

Press Clippings 4/30/2022 to 5/2/2022

Shaw Local News Network

Kaneland kindergarten teacher named Kane County Educator of the Year --- 5/2/2022

By Eric Schelkopf



John Shields Elementary School kindergarten teacher Jillian Yaggie, left, accepts the Kane County Educator of the Year award from Regional Superintendent Patricia Dal Santo, right, of the Kane County Regional Office of Education. (Eric Schelkopf)

In being named the 2022 Kane County Educator of the Year, Jillian Yaggie, a kindergarten teacher at Kaneland School District's John Shields Elementary School, thanked her students.

“My students give me everything,” Yaggie said, in accepting the award Friday at the Q Center in St. Charles. “They make every day a better day. They give way more back to me than I feel I give to them. Thank you to my students for being my heart and my true inspiration.”

She also thanked her co-workers.

“I would like to thank my John Shields family,” Yaggie said. “We are a family unit. We are always there for each other. I know I can go to anyone at any time for a laugh or a shoulder to cry on.”

As part of the honor, Yaggie received a \$3,000 grant from the Kane County Regional Office of Education to be used for a project of her choosing for her school or district. This was the organization's 46th year of presenting the award.

“We are always amazed at the dedication and the commitment to students that our nominees exemplify,” Regional Superintendent Patricia Dal Santo said.

Other awards presented that night include:

- Regional Superintendent Award: **Juan Figueroa, Elgin High School, District U-46**
- Early Career Educator Award: Danielle Sheppard, St. Charles North High School, District 303
- Elementary/Early Childhood Teacher: Barbara Spence, Grace McWayne Elementary, District 101
- Middle School Teacher: Suzanne Satterfield, Harter Middle School, District 302
- High School Teacher: Patricia Sampson, West Aurora High School, District 129
- Educational Service Personnel Award: Thomas Poulin, St. Charles North High School, District 303
- Student Support Personnel Award: Tracy Warwick, Fred Rogers Magnet Academy, District 131
- School Administrator: Dr. Sarah Mumm, Kaneland School District, District 302

Chicago Tribune

As nationwide teacher shortage worsens, some say inadequate pay is to blame--- 4/30/2022

By Karen Ann Cullotta

With the steep shortage of teachers across the U.S. leaving school districts scrambling to staff their classrooms during the lingering COVID-19 pandemic, officials at the nation’s largest teachers’ union said this week that insufficient pay is fueling the growing crisis.

A recent release of the National Education Association’s data on educator pay and school funding coincided with Gov. J.B. Pritzker’s signing into law a slate of measures this week intended to address the teacher shortage in Illinois, including simplifying the licensing process, lowering licensing fees and easing restrictions for substitute teachers.

Despite the stepped-up statewide efforts, the NEA report unveiled new data union officials deemed “alarming,” including findings that during the 2020-21 school year, first-year teachers earned an average of \$41,770, which, when adjusted for inflation, represents a 4% decrease from the previous year.

In Illinois, where Pritzker spearheaded a law that will raise the minimum salary for teachers to \$40,000 by the 2023-24 school year, the NEA report rated the state 23rd in the nation, with an average teacher starting salary of \$41,228.

With an average teacher salary of \$70,705, Illinois ranks 13th in the nation, according to the NEA report.

Still, according to a recent analysis by the Economic Policy Institute of educator pay statistics, nationwide teachers on average make 19.2% less annually when compared with similarly educated workers, NEA officials said.

In addition, the report found teachers are bringing home \$2,179 less per year, on average, than they did a decade ago, when adjusted for inflation, NEA officials said.

The “troubling trends” are especially difficult for educational support professionals, including paraprofessionals, teachers’ aides, custodians, cafeteria workers and bus drivers, officials said.

“These crucial public school employees are earning an average of at least \$10,000 below a basic living wage in all but one state across the country. In fact, more than a third of all ESPs working full time earn less than \$25,000 per year,” NEA officials said.

The recent report comes months after an NEA survey found that 55% of educators are ready to leave the profession earlier than planned and that teachers’ job satisfaction is at an all-time low during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kathi Griffin, president of the Illinois Education Association, said Friday: “Teachers and support staff are suffering right now. It’s been blow after blow. The pandemic has been extremely challenging for everyone in our public schools.”

To make matters worse, Griffin said, “prices are skyrocketing and inflation is at a high point. And now we have the data to prove what we already knew: Teacher salaries are too low. ... We need to bring respect and dignity to the profession, so we can keep the quality teachers we have and attract new dedicated, certified teachers to the profession.”

Illinois State Board of Education Superintendent of Education Carmen Ayala said at Wednesday’s bill signing that despite the hiring of 5,600 teachers across the state this school year, more than 2,100 certified teacher positions remain unfilled, many of which negatively affect low-income, bilingual and special education students.

The state board also reported a shortage of 2,400 paraprofessionals and an additional 900 vacant positions, including administrators and other school employees.

More than 5,000 positions at Illinois schools were unfilled due to a lack of qualified applicants, according to ISBE.

Underscoring the urgency of addressing the statewide teacher shortage, a recent survey of 663 school districts conducted by the Illinois Association of Regional School Superintendents found 88% of school districts reporting shortfalls of certified teachers, and 96% citing a scarcity of substitute teachers.

While west central Illinois appeared to have the most critical staffing hardships, with 95% of school districts in the region reporting teacher shortages, the challenges are not limited by geography, with 89% of rural, 88% of suburban and 85% of urban school districts reporting they struggle to find a sufficient number of educators.



A cleaned classroom is ready at Calmecca Academy of Fine Arts & Dual Language, Dec. 23, 2021, in the Brighton Park neighborhood of Chicago. (Erin Hooley / Chicago Tribune)

A spokesman for Chicago Public Schools said Thursday that “like other districts, (CPS) has worked diligently to address the teacher shortage.”

While CPS currently has 616 open teaching positions — a vacancy rate of less than 3% — the number of open positions for the 2022-23 school year “will not be known until staffing models, based on budgets recently completed by school leaders, are reviewed and implemented,” CPS spokesman Evan Moore said in a statement.

In 2019, CPS also launched teacher residencies, a full-time, paid teacher-training program that offers a path to the profession for those hoping to make a career change.

At **Elgin-based Unit School District 46**, the district is seeking candidates for more than 500 open certified and noncertified positions, including 300 teachers, 39 administrators, 91 paraprofessionals and 85 other vacancies, such as secretary, food services, transportation, plant operation, maintenance, grounds, human resources and information services.

“This is a higher number of vacancies for teachers, paraeducators and administrators compared to prepandemic — something that was not experienced in the past,” District 46 spokeswoman **Karla Jimenez** said.

Last week the district launched the Horizons 4U Tuition Reimbursement Program, a collaborative initiative between neighboring universities and colleges aimed at providing current District 46 employees with support to pursue a career in teaching, as a certified school nurse, as a paraprofessional or within the trades, Jimenez said.

This summer, the district plans to create a cohort through Northern Illinois University for the district's current teachers to earn a bilingual/ESL endorsement, with the courses offered online or at a district office in Elgin, she said.

The district is covering tuition for teachers accepted into the program who commit to five years of service with the district's English language learners or dual language students, Jimenez said.



AJ Ratzki raises his hand at Buffalo Grove High School on April 28, 2022, during Tim Kosiek's introductory class on teaching methods. (Stacey Wescott / Chicago Tribune)

While there are likely no quick fixes for the state's teacher shortage, the 28 students enrolled in Buffalo Grove High School teacher Tim Kosiek's introductory class on teaching methods provide a ray of hope.

The class is offered at the beginning of the Township High School District 214 education "pathway," which prepares students for teaching careers, including offering early college credit, internships and an Educator Prep program.

It aims to prepare students for teaching positions in the northwest suburbs and beyond. Teens who complete the program and go on to study teaching at National Louis University or Eastern Illinois University are guaranteed a student teaching position in the district or at one of the district's partner schools, Kosiek said.

After college graduation, the students will be guaranteed a job interview if District 214 has an open teaching position in their degree area, he said.

Delivering a Thursday morning lesson to his students called "Equity in Education: What's in a Grade?" Kosiek told his students about a former student "whose camera was never on when we were doing remote learning, and I was wondering why."

"Well, it turned out she was working, and doing my class while she was helping to support her family," Kosiek said. "Some of your students will go home to a big house, with two parents who have dinner on the table every night, and some will go home to a small apartment or mobile home, where they need to take care of their siblings and make dinner, so it's not equitable."

While some of Kosiek's students shared concerns that if they do pursue a teaching degree, the modest starting salary might not be worth the investment in their college education, others, such as junior Natalie Santiago, appeared determined to make a difference.

"I want to be that teacher who when little kids are adults, they would look back and think of me, which would mean so much," Santiago said.

Daily Herald

Coding error caught: How much some suburban school districts are getting in new state funding-- 4/29/2022

By Maria Gardner



Elgin Area School District U-46 will get nearly \$5.2 million after an error in the distribution of state school funds was corrected. *Daily Herald File Photo*

Several suburban school districts will receive a portion of \$87 million in additional school funding due to a coding error in the state's funding formula that wrongly routed the money to Chicago Public Schools.

School district administrators say they welcome the additional money, though some acknowledge their portion will not be substantial enough to overcome state funding issues and their effect on local property taxes.

The amount owed to schools across the state range from \$16.09 -- yes, just over 16 bucks -- to \$5.2 million, with that largest sum earmarked for Elgin Area School District U-46.

"I'm certainly grateful that we're seeing an increase in our funding," said Tony Sanders, U-46 superintendent. "U-46, along with all large unit districts across the state of Illinois, we're furthest from being fully funded."

The district has 35,958 students, with 57% of them considered low-income. It is funded at 63% of what is considered adequate, according to the school funding formula.

Like many school district administrators, Sanders said the additional funding will help hire counselors, social workers and support staffers for new language learners to meet students' social and emotional needs.

U-46 is among 14 school districts that are owed more than \$1 million, including these from the suburbs: Algonquin-based Community Unit District 300, due \$2.6 million; Waukegan Community District 60, due \$2.1 million; Aurora East District 131, due \$1.9 million; and Aurora West School District 129, due \$1.6 million.

A contractor hired during Gov. Bruce Rauner's administration miscalculated funding and overcounted students attending charter schools in districts where there were more than one charter school, said Jaclyn Matthews, an Illinois State Board of Education spokeswoman.

The mistake affected the state's evidence-based funding formula, which determines how much extra money the state gives each school district. Signed into law in 2017, the Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act aims to address the financial gap between the most funded and the under-resourced schools.

The formula takes into account different student population needs, such as those in special education and new English language learners, to determine an "adequacy target," or the dollar amount necessary for a school district to be properly funded, according to ISBE. State support for better-funded districts stays the same, but any new funding goes to schools determined by the formula to be underfunded.

The funding is expected to be distributed by the end of the school year, Matthews said.

The number of school districts owed between \$100,000 and \$500,000 is 168, according to ISBE. Warren Township High School District 121 in Lake County is among that pool, receiving more than \$137,000.

"The extra money is helpful but is not going to help us enough," said Michael Engel, assistant superintendent of business operations for the district.

The district has a budget deficit of more than \$1 million. For the current budget year ending June 30, the district's funding level is at 70% of what it needs to be considered fully funded, according to the ISBE.

The school district has run a deficit for six years. Engel said that over the years, 79 jobs have been cut, including 48 teachers and three administrators.

Without the proper funding, Engel said, "classroom sizes go up, mental health support and academic support goes down, and sports and activities disappear."

The district is hoping voters in a referendum will approve a property tax increase of 60 cents for every \$100 in assessed valuation. If approved June 28, it would generate \$13.25 million in additional revenue annually, officials have said.

Freshman sports programs are already eliminated for the next school year, but if the tax increase is rejected, all sports will be cut, the district says. The school day would be reduced from an eight- to a seven-period day as educators teaching art, music and business are cut, Engel said.

A lack of funding from the state is part of the problem, Engel said, and other districts have similar concerns.

No new school funding was available for fiscal year 2021, as the state dealt with its own budget woes. The state budget that goes into effect July 1 adds \$350 million in new funding, which will be distributed based on the funding formula.

"For all our schools, we're still far too reliant on property taxes, which leads to inequities in different schools," said Mikkel Storaasli, Grayslake Community High School District 127 superintendent. "Students who live in apartments or public housing should have the same quality education as students living in a wealthier area."

He's grateful for state officials' attention to the funding gaps in the school districts, "but there's still a lot of work to do."

When Storaasli heard about the coding error, he wasn't shocked.

"The calculations and the distribution of funds is a little bit of a black box," he said.

More transparency to how specific numbers are calculated would be helpful, he said. The state owes the district more than \$140,000. The district is at 77% of the adequacy target, according to ISBE.

While the state owes several districts large sums, 565 school districts are owed less than \$100,000.

Money owed to local school districts

Here is the money due to individual school districts in the Daily Herald circulation area.

Cook County

Elk Grove Dist. 59: \$23,341.44

Arlington Heights Dist. 25: \$18,513.99

Palatine Dist. 15: \$17,896.01

Glenview Dist. 34: \$16,642.45

Mount Prospect Dist. 57: \$13,451.32

Schaumburg Dist. 54: \$3,514.94

Wheeling Dist. 21: \$1,117.00

Prospect Heights Dist. 23: \$167.67

DuPage County

West Chicago Dist. 33: \$450,269.24

Community High School Dist. 94: \$318,083.63

Queen Bee Dist. 16: \$182,573.69

Keeneyville Dist. 20: \$70,371.24

Addison Dist. 4: \$54,967.17

Wheaton Warrenville Dist. 200: \$46,039.33

Marquardt Dist. 15: \$34,645.03

Glenbard H.S. Dist. 87: \$32,885.37

Downers Grove Dist. 58: \$16,574.99

Glen Ellyn Dist. 89: \$6,398.67

Indian Prairie Dist. 204: \$5,389.54

Villa Park Dist. 45: \$4,848.77

Itasca Dist. 10: \$3,569.22

DuPage High School Dist. 88: \$818.80

Bensenville Dist. 2: \$446.65

Kane County

Elgin Area U-46: \$5,229,884.65

Community Dist. 300: \$2,612,236.77

Aurora East Dist. 131: \$1,914,237.01

Aurora West Dist. 129: \$1,633,962.26

Central Dist. 301: \$34,736.91

Batavia Dist. 101: \$16,358.52

Kaneland Dist. 302: \$132.64

Lake County

Round Lake Area Dist. 116: \$982,185.78

Grayslake Dist. 46: \$463,600.07

Beach Park Dist. 3: \$298,944.93

Mundelein Dist. 75: \$234,736.77

Big Hollow Dist. 38: \$204,775.33

Grayslake H.S. Dist. 127: \$140,639.01

Lake Villa Dist. 41: \$137,894.79

Warren Twp. H.S. Dist. 121: \$137,295.39

Gavin Dist. 37: \$103,232.43

Wauconda Dist. 118: \$38,377.19

Mundelein H.S. Dist. 120: \$24,571.81

Gurnee Dist. 56: \$15,069.05

Antioch H.S. Dist. 117: \$12,471.87

Antioch Dist. 34: \$10,117.17

Fremont Dist. 79: \$7,358.45

Aptakisic-Tripp Dist. 102: \$1,778.19

Fox Lake Dist. 114: \$1,150.51

Woodland Dist. 50: \$1,112.91

Hawthorn Dist. 73: \$760.71

Millburn Dist. 24: \$224.22

Diamond Lake Dist. 76: \$160.10

McHenry County McHenry H.S. Dist. 156: \$324,436.65

Huntley Dist. 158: \$97,502.84

Community H.S. Dist. 155: \$67,020.12

Crystal Lake Dist. 47: \$53,836.31

Cary Dist. 26: \$18,035.03

Source: Illinois State Board of Education

Chicago Tribune/The Courier-News

Elgin News Digest --- 4/29/2022

By Mike Danahey

U-46 named a top school district for music education

School District U-46 is among 738 school districts across the country cited for being the Best Communities for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation.

The distinction recognizes school districts and schools for their support and commitment to music education and efforts to assure access to music for all students as part of a well-rounded education.

This was the second consecutive year U-46 has made the list, Superintendent Tony Sanders told school board this past week.

The foundation was established in 2006 and funded through trade association activities and donations.

Daily Herald

Centro de Informacion celebrates 50th anniversary at annual luncheon on May 4 --- 4/28/2022

Submitted by Centro de Informacion

Centro de Información will continue its "Celebrando 50" anniversary by hosting the annual Community Day Luncheon on Wednesday, May 4, at the Elgin Country Club. It will start at 11:30 a.m.

The speaker will be Antonio Ramirez, associate professor of history and political science at Elgin Community College. He will speak about the history of Hispanics in the Elgin area.

The following recipients will be recognized for their contributions to Centro de Información and/or the community:

- The Noon Rotary Club of Elgin, longtime supporter and funder of Centro programs, is celebrating 100 years of serving the community.
- Gwen Gage, interim director of Centro de Información in the 1980s, has been a supporter and sponsor of Centro's annual galas for many years. In 2021, she volunteered as co-coordinator of the gala with Janine Kirkland.
- Mike Alft, former teacher at **Elgin High School** and former Elgin City Councilman, served as mayor of Elgin in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He was also an Elgin historian and advocated for access to services for the Hispanic community. He died last November and remembered Centro by leaving a gift from the estate of Mike and Fran Alft.

The community is invited to honor these individuals and participate in Centro's ongoing celebration of 50 years of service by attending their annual Community Day Luncheon.

Tickets and more information can be found at communityluncheon2022.eventbrite.com.

Tickets are \$40 or \$45 at the door. Please RSVP by Friday, April 29, to save your seat at this special event to support one of the community's crucial agencies.

Interested sponsors should email Jaime Garcia at jgarcia@centrodeinformacion.org.

All proceeds from the event will benefit Centro de Informacion, a certified 501(c)(3) nonprofit social services agency that provides bilingual advocacy for thousands of immigrants each year at locations in Elgin, Carpentersville, and Hanover Park.

