, Alignment Collaborative for Education to Explore 2021

*Virtual event to give 8th graders a window into
career options*

ELGIN - About 2,500 8th graders in School District U-46 will participate on Monday, May 3 in a virtual version of Explore 2021, the District's annual curriculum and career expo designed to show students the connection between academics and future careers.

Traditionally, Explore is held inside a large sports arena, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, it has been transformed into a virtual event. As a result, it's being considered a virtual field trip, and 8th graders will stay home to participate synchronously via Zoom on May 3.

"The virtual format has actually allowed us to offer an engaging and personalized experience for our students," said U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders. "Explore is always an important part of our efforts to strengthen our work around educational pathways that will serve students in both college and career, and I'm sure this year will be no different."

In advance of attending Explore 2021, each 8th grader has utilized Naviance — a digital college and career planning system — to learn which career clusters align with their interests and aptitudes. Using this information, they have worked with counselors to select three career exploration sessions to participate in on May 3.

Each session will be hosted by a representative of the occupation and showcase several career options in the field. The middle school counselors have also created pre-lessons and a post-lesson so students better understand how their career exploration, interests and insights can be applied to their coursework at U-46 as well as planning for their future.



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The [Alignment Collaborative for Education](#), a non-profit local organization that brings together community resources and initiatives to support District priorities, is once again partnering with U-46 to organize the event and has recruited local professionals, companies, organizations, and educators to place a spotlight on 85 careers — everything from accountants and actors to welders and wind turbine techs.

“Explore is just one element — a very early step — of a comprehensive approach to preparing students for college and careers,” said Nancy Coleman, executive director of Alignment. “We’re very appreciative of how our businesses, organizations, and nonprofit partners come together to support this event — and this year, to help us think creatively about how we can offer something special for our students.”

Also this year, Alignment has helped host virtual career panels for high school students interested in engineering, healthcare, law, accounting, information technology, or public administration, along with college workshops with representatives from Loyola University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Elgin Community College, Northern Illinois University, and more.

The Community Advisory Council, then called the Citizens’ Advisory Council, helped the District launch the first expo in the 2015-16 school year. The Alignment Collaborative for Education has since helped expand the expo, first as a weekend event at Elgin Community College and then in 2018 and 2019, as a weekday event at the then-Sears Centre. The 2020 version of Explore had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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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



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37,000 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.