

Press Clippings 8/3/2022

The Examiner of South Elgin

Project Backpack extends benefit to many area students ---

8/3/2022

By Seth Hancock

The Kane County Regional Office of Education (ROE) recently cosponsored Project Backpack, which is a community-based initiative led by Elgin Community College (ECC) and other event partners to benefit K through 12 and college students in need by offering appropriate resources to start a successful school year. Since 2010, Project Backpack has helped over 17,000 students.

“For some children, purchasing new school supplies is a normal part of going back to school,” said Jimmy Pawola, ROE Equal Chance Program liaison for the Kane County Regional Office of Education. “For others, school supplies are not readily available and it may set a negative tone that carries with them throughout the entire school year. Project Backpack makes sure that all students have the proper tools for a positive school experience.”

“A simple act as donating a backpack full of school supplies can be the one thing that pushes a child toward a love of school, giving them the encouragement, they need to have continued academic success throughout their academic career,” said Regional Superintendent Patricia Dal Santo in emphasizing her beliefs in helping create more equity in school districts. “For the Kane County ROE office to be a small part of that is quite humbling.”

In 2022 Project Backpack impacted 1,700 students. These students reside in the school communities of **District U46**, District 20, District 300, District 301, District 302, District 303, EMSA and Elgin Community College. Each bag includes school supplies kits and mental health/agency information. Bags were put together during the week of July 26 at Elgin Community College with the help of its Student Life volunteers.

Discover more about Project Backpack, visit project-backpack.org. Learn more about the Kane County ROE, visit www.kaneroe.org. Stay updated with Kane ROE and subscribe to the bi-weekly newsletter from the Kane ROE and follow-on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

The Examiner of Bartlett

U-46 adds depository to list of approved firms --- 8/3/2022

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 a list of authorized depositories at its upcoming meeting on Monday, Aug. 8. The list was presented on July 18.

The list of depositories, which handle the district's investments, will remain with the same three companies previously used while a fourth has been added.

“In accordance with the Illinois School Code and board policy, we are recommending four firms; PMA Securities, the Illinois School District Liquid Asset Fund, JP Morgan Chase and Fifth Third Bancorp; as authorized depositories for the new school year,” said **Ann Williams**, deputy superintendent for operations.

Williams added: “All of them except Fifth Third are financial institutions that we've used in the past. We're adding Fifth Third in an effort to improve our investment strategies long term and maximize our interest earnings.”

The addition of Fifth Third offers at least some vindication for former board member Phil Costello who in 2018 raised the lack of a competitive process in choosing investment companies as an issue that needed to be addressed. District officials admitted that they chose the same companies every year simply because a majority of school districts used them.

Costello, a public administrator himself, did his own analysis of the district's investments at the time and found at least \$940,000 in “missed opportunities” over an 11-month period. The district and the board's majority did not address his concerns then.

“At no time were the merits of my analysis assessed or detrimental consequences refuted,” Costello said at the time. “I have consistently asked that district staff provide additional evidence of competitive bidding, robust internal control, and avoidance of sole sourced professional services.”

The Examiner of Bartlett

Expenditure items poised for Dist. U-46 board vote --- 8/3/2022

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 \$812,708 in expenditure items at its upcoming meeting on Monday, Aug. 8. The items were presented on July 18.

The largest item is \$195,000, from the education fund if approved, with Hudl for a three-year package that allows all five high schools to livestream and provide online storage of athletic games and practices.

Hudl has been used by Bartlett and South Elgin high schools in the past through funds raised by athletic boosters, but the district wants it taxpayer-funded so “all athletic programs have access to the program,” the proposal states.

The district is asking for \$161,528 (education fund) with School Health Corp. of Rolling Meadows for an automatic external defibrillator (AED) maintenance program. The district has 107 AEDs.

There were five bids, including two lower than School Health Corp. The lowest bid was \$151,124.

“School Health Corp. was not the lowest bidder, but they scored highest on the Scoring Summary, and they are the only local company,” the proposal states. “Being local, they can provide on-site yearly inspections and replacement units within [three] hours. The online program is the best we found to track and document compliance and safety with additional features to help the district track our legally required emergency medications. No one else could provide that service.”

The district is seeking \$100,255, to be paid by the nation’s taxpayers by federal funds, with Alphaprime Communications to replace 200 handheld two-way radios.

A contract renewal with Learning Genia has a price tag of \$95,680 (education fund) for a software program “to empower early learning communities to achieve continuous quality improvement with data-driven child assessment and family engagement,” the proposal states.

A pair of two-year contract renewals with Don Johnston have the same cost of \$78,624 (education fund) each for Co:Writer and Snap & Read software licensing. The software is for students “who have more significant difficulty” with grammar, reading and spelling.

Two more contract renewals from the education fund include \$68,396 for Encyclopedia Britannica resources and \$34,600 for a participation fee with Project Lead the Way.