



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **School District U-46 Welcomes Students on Aug. 16**

*2022-23 school year to see expansion of U-46 Rising*

**ELGIN** - Classes resume Tuesday, Aug. 16 for more than 35,000 kindergartners through 12th graders across School District U-46. The school year promises continued innovation and excellence, including an award-winning Dual Language program that stretches from PreK through 12th grade and the expansion of U-46 Rising, a system-wide intentional focus to improve core instruction.

"U-46 team members across the District have spent the summer preparing our buildings, classrooms, curriculum, and resources for the 2022-23 school year," said U-46 Superintendent Dr. Tony Sanders. "We are excited to welcome back our students for another year of learning and growth."

To watch a welcome video from Superintendent Sanders, click [here](#).

The 2022-23 school year will see the placement of assistant principals at all 40 of the District's elementary schools to support the school principal and take on other leadership responsibilities. Previously, only the largest elementary sites had assistant principals. Literacy specialists will work with kindergartners through 3rd graders at a number of our elementary buildings. U-46 continues to invest in social-emotional supports; there are social and emotional learning teacher leaders assigned to each of the District's networks, and the secondary schools have a strong team of school counselors and social workers to help ensure our schools are supportive, successful learning environments.



U-46 Rising will expand from five elementary schools — which served as demonstration sites for the work last year — to include seven additional elementary schools, one middle school, and one PreK site. U-46 Rising is an intentional focus to improve classroom instruction and to ensure our systems work for all students through the use of student-led academic teaming. In this model, teams of two to five students work toward a common academic goal with clear protocols for engaging in standards-based academic work. Teams are interdependent, relying on each other with minimal teacher guidance.

The new schools embarking on U-46 Rising are Tefft Middle School; Independence Center for Early Learning; and Clinton, Coleman, Fox Meadow, Harriet Gifford, Highland, Oakhill, and Timber Trails elementary schools. The initial five — Creekside, Channing Laurel Hill, Parkwood, and Willard elementary schools — will continue with their work. All 14 schools are known as Schools for Rigor and Equity.

As a School for Rigor and Equity, the entire school staff receives additional professional coaching and support in order to ensure that every teacher and administrator has the tools, and resources they need to implement academic teaming in the classroom. In addition, these schools receive extra resources to provide time for teacher teams to meet weekly with an instructional coach to review student progress and work collaboratively to plan instruction. More information on U-46 Rising, including videos showcasing the work at the five model schools, can be found at [www.u-46.org/u46rising](http://www.u-46.org/u46rising).

The District's Dual Language program will serve about 12,000 students during the 2022-23 school year. Dual language is a form of bilingual education in which students are taught literacy and academic content in two languages - English and in the case of U-46, Spanish. The District is home to one of the largest such programs in the United States, and the students in the program are on their way to becoming bilingual and biliterate, better ready to build careers in a global society.



U-46 will also continue its robust college and career offerings, including a partnership with Elgin Community College to offer a full-time Dual Credit program for our juniors and seniors. These students, who must demonstrate certain college readiness benchmark scores for acceptance, take all of their courses at ECC. They earn both high school and college credit for each class. Students in the program for two years will graduate with both a high school diploma and an ECC associate's degree in arts or science. In May 2022, 44 graduating seniors were honored for their participation in this valuable program — 32 of them graduating high school with an associate's degree.

Also during the 2022-23 school year, U-46 will continue the work begun last spring with Unite U-46, a community engagement initiative that seeks to develop recommendations on the best way to implement the long-range vision of the Board of Education; this vision includes shifting middle school to include grades 6th, 7th, and 8th (the current model has 6th grade as part of elementary school); using the space in elementary schools to expand early childhood opportunities across U-46; and to replace and/or renovate some of our older buildings to provide equitable access to learning environments that support academic success for all.

The next Unite U-46 session, scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 14 at 7 p.m., will focus on how school building improvements are funded and the options U-46 has for moving the process forward. In addition, there will be a Unite U-46 tour of a selection of school buildings on Saturday, Sept. 24 from 9 a.m. to noon and an open house on Thursday, Sept. 29 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. More information, including locations and registration, plus recordings of past sessions, can be found at [UniteU46.org](http://UniteU46.org).

After being held virtually the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the District's annual career expo for 8th grade students will return to being held in-person, during the school day on Thursday, Oct. 6 at the NOW Arena in Hoffman Estates. Called Explore, the event is designed to demonstrate for



students the connection between academic curriculum and future careers. The [Alignment Collaborative for Education](#), a non-profit local organization that brings together community resources and initiatives to support District priorities, is once again partnering with U-46 to organize the event.

As part of the #U46FirstDayReady campaign, U-46 has been urging parents to use the last weeks of summer break to ensure their children meet health-related requirements, including having up-to-date physicals and immunization records. Students starting pre-school, kindergarten, sixth, ninth, and twelfth grades must show proof of meeting specific health requirements by the first day of school. The policy aims to ensure a healthy environment for all students. Links to the requirements and necessary forms can be found at [u-46.org/health](http://u-46.org/health).

With the world in the midst of the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, U-46 will be keeping in place a number of safety measures to help protect students, staff, parents, and the larger community from the spread of COVID-19 and its variants. The District will also comply with the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois State Board of Education, and its local health departments, Kane, DuPage, and Cook.

Those safety measures include:

- Strong recommending, but not requiring, indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status.
- Social distancing to the extent possible.
- Regular hand washing and respiratory etiquette.
- Monitoring data, including vaccination rates among staff and students, community transmission rates, and reported COVID-19 cases in schools.



Also due to the impact of COVID-19, the U-46 Board of Education voted to waive instructional fees for U-46 students for the 2022-23 school year. In addition, the District is providing school supplies to elementary students, and school meals will be provided at no cost to students at all U-46 schools.

Students enrolled in the District's PreK programs will have their first day of school on Tuesday, Aug. 23.

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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 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](#).*