



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Three U-46 Academies Receive National Certification**

*'Magnet' status given to academies at Streamwood, Larkin, Bartlett*

**ELGIN** - Three of School District U-46's specialized academies — at Streamwood, Larkin, and Bartlett high schools — have been recognized as nationally certified magnet schools for providing high-quality, innovative educational options to families and students that promote choice, diversity and academic excellence.

Of the two remaining academies in U-46, South Elgin High School's Beacon Academy of Media & Digital Arts earned magnet status in 2021, and Elgin High School's Gifted and Talented Academy is preparing for International Baccalaureate accreditation.

The certifications come as U-46 continues to strengthen its high school programming to ensure every student is prepared to succeed in college and careers. The District is investing in facility upgrades, enhancing its "Educational Pathways," and offering an increasing number of work-based learning opportunities.

"We've always been proud of our high school academies, and the certification through the Magnet Schools of America demonstrates to our families that they provide outstanding learning opportunities for our students, with a rigorous and relevant curriculum," said School District U-46 Superintendent Dr. Tony Sanders. "I wanted to thank all the administrators and teachers who worked on the applications, evaluations, and extensive process that led to this accomplishment."



U-46 launched academies, a themed-based school within a school, at each of its five comprehensive high schools more than 20 years ago. In recent years it has redesigned programming at the academies to ensure they remain unique and focused.

**The three academies that recently received Magnet status are:**

- Streamwood High School’s LEAD Academy, with LEAD standing for Leadership Entrepreneurship Action and Design. The academy students learn to be problem solvers and innovators in a collaborative environment. The program is designed for students interested in rigorous academic learning coupled with real-world experiential learning. Through several courses, students develop a business from conception to market, culminating in a “pitch night” to seek funding for each business.
- Larkin High School’s Visual and Performing Arts Academy. This academy features a four-year performance-based program in the focus areas of dance, drama, visual arts, and vocal and instrumental music. It uses multiple approaches to learning that address problem-solving skills, the creative process, and imagination through a focus on the fine arts.
- Bartlett High School’s Science, Engineering, and High Technology Academy. At this academy, students are immersed in the principles of engineering and design. Concepts from science and math are applied to solving real-world problems with technology.

The academies received the certification following a yearlong process. Academy staff and high school leadership provided evidence that demonstrated the schools met or exceeded criteria developed by Magnet Schools of America — criteria that fall under the pillars of diversity, innovative curriculum and professional development, academic excellence, leadership, and family and community partnerships. The efforts were led by



Tracy Stewart, the Assistant Principal of Innovation at Streamwood High; Todd Duty, then the Assistant Principal of Innovation at Larkin High; and Milena Nedeljkovic, the Assistant Principal of STEM at Bartlett High. The certifications are valid through 2026.

Students in U-46 apply to attend one of the five high school academies in the fall of their 8th grade year.

To help students decide on whether and where to apply, the five academies will offer open houses throughout October. Families and 8th grade students should visit [www.u-46.org/magnetacademies](http://www.u-46.org/magnetacademies) for updated information on these opportunities. Email and text reminders will also be sent this fall to all families with 8th grade students.

Meanwhile, the District is also strengthening the “Educational Pathways” for students not part of an academy. Educational Pathways are a strategically planned sequence of career oriented courses paired with required general education courses that lead directly to a post-secondary plan. For instance, a student in the Health Sciences pathway would take their core classes, as well as courses in the pathway. They could graduate high school as a certified nursing assistant, earning college credit through the Dual Credit program, and then be well prepared to pursue a variety of postsecondary options in the health professions or medical field.

Over the summer of 2022, improvements were made to the facilities at Streamwood High School for programs that include early childhood education, healthcare science, and law. The LEAD Academy was also fully renovated to include spaces that foster creating thinking and teaming; a board room; a student-run school store; and a digital fabrication laboratory. In the summer of 2023, the precision manufacturing, engineering, hospitality and automotive technologies programs at Streamwood High School are planned to be upgraded. Larkin and South Elgin high schools



underwent similar improvements in the summer of 2021, and the remaining high schools are scheduled for updates in the coming years.

In addition, School District U-46, in partnership with the Alignment Collaborative for Education, placed 52 students in summer internships around the U-46 community. These internships offered the high school students hands-on opportunities with companies across many industry clusters working directly with professionals in engineering, manufacturing, real estate, finance, marketing, community relations, and youth services careers.

“I appreciated having real workforce opportunities that opened my mind to see how things we learn in school apply in real life,” said Kush Patel, a senior at Bartlett High School’s STEM Academy who completed an internship with Elgin Sweeper.

The Alignment Collaborative for Education is a non-profit organization of business and community leaders committed to partnering with schools, families, and the community to prepare students for future success as they progress through high school, ready to transition to post-secondary education and work experiences.

Alignment will also support U-46 by planning Explore, the District’s annual expo designed to expose 8th graders to various careers and demonstrate the connection between academic curriculum and future careers. Students will attend during the school day on Wednesday, Oct. 6, at the NOW Arena in Hoffman Estates.

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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*



## School District U-46

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*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 35,000 pre-K through 12 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](#).*