

Press Clippings 12/11/2021 to 12/13/2021

---Daily Herald--- 12/12/2021

Elgin U-46 hiring new administrators Daily Herald report

Elgin Area Unit District 46 has hired a new administrator and a search firm to fill another position.

Superintendent Tony Sanders announced Ann Williams will become the district's deputy superintendent for operations starting Jan. 31.

Williams has been the chief financial officer for East Aurora School District 131 since 2019. In that role, Williams has overseen financial services, technology, facilities and construction management, transportation and food services, in a district with an annual budget of \$220 million, Sanders wrote.

Williams also has private sector experience as a manager of financial analysis for CNA Financial.

In addition, the district has contracted with a search firm to replace Ann Chan, assistant superintendent of human resources, who has taken a job with Aurora University. Kerry Foderaro, a retired superintendent of Darien-based Cass Elementary District 63, will step into the HR position on an interim basis.

Sanders also has named Mireya Perez director of human resources.

---Daily Herald--- 12/12/2021

Fox Valley schools' report card shows declines, but leaders cite factors from the pandemic By Madhu Krishnamurthy



Alexander Nunez works a math problem in his fourth-grade class Wednesday at **Garfield Elementary School** in Elgin. *Brian Hill | Staff Photographer*

Mirroring a statewide trend, schools across the Fox Valley saw steep declines in students' English and mathematics proficiency during the pandemic-impacted past school year.

Yet, the latest school- and district-level results from the [2021 Illinois Report Card](#) are not comparable to pre-pandemic years for several reasons and can't be used as a yardstick for student performance, educators say.

Among those factors is that not all students took the standardized tests typically administered each spring -- the Illinois Assessment of Readiness and SAT college entrance exams. They are mandatory for students in third through eighth grades and 11th grade, respectively, in a typical school year.

In addition, a strained learning environment with schools shifting between a hodgepodge of remote and hybrid in-person instructional models, as well as poverty and language barriers, were major challenges affecting performance.

Schools statewide received a waiver for state assessments in the 2019-20 school year, when the COVID-19 pandemic first disrupted learning, closing schools in March 2020. There is no data available for that year.

In [Elgin Area School District U-46](#), which crosses into Cook, DuPage and Kane counties, only 19% of students met or exceeded standards in English language arts on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness in the 2020-21 school year compared to 28% in 2018-19. And only 18% of students at the state's second-largest school district met or exceeded math standards in 2021 compared to 27% in 2019, preliminary spring testing data show.

That's in line with the statewide trend for most schools showing declines in students attaining proficiency in English and math across grade levels -- 16.6% and 17.8%, respectively.

However, only half of U-46 students in third through eighth grades were tested in the spring, when they were split between remote and in-person learning, U-46 Assessments Coordinator Matt Raimondi said.



Gisselle Moreira works with her fourth-grade math class at Garfield Elementary School in Elgin. Elgin Area Unit District 46 schools were among those that struggled to help students meet proficiency standards over the pandemic. - Brian Hill | Staff Photographer

On the [SAT](#), 27% of U-46 students met or exceeded standards in English and 24% met or exceeded math standards in 2021. That's compared to 27% in English and 25% in math in 2019. And again, only about 70% of students took that test, Raimondi said.

"We're really hesitant ... to use the results for any kind of high stakes just because there's so many factors that were influencing that data," Raimondi said.

While individual students' results might be useful for teachers and parents in assessing learning growth or slide, it's hard to gauge how students performed overall by grade level, said Laura Hill, U-46 director of assessment and accountability.

Test participation was much higher at some neighborhood elementary schools where a majority of students walk to campus, Hill said. At Garfield in Elgin, for example, participation was more than 90%, and Ontarioville in Hanover Park, it was 82%.

But even parity in the demographics of both schools didn't produce similar results.

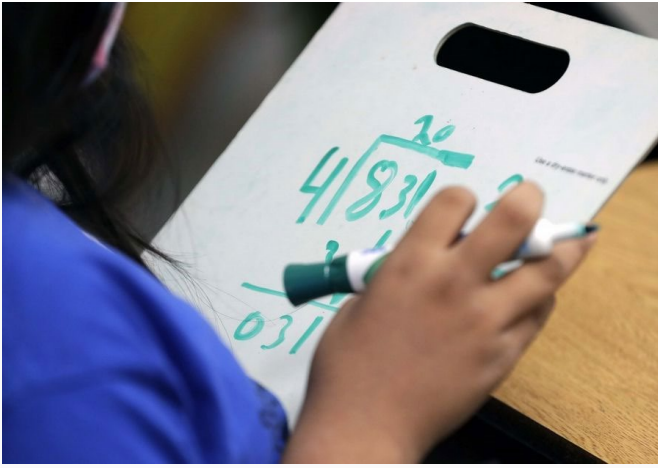
At [Garfield](#), students who met English standards were at 11% for both 2019 and 2021. But math actually improved, going from 11% meets and exceeds in 2019 to 15% in 2021. The school's students are 95% low-income and 75% English learners.

Yet at [Ontarioville](#), students meeting standards in 2019 and 2021 dropped from 20% to 10% in English and from 23% to 5% in math. Students there are 83% low-income and 81% English learners.

But there's a lot the report card data isn't telling educators about how students adapted to the pandemic learning environment. And, Hill added, it might take two or three years before students are back on track from any pandemic setbacks.

While [Batavia Unit District 101's](#) scores did not dip as dramatically as those in some Fox Valley districts or the state, officials there say they don't feel the 2021 scores are indicative of student mastery of standards typically seen in classrooms.

"There was a multitude of variables at play last year, including different learning modalities, instructional constraints and social impacts from the mitigation strategies that needed to be enacted in our schools," said Brad Newkirk, chief academic officer. "These variables certainly had an impact on our scores."



A student works on a math problem Wednesday at Garfield Elementary School in Elgin. More than 90% of students at the school took the state's standardized test in the spring and performed reasonably well considering pandemic constraints, officials said. - Brian Hill | Staff Photographer

Local data showed there was a "schooling loss" last year, particularly among English learners and students struggling with poverty who were more negatively affected than other groups on state and local tests, Newkirk said.

In Algonquin-based [Community Unit District 300](#), students who participated in the Illinois Assessment of Readiness saw a 12% decrease in English proficiency and 11% for math. Only two-thirds of students took the test during the 2020-21 school year. Of the students who took the [SAT test](#), the district saw a 4% decrease in English proficiency and an 11% dip in math.

"To have such minimal slippage really speaks to the metric of persistence," Deputy Superintendent Kara Vicente said.

Despite the pandemic challenges, there were some silver linings.

[Jacobs](#) and [Dundee-Crown](#) high schools saw minimal decreases in English scores from 2019. [Eastview Elementary](#) in Algonquin outperformed the district in English by 18 percentage points on the state test, and [Neubert Elementary](#) in Algonquin performed well on math at 20 percentage points higher than the district average.

To mitigate the learning slide ahead of this school year, District 300 offered summer classes to address targeted math and English standards.

"An early indicator of our student success came this past fall when we administered our benchmark assessment, i-Ready, and learned that our students were in line with national patterns of placement," Vicente said. "District 300 students actually demonstrated a summer learning gain in reading that outperformed the national trends."

The district also added support personnel in elementary classrooms to address foundational learning skills that may not have been fully developed due to the pandemic. And it hired intervention teachers at the secondary level to address specific learning gaps.

---Daily Herald--- 12/12/2021
One DuPage County district bucks trend of declining results on state report card
By Madhu Krishnamurthy

Schools across DuPage County saw declines in students' English and mathematics proficiency skills during the past pandemic-impacted school year, mirroring a statewide trend, with one notable exception.

[DuPage High School District 88](#) saw an increase in students meeting or exceeding standards in reading and math on the SAT college entrance exam, [2021 Illinois Report Card](#) data show.

That, school officials say, is because from the start of the school year, the district prioritized in-person instruction for high-need students, including English learners and students with disabilities. The district also provided in-person and online tutoring, invested in technology for full synchronous remote instruction, conducted home visits and concentrated on social-emotional supports, officials said.

Yet, the latest school- and district-level results are not comparable to pre-pandemic years for several reasons and can't be used as a yardstick to measure student performance or growth, educators say.

Among those factors is that not all students took the state standardized tests typically administered each spring -- the Illinois Assessment of Readiness and SAT college entrance exam. They are mandatory for students in third through eighth grades and 11th grade, respectively, in a typical school year.

In addition, a strained learning environment with schools shifting between a hodgepodge of remote and hybrid in-person instructional models, as well as poverty and language barriers, were major challenges affecting performance.

"No school in the area has a full data set," District 88 Superintendent Jean Barbanente said. "We have not had a mandatory test really since 2019. Because of the safety concerns, not all students were comfortable coming on campus to test (during the pandemic). We feel that our kids did really well ... considering everything that they were dealing with."

About 75% of 11th-graders at [Addison Trail High School](#) and about 80% of students at [Willowbrook High School](#) took the SAT in the spring.

Addison Trail went from 22% meets and exceeds in English proficiency in 2019 to 29% in 2021. In math, 21% met or exceeded standards in 2019, compared to 24% in 2021.

Willowbrook maintained 42% meets and exceeds standards in English from 2019 to 2021, while math slipped from 40% meets and exceeds in 2019 to 35% in 2021.

Meanwhile, at [Naperville Unit District 203](#), roughly 80% to 84% of third- through eighth-graders took the state test in the spring. Participation rates were lower for students dealing with poverty, academic disability and English learners, said Patrick Nolten, District 203 assistant superintendent for assessment and accountability.

Of those tested in third through eighth grades, 57% met or exceeded English standards, and 49% met them in math in 2021. Typically students' proficiency percentages are in the 60s.

For the [SAT](#), 97% of 11th-graders participated and scored at 63% in English proficiency and 61% in math for 2021. Those scores are down from what they would have been during a typical year.

"We saw a lot more spring fatigue, or test fatigue, because kids in pretty rapid succession participated in this test, the math test and some other tests that we typically do near the end of the year. So that could influence performance," Nolten said.

In [Elgin Area School District U-46](#), which crosses over Cook, DuPage and Kane counties, only 19% of students met or exceeded standards in English language arts on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness in the 2020-21 school year compared to 28% in 2018-19.

And only 18% of students at the state's second-largest school district met or exceeded math standards in 2021 compared to 27% in 2019, preliminary spring testing data show.

That's in line with the statewide trend for most schools showing steep declines in students attaining proficiency in English and math across grade levels -- 16.6% and 17.8%, respectively.

However, only half of U-46 students in third through eighth grades were tested in the spring when they were split between remote and in-person learning, U-46 Assessments Coordinator Matt Raimondi said.

On the [SAT](#), 27% of U-46 students met or exceeded standards in English and 24% met or exceeded math standards in 2021. That's compared to 2019 percentages of 27% in English and 25% in math. And again, only about 70% of students took that test, Raimondi said.

"We're really hesitant ... to use the results for any kind of high stakes just because there's so many factors that were influencing that data," Raimondi said.

Test participation was much higher at some neighborhood elementary schools where a majority of students walk to campus, said Laura Hill, U-46 director of assessment and accountability.

One of those was [Ontarioville](#) in Hanover Park, where 82% of students took the test. There, students meeting standards dropped from 20% to 10% in English between 2019 and 2021 and from 23% to 5% in math. Students there are 83% low-income and 81% English learners.

Hill said it could take two or three years before students are back on track from pandemic-related learning loss.

Schools statewide received a waiver for state assessments in the 2019-20 school year when the COVID-19 pandemic first disrupted learning, closing schools in March of 2020. There is no data available for that year.

Note: Daily Herald staff writer Kevin Schmit contributed to this report.

---DuPage Policy Journal--- 12/13/2021

Bartlett High School reports 24% truancy rate

By DuPage Policy Journal

The truancy rate at [Bartlett High School](#) rose to 24 percent during the 2018-19 school year, according to a DuPage Policy Journal analysis of the latest [Illinois schools report card](#).

The school's average daily attendance rate was 92 percent.

Students are considered chronically truant if they miss five percent of school days or more per year without acceptable excuses. The [SD U-46](#) saw a chronic truancy rate of 20 percent during the 2018-19 school year, while the statewide rate was 13 percent.

The school enrolled 2,417 students in the 2018-19 school year, and average daily attendance was at 92 percent for the year, the [Illinois State Board of Education](#) reported. The average daily rate of attendance across the state was 94 percent.

Bartlett High School chronic truancy rates 5-year trend

YEAR	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2015	7	6	9
2016	10	9	10
2017	10	12	11
2018	13	14	11
2019	24	20	13

Bartlett High School daily attendance rates 5-year trend

YEAR	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2015	94	94	94
2016	94	94	94
2017	93	93	94
2018	93	93	94
2019	92	93	94

---Kane County Connects--- 12/13/2021 IDPH reports 19 active school outbreaks in Kane County

Kane County is recording a total of 19 active school outbreaks, according to data posted by the Illinois Department of Public Health.



Among the updated outbreaks are 10 cases at Elgin Academy, 11 cases at the Elgin Math & Science Academy, seven cases at Immanuel Lutheran School in East Dundee, nine cases at Louise White Elementary School in Batavia, and eight cases at St. Patrick School in St. Charles.

- [Click here to see the IDPH School Outbreaks page.](#)

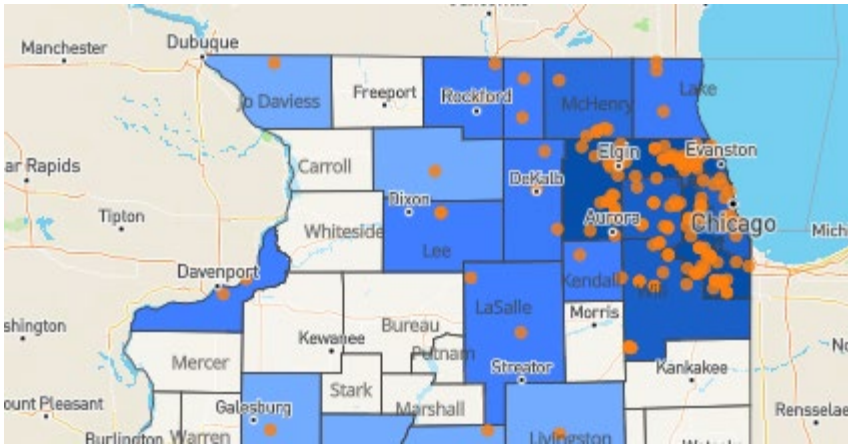
Outbreak information is reported once clusters of cases are confirmed to be linked by location and time (within 14 days). Some outbreaks are pending processing and evaluation and will be added as more complete information is available.

The outbreak information is reported by local health departments to the Illinois Department of Public Health through an outbreak reporting system.

Specific outbreaks included are those that have been identified by the local health department to have three or more COVID-19 cases who may have a shared exposure at a shared Youth Related location and are from different households.

These outbreaks do not include secondary cases that may occur in a household member who has not been at the same outbreak location.

All data is provisional and subject to updating as more information becomes available. Data are updated once a week, typically on Fridays. The IDPH says this data includes entries elicited from cases opened within the previous 30 days from the date of the update.



Cambridge Lakes Charter School (K-12)

- 24 Cases
- Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/9/2021

Dundee-Crown High School (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases
- Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 12/9/2021

Elgin Academy (K-12)

- 10 Cases
- Students
- Source: Sports
- First Reported: 12/9/2021

Elgin Math and Science Academy (K-12)

- 11 Cases
- Staff and Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/15/2021

Gary D Wright Elementary School (K-12)

- 6 Cases
- Staff and Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/18/2021

Gates Elementary School (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases
- Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 12/2/2021

Harvest Christian Academy (K-12)

- 6 Cases
- Staff and Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 10/29/2021

Heartland Elementary School (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases
- Staff and Students

- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 12/7/2021

Hillcrest Elementary School (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases
- Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/18/2021

Immanuel Lutheran Church and School (K-12)

- 5 Cases
- Staff and Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/17/2021

Immanuel Lutheran School – East Dundee (K-12)

- 7 Cases
- Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/30/2021

John Shields Elementary School (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases
- Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 12/9/2021

Lincoln Elementary School (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases
- Staff and Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/18/2021

Louise White Elementary School (K-12)

- 9 Cases
- Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/10/2021

Marmion Academy (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases
- Staff and Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/16/2021

Mill Creek Elementary School (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases
- Staff and Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/29/2021

South Elgin High School (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases
- Staff
- Source: Other
- First Reported: 11/24/2021

St. Patrick School (K-12)

- 8 Cases
- Staff and Students
- Source: Classroom

- First Reported: 11/15/2021
- St. Peter School (K-12)
- Less Than 5 Cases
 - Students
 - Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/12/2021
- SOURCE: IDPH website

---Elgin Courier-News--- 12/13/2021
Crunchtime. Prime time. Call it what you want, Jullian Acosta comes through to end regulation and in OT as East Aurora edges South Elgin
By Rick Armstrong for the Aurora Beacon-News



East Aurora's Jullian Acosta (23) regains control after the ball was slapped away by [South Elgin's Elias Cole Williams](#) (13) during an Upstate Eight Conference game in Aurora on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

East Aurora's Jullian Acosta kept a low profile through three quarters Friday night, but when it became crunchtime, the veteran leader was ready for a prime-time role.

"Jullian is a senior now," Tomcats coach Rick Robinson said. "It's times like that he needs to step up and show why he's been a four-year player on the varsity."

Those "times" came in the final minute of regulation and overtime for host East Aurora in a 65-63 Upstate Eight Conference victory over [South Elgin](#).

Brian Vesta, a 6-foot-4 senior guard, made his third 3-pointer of the fourth quarter with 57 seconds remaining in regulation as South Elgin (2-6, 1-2) completed a comeback from a 13-point deficit by forcing a 56-56 tie.



South Elgin's Brian Vesta (1) shoots a 3-pointer to tie the Upstate Eight Conference game against East Aurora in the fourth quarter on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Acosta, a 6-2 guard/forward, answered for East Aurora (4-0, 2-0) with a short pullup jumper on the baseline with 24 seconds left.

Vesta, who scored all 11 of his points in the fourth, had the answer.

He took a pass from Drew Cwik and made a layup to tie it up again with 2.3 seconds left. That extended the game an extra four minutes after a midcourt shot by the Tomcats was well short at the buzzer.

An 18-9 edge for the Storm in the fourth erased a 49-40 deficit after three quarters.

“Going into the fourth quarter we said, ‘Beat them by 10,’” South Elgin coach Brett Johnson said. “We just couldn’t get that extra shot.”

Acosta, who was held to seven points through three quarters, made a driving layup with 2:21 left in OT after the teams traded a pair of scoreless possessions.

After Cwik made two free throws to force a 60-60 tie, Acosta gave East Aurora the lead for good by making a free throw with 1:05 remaining.

Acosta then made the defensive play of the game, blocking a South Elgin shot on a drive to the basket and coming up with the rebound. He then fed teammate James Parker for a layup and a 63-60 lead with 42 seconds left.

Sophomore guard Calvin Savage, who finished with a game and career high of 25 points for the Tomcats, felt that play was the clincher.

“Calvin has exhibited he can shoot the ball,” Robinson said. “When he gets on a roll and is in rhythm, as you can see, like all good shooters, he’s gonna let it go.”

Parker added two free throws to make it 65-60 with 28.9 seconds left and the Tomcats barely held on, going 0-for-4 at the free-throw line in the final seven seconds.

“The reality of it is, South Elgin has some outstanding shooters,” Robinson said. “Bottom line, and it’s not one or two. They’ve got about five or six who can really shoot the 3-pointer. They just started launching them and they were going in.”

Defensive lapses almost proved costly, according to Acosta.

“We have to play better defense,” Acosta said. “They started hitting threes in the fourth and we were over-rotating. We can’t let teams come back on us like that.

“If we play defense like we’re supposed to, we win that game by 10 points.”



East Aurora's Calvin Savage (2) defends against South Elgin's Jadin Ashby (4) during an Upstate Eight Conference game in Aurora on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Jullian Acosta, his younger brother Jabian and Parker each finished with eight points.

Cwik scored 17 points to lead the Storm, who made 10 3-pointers. Kendis Wiley added 10 points.

"I felt this was a team that grew up a ton tonight and that's important," Johnson said.

"Sometimes, you don't get the win in the win column, but I think for this team right now, the effort and fight they gave in battling is a win.

"We're going to remember how we fought and how we need to play consistently to compete against anybody. I told them we can beat anybody in the state if we play that way because East Aurora is a very good team."

---Daily Herald--- 12/11/2021

Luczynski shines again in Bartlett's win over Glenbard East

By Kevin McGavin, Daily Herald Correspondent

The athletic repercussions for the still-ongoing pandemic were certainly not limited to on-field issues for local high school athletes.

Getting noticed has also been particularly difficult in the last two years for those seeking to compete at the next level.

But new doors are certainly opening for Bartlett post Conrad Luczynski.

Friday night in the Hawks' 54-37 Upstate Eight Conference boys' basketball victory over Glenbard East, Luczynski continued to fine-tune his recruiting profile with a dominant 21-point and 13-rebound performance in Bartlett.

Then again, Luczynski is not a commonplace figure on the basketball court.

"He is 7-foot-3 -- and he is skilled," Bartlett coach Jim Wolfsmith said of his senior center.

In recent days, Purdue, which entered the week as the No. 1-ranked program in the nation, became the latest major Midwest program to express interest.

"It shows that I am doing something right," Luczynskis said of his increased profile. "I am getting the guys open when (the opposing defenses) collapse on me. It's hard for the other teams to guard a 7-3 person."

The final stat sheet will show the Hawks failing to convert their last 11 field-goal attempts from beyond the arc, but Jacob Magnanao made sure his back-to-back first-quarter 3-pointers carried some weight.

Glenbard East (2-5, 2-1) had its sole lead of the game quickly evaporate as the Hawks (5-3, 2-1) scored 10 of the first 12 points of the game behind the Magnanao 3-pointers.

"With zone defenses, they usually leave scorers open at the top of the key," Magnanao said. "It's about finding your space. Give credit to Conrad with his post game."

Glenbard East had other issues besides contending with all-encompassing presence in the paint -- at both ends as Luczynski had a pair of blocks as well.

On countless other occasions, Glenbard East ballhandlers made dramatic U-turns when penetrating the free-throw line.

"We have been playing short-handed with COVID and injury issues," said Glenbard East coach Al Bianclana, who was missing starters Troy Cooper and Ari Pierson. "We needed some guys to step up tonight. It wasn't that way tonight. (Luczynski) was up for the task. No one is going to feel sorry for us."

Jack Ryan, who paced the Rams with 9 points, brought Glenbard East to within 28-15 with a runner as the second quarter wound down.

But Luczynski took command in the second half by scoring 14 of his game-high total after the break.

Six of his points came via second-chance rebounds as six of his fellow high on the glass came at the offensive end.

No one else was in double figures for the Hawks as Kelton McCarthy (9 points) did most of his damage from the line.

Marty McCarthy added seven for Bartlett.