

## Press Clippings for 8/17/2022

### ABC-7 Eyewitness News

## Suburban Chicago school districts fill position with subs, retirees amid ongoing teacher shortage

--- 8/16/2022

By Michelle Gallardo

<To see interview with Superintendent Tony Sanders, click on link below>

<https://abc7chicago.com/illinois-teacher-shortage-u-46-substitute-teachers-special-ed/12131501/>

The ongoing Illinois teacher shortage is top-of-mind throughout Chicago area districts as they kick off the new school year.

Superintendents around the area say the main problem they are encountering is that they simply don't have enough qualified people applying for the positions they have open, most of which appear to be special ed, bilingual and dual-language teachers.

Around [35,000 students returned to the classroom in School District U-46](#), the second largest in the state, including Elgin as well as 10 other surrounding communities. But even as students begin to shake off the summer cobwebs, many will be taught by substitutes, for now.

"We still have around 100 teacher vacancies," [District U-46 Supt. Tony Sanders](#) said. "We're able to fill those. We have retirees. We have long-term subs. We have lots of people to step in to fill those roles."

Most of U-46's vacancies are for dual language and special ed teachers.

It's a similar story in Joliet's Public School District 86, where students will be welcomed back on Wednesday. They are still short about 20 full-time teachers, and the Illinois State Board of Education will only allow districts to use subs for 30 days at a time in a single classroom.

"We may be close to hiring someone but not quite, but we don't want to shuffle the teachers around because it's hard on the students," District 86 Supt. Theresa Rouse said. "So we'd like to see those numbers increased to 60-90 days at least so we have a little more wiggle room."

But subs aren't a permanent fix. And that, according to both of these superintendents, lies in attracting more people into the profession.

"There are fewer and fewer people coming into university programs to become teachers and it's a nationwide crisis at this point," Rouse said.

"The board has set aside millions of dollars for this tuition reimbursement trying to get people to leave their current jobs and come become a teacher," Sanders said. "It's a great way not just to make a living but to make a difference in the lives of children."

According to a study conducted by the Illinois State Board of Education, the current shortage has a disproportionate impact on chronically struggling schools, underfunded schools and schools serving low-income communities, reinforcing the need for equity as steps continue to be taken to increase the teacher pipeline in the state.

### **Full Statement from Illinois State Board of Education**

*Thank you for your patience. Like many states across the country, Illinois is currently experiencing a teacher shortage. In the hopes of better understanding this shortage, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) conducted an analysis to understand the specific students and communities most impacted by teacher vacancies. This analysis found that the current shortage has a disproportionate impact on chronically struggling schools, underfunded schools, and schools serving low-income communities, as well as specific subject areas including special education and bilingual education. The data reinforce the importance of equity as the driving strategy for continuing to strengthen the teacher pipeline in Illinois.*

*To help address the shortage of substitute teachers, ISBE has instituted changes to expand the pipeline for substitute teachers. For example, in addition to any individual with a bachelor's degree, we also now allow those enrolled in an Illinois approved educator preparation program who have completed 90 semester hours of coursework to substitute teach beginning January 1, 2023. We have also waived the \$25 application fee during public health emergencies, such as the current covid-19 pandemic, so individuals can get licensed to sub completely for free. Short-term substitutes can also teach up to 15 consecutive days, instead of the usual five, for up to 120 days for school year 2022-23.*

*The state has also employed several other strategic initiatives, which have proven to be effective in growing the teacher workforce, raising enrollment in educator preparation programs, and increasing teacher retention rates. These initiatives include CTE Education Career Pathways Grants that allow current high school students to prepare for college-level teacher preparation programs, Teacher Residency Grants that increase new educator preparedness and retention by embedding candidates in a school for a full year, the Teacher Mentoring Program which pairs novice teachers with on-site mentors and virtual instructional coaches to help guide them through their first years of teaching, adding Educators Rising as a Career and Technical Student Organization to provide leadership opportunities to aspiring teachers in high school, Short-Term Approvals that increase access to teacher preparation programs by allowing candidates to earn their license while teaching, grants to support special education teacher retention and bilingual educator licensure, and affinity groups for teachers of color to boost retention rates.*

*As a result of these initiatives, and others, the teacher workforce in Illinois has grown year-over-year since 2018, adding more than 5,000 new teachers to the profession. The state also saw an 11 percent increase in enrollment in educator preparation programs between 2019 and 2020, and last year teacher retention rates rose to over 87 percent, the highest since 2014.*

## **Telemundo Chicago**

### **With enthusiasm and new COVID guidelines; students return to school in Elgin --- 8/16/2022**

<To see the report that aired on 8-16-2022, including an interview with School and Community Relations Director Karla Jimenez, click on link below>

<https://www.telemundochicago.com/noticias/local/con-entusiasmo-y-nuevas-guias-de-covid-19-asi-se-vivio-el-regreso-a-clases-en-elgin/2285849/>

## **ABC-7 Eyewitness News**

### **District U-46 students return to school amid teacher shortage, easing COVID cases**

**--- 8/16/2022**

By Stephanie Wade

<To see interview with Superintendent Tony Sanders, click on the link below>

<https://abc7chicago.com/school-district-u-46-calendar-jobs-covid/12129610/>

It's back to school Tuesday for most students in **District U-46**, Illinois' second-largest school district, which serves parts of Cook, DuPage and Kane counties.

Students returned amid a teacher shortage, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact education.

Nearly 39,000 students returned to the classroom for what will be their fourth school year impacted by the pandemic.

The district covers 11 communities in the northwest suburbs, including Bartlett, Elgin, St. Charles and Schaumburg. There are 40 elementary schools, eight middle schools and five high schools.

**Superintendent Tony Sanders** said he feels more optimistic this year regarding COVID. Masks will still be encouraged, but not required.

They're also putting a pause on shield testing for students and staff, as they look into other voluntary testing options. Unvaccinated staff members will still be tested, Sanders said.

"I think the more we've gotten into COVID, and vaccinations are widely available, treatments are available, and the continuing easing of restrictions from the CDC and the state are making it easier and easier for schools to feel a little bit more normal," he said. "It just had a much more normal feel to the start of the school year unlike all of our past couple of years."

Several students were wearing masks Tuesday morning.

"For safety and the COVID and everything," sophomore Jason Trajo said.

"They're asking if they want to, to wear them. I told him, if you want to, just wear it and take it. It's safety for them," parent Polo Trajo said.

U-46 is also among school districts across the state that are dealing with a shortage of teachers and bus drivers.

Sanders said they have about 100 teacher vacancies right now, and will continue to look for teachers as the school year gets underway.

He said the district can fill those vacancies temporarily with retirees and long-term subs.

As for bus drivers, they have enough, but are always looking for more.

They've launched a tuition reimbursement program as an incentive to come work as a teacher or bus driver.

In terms of safety precautions, all employees and students will be required to wear their IDs in a visible location.

They also have a system that screens anyone who enters the school and tracks visitors.

The superintendent said they've also significantly increased the number of social and emotional workers and counselors in their schools, recognizing the needs of their students coming out of the pandemic.

At Streamwood High School, students were greeted at the door with a spirited, warm welcome for their first day back.

"I'm happy because they can go back to school and keep enrolling in more stuff," Polo Trajo said.

Parent Darren Nosck agreed.

"It's awesome to have them back -- can finally get some work done during the day," Nosck said.

"I just want to feel back to normal basically. I know that's what a lot of people want to do. I know, like, it's scary out here and everything, but everybody just wants to get back to normal or at least close to it," parent Danielle Brown said.

## **Univision Chicago**

### **More than 35,000 students started a new school year in Elgin School District U-46**

**--- 8/16/2022**

**By Jesse Echeverria**

<To watch the report that aired on 8-16-2022, click on link below>

<https://www.univision.com/local/chicago-wgbo/mas-de-35-000-estudiantes-inician-un-nuevo-ano-escolar-en-el-distrito-escolar-u-46-de-elgin-video>

## **WBBM Newsradio-105.9**

### **School District U-46's Bartlett High School kicks off new school year in style**

**--- 8/16/2022**

**By Bernie Tafoya**

<To listen to the WBBM broadcast from 8-16-2022, click on the link below>

<https://omny.fm/shows/wbbmam-on-demand/school-district-u46s-bartlett-high-school-kicks-of?fbclid=IwAR1nUyRrkOIwJqS2lVI--p3j3hzhLjtIPO2rTyIh2yZ2k5TpdfC6zDTU-bs>

## **NBC-5 Chicago**

# **As Illinois heads back-to-school, the CDC has new COVID guidelines for isolation, exposure**

**--- 8/16/2022**

**By Lisa Chavarria**

<To view the report that aired on 8-16-2022, click on link below>

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/as-illinois-second-largest-school-district-heads-back-to-school-heres-a-refresher-on-the-cdcs-new-covid-guidelines/2915867/>

While some Illinois students and teachers are still waiting until later this month to head to the classroom, others have already begun to head back-to-school, including those in **District U-46** -- the state's second largest school district.

But as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continues to roll out its new, more flexible COVID guidelines and protocols, this school year is shaping up to look a little different than the last two.

“We’re in a stronger place today as a nation, with more tools—like vaccination, boosters, and treatments—to protect ourselves, and our communities, from severe illness from COVID-19,” the CDC's Greta Massetti, an author of the guidelines, said in a statement.

“We also have a better understanding of how to protect people from being exposed to the virus, like wearing high-quality masks, testing, and improved ventilation. This guidance acknowledges that the pandemic is not over, but also helps us move to a point where COVID-19 no longer severely disrupts our daily lives.”

At District U-46, which encompasses communities in the Northwest suburbs including Bartlett, Elgin, South Elgin, Hanover Park, Stream and Wayne, masks will not be required for students, staff and visitors.

Those guidelines also ring true for what's in place at the state's largest school district, Chicago Public Schools.

And while it won't be required for the upcoming school year, vaccination is still strongly encouraged.

According to recent update from Chicago Public Health Department commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady, only about 9% of Chicagoans under five years old have received first doses of the COVID vaccine -- a number she said she isn't "pleased" with.

CPS CEO Pedro Martinez echoed Arwady's sentiments, saying "There is no better protection than vaccination. One of our goals for the new school year is having our children be learning safely in our classrooms. The best way to accomplish that for families is through vaccinations."

While specific protocols and guidelines may vary from district to district, many will put into practice the CDC's new procedures around quarantine, exposure and more.

## **The Examiner of Bartlett COVID-related resolution passed by Dist. U-46 board --- 8/17/2022**

**By Seth Hancock: Note – This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood**

The **Board of Education in School District U-46** will defer to agencies in making COVID-related decisions as the 2022-2023 school year begins.

The board, without discussion or questioning, approved a resolution supporting the return to in-person instruction following direction from federal down to local “health” agencies at its meeting on Monday, Aug. 8. The vote was 5-0, board members Dawn Martin and Kate Thommes were absent.

A similar resolution was approved last year when school districts were required to return to in-person learning. The resolution continues to cite Gov. J.B. Pritzker’s original emergency orders in 2020.

The resolution states there’s “no policy compelling” the vote, but the board “wishes to express its support” for **Superintendent Tony Sanders’** directives it claims he has authority to make students, staff and visitors follow in public school facilities.

“The Superintendent and the Superintendent’s designees are hereby authorized and directed to implement and enforce the plan and are further authorized to require students, staff,

parents, visitors and other participants in the District's programs to comply with the Plan and with the directives of the Superintendent and the Superintendent's designees," the resolution states. "The Superintendent is further authorized to modify the Plan from time to time to address operational needs in connection with federal, State, local public health guidance."

The resolution states contact tracing will continue as well as forced compliance with executive order mandates such as staff requirements to submit to COVID shots. The district will also attempt to track staff and student inoculation rates.

"Such system shall then be used to determine when prevention strategies, including social distancing and mask usage, can be incrementally reduced when data suggests it is safe to do so," the resolution states.

What should be noted is that U-46 was one of several school districts in the state that were told by a court earlier this year that it cannot force mask wearing without due process. That court precedent remains in place.

The resolution also states the superintendent can "close a building" or "limit access" of visitors.

## **The Examiner of Bartlett**

### **U-46 expenditure items on agenda for Aug. 22 vote --- 8/17/2022**

**By Seth Hancock: Note – This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood**

The **Board of Education in School District U-46** is set to vote on \$2.5 million in expenditure items at its upcoming meeting on Monday, Aug. 22 after being presented on Aug. 8.

Included is a 36-month agreement with Esscoe, LLC costing \$1.3 million, from the operations and maintenance fund if approved, for service maintenance of access controls and video surveillance systems.

"The scope of services detailed in the RFP (request for proposal) includes supporting our current inventory, totaling over 910 cameras, 330 doors, and 11,000 FOBs," the proposal states. "It also requires dedicated technicians for School District U-46, so that corrective maintenance measures can be performed promptly with limited service disruptions. The district also required all bidders provide proof of certifications in Genetec software and CCure 9000, which are the operating systems that currently support the camera and card reader systems in School District U-46."

Costing \$855,819 (education fund), the district is seeking to buy 715 desktop computers from Lenovo.



“The Lenovo desktops will be able to support the current curriculum as well as provide the district with the ability to add new programs as needed,” the proposal states. “With the added performance that these systems will provide, we will be able to support the high schools’ growing ESports programs. The new systems will save the district the expense of having to purchase dedicated devices for the E-Sport programs.”

The district is seeking a three-year contract with Gallup, Inc. for the Gallup Q12 survey for staff which has a price tag of \$271,080 (education fund).

“Administration and the Board of Education have recently reviewed the district’s strategic plan and metrics for tracking success,” the proposal states. “Through this work, we established the need for a more robust process for measuring employee engagement across the district and identifying specific actions to address areas of low engagement.”

The district is also seeking a contract with High Scope for a preschool curriculum that has been in use in the district since 1985. The contract costs \$53,324 which will be paid via an Illinois Preschool for All grant.

## **The Examiner of Bartlett**

### **Caution urged for motorists as schools open ---**

**8/17/2022**

#### **Examiner Report**

The first day of school for **School District U-46** students was Tuesday, Aug. 16, and Bartlett police are urging drivers to obey school speed zone signs, no parking signs, refrain from using cellular telephones and pay attention to students walking to and from school. Police also urge drivers to drive with caution near residential bus stop locations. Motorists should plan for longer commute times near school zones.

Police encourage students who walk to and from school to always look both ways before crossing the street, obey the crossing guards and try to walk with a parent, sibling, friend, or neighbor.

Bartlett police will be conducting extra patrols near U-46 schools and surrounding neighborhoods. These extra patrols are to encourage residents to obey the school zone speed limits, and compliance with “no parking” signs. Please refer to the individual school to identify proper drop off and pick up locations.