

Press Clippings 5/18/2022

Chicago Tribune/The Courier-News

U-46 holding community discussion May 25 --- 5/17/2022

By Mike Danahey

School District U-46 will hold its final Unite U-46 (Moving Forward Together) community discussion at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 25, at the U-46 Welcome Center, 1019 E. Chicago St. Elgin.

The focus of the town hall-style meeting will be the expansion of the district's early childhood programs and the planned shift to a grade 6-8 middle school system.

This will be the last meeting of its kind for this school year, with the sessions resuming in the fall.

To register to attend or for more information, go to www.u-46.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=15447.

The Examiner of Bartlett

Boundary change ratified for U-46's Hawk Hollow---

5/18/2022

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

By a unanimous vote, the School District U-46 Board of Education approved of boundary changes for Bartlett's Hawk Hollow Elementary School, at its meeting on Monday, May 2.

The changes are part of a five-year facilities plan which includes converting Hawk Hollow into a middle school as the district plans to expand middle school to sixth through eighth grade instead of the current seventh and eighth. The changes will take effect in 2023-2024.

The board approved of the facilities study and plan earlier this year.

A memo from Brian Lindholm, chief of staff, states that Army Trail Road will be the dividing line for determining where current Hawk Hollow elementary families will send their children to elementary school. Families north of the road would go to Prairieview and south of the road will go to Spring Trail for elementary school.

Current enrollment shows 90 percent going to Prairieview and 10 percent to Spring Trail.

“We have confirmed that both schools possess the available capacity to absorb these students starting in the 23-24 school year,” Lindholm wrote.

Additionally, the district will give qualifying families the chance to go to Prairieview or Spring Trail starting in the 2022-2023 school year. Qualifying currently are 43 incoming kindergartners, 21 siblings of incoming kindergartners and three new students to Hawk Hollow.

“The students will be offered transportation services if the area of residence qualifies for services,” Lindholm wrote. “We will ask these families to decide by May 27, 2022, if they would like to move their student(s) to allow us to assess the impact on class rosters and possibly staffing. If we do not hear back from the family by May 27, 2022, the student(s) will remain enrolled at Hawk Hollow Elementary School for the 2022-2023 school year.”

Lindholm added: “Approving the new boundaries will provide families of new Hawk Hollow Elementary School students for the 2022-2023 school year the opportunity to move their students a year early to avoid consecutive transitions. It will also allow us to publicly share the new boundaries that would become effective for all students in the current Hawk Hollow Elementary School boundary area for the 2023-2024 school year.”

The Examiner of Bartlett

U-46 conducts annual high school honors event ---

5/18/2022

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** held its annual recognition of the top 2 percent of graduating seniors at its meeting on Monday, May 9. This will be one of the last graduating classes to receive the recognition as the district plans to do away with class ranking by the 2026- 2027 school year.

The ceremony was held at South Elgin High School.

“Your parents, your network that’s here to support you tonight, the people at home who have supported you during your academic journey and all of the teachers who are at home watching you online or are here in person with you tonight helped you get to where you are today,” said Superintendent Tony Sanders.

There were 31 seniors in the top 2 percent from the three high schools in The Examiner coverage area.

From South Elgin: Abigail Choi, Anna Creagan, Ashlin Lee, Caroline Croft, Ella Winterhalder, Emma Hunter, Gino Santini, Liliana Hernandez, Loreal Wilson, Michael Walczuk, Rachel McClow, Salvi Patel and Yuri You.

From Bartlett: Agilan Gunashankar, Anthony Martin, Asmita Shah, Carter Eid, Desiree Oliveros, Evan Bulatek, Jillian Murdoch, Lorenzo Marasigan, Marcos Sanson and Ronit Nagarapu.

From Streamwood: HeeRan Yang, Jennifer Voravong, Joshua Manzano, Kaitlyn Esteban, Katelyn Nguyen, Kayla Ticherafi, Mishael Mazhar and Vanessa Pitsenbarger.

As for the coming changes, an April 11 memo to the board in response to questions from board member Dawn Martin stated students will not have access to their SAT scores or their class rank on their Infinite Campus transcripts when class rank changes take effect. SAT and PSAT scores will only be available on College Board accounts.

Regarding class rank, Martin noted every college asks for class rank on applications and “making sure students still have access if needed seems to make sense.”

The memo stated: “We will continue to recognize the Top 2 [percent] until this change takes effect with our current 7th grade class. We are still working to determine the district-wide recognition structure that will begin in the 2026-2027 school year. Students will continue to have access to their class rank through their counselor once this change takes effect.”

The Examiner of Streamwood

Canton principal retiring following 33-year career ---

5/18/2022

By Seth Hancock

Jeff Smith will be retiring after a 33- year career in **School District U-46** including the longest serving principal at Streamwood’s **Canton Middle School** for over 12 years.

Smith began his career as a math teacher at Canton in 1989 and spent time as a teacher, administrator and baseball coach at **Elgin High School** and South Elgin’s **Kenyon Woods Middle School**.

But Canton has primarily been Smith’s home in U-46 with 21 years there, and it is clear by the number of staff members, parents and former students ready to talk about his career that Smith will be missed.

Creating a family atmosphere was common from those who commented on Smith to The Examiner, including reading teacher Anna McEvelly who has taught at Canton during Smith’s 12-year stint as principal.

“His actions show that he loves his staff and students as a family,” McEvelly said. “He has shoveled the front sidewalk before school when custodians were working on the back. He would go out to our cars and change our tires when we had a flat, even in his dress clothes he would get down on his knees in the winter so we could get home on a spare tire.”

Kim Rudden will be replacing Smith as Canton’s principal. She has taught under Smith as Canton’s principal and assistant principal at Kenyon Woods, and she was also a student of his in 1990.

“I am honored to be the next [school principal] of his school where he has created such a strong sense of community and family,” Rudden said.

Several staff at Canton have had the experience of being former students and staff under Smith. Jay Svendsen, a Canton guidance counselor, played baseball for Smith at Elgin.

“Coach Smith had an innate ability to support and relate to his players; as well as push and challenge them to reach their potential.... His legacy as a teacher, coach, and administrator will be remembered for years to come,” Svendsen said.

Elizabeth Brunner, a Canton English teacher, and Jason Welch, Canton’s head custodian, are both current staff who were math students of Smith. “It was an honor working with him,” Welch said. “I wish him all the best in retirement. May your drives always find the fairway and your putts always find the bottom of the cup.”

Brunner said: “I have had the pleasure of having Jeff Smith as not only my own teacher in seventh grade, but also as a leader and friend during the last nine years of my career. In both cases, Jeff knew how to bring fun and excitement into the learning environment.

Julie Roy-Chowdhury, former Canton PTO president, and Jennifer Noble, current PTO president, described Smith’s desire to work with parents and willingness to put himself into embarrassing situations, like dressing up as Princess Ariel from “The Little Mermaid,” for fundraisers.

“He believed that communication with parents was important and did a weekly connected message on Friday nights,” Roy-Chowdhury said. “He was always there to participate in whatever people asked of him.”

“Mr. Smith, without any hesitation, dolled up with makeup and dressed up,” Noble said of Smith going as Ariel for a PTO fundraiser. “Even when the outfit didn’t quite fit, he made it work. He even changed to a second princess dress for the special needs students who could not attend his stage performance.”

Smith was mentored by Sue Welu as her assistant principal at both Kenyon Woods and Canton. “His passion for his work was by far his greatest asset,” Welu said. “Jeff will be missed in U-46, and especially by his students and staff.”

The Observer (News site of Elgin Community College)

U-46 graduates first class of students with college degrees ---

5/17/2022

By Hannah Mourousias, Contributor

Elgin Community College's dual credit program is an academic opportunity offered to high school juniors and seniors from school districts **U-46**, 300, 301, 303 as well as select local private and charter schools. According to U-46's dual credit program guide for parents and students, "[t]he programs provide a way to save time and money towards attaining a higher education, experience college life, and prepare for a successful transition after high school."

Students enrolled in the program are able to complete high school and college credits simultaneously either part-time or full-time. For full-time students, those who begin in their junior year can graduate from high school and from ECC at the same time. Seniors are able to earn as many as 32 transferable credit hours. Part-time students are able to enroll in a handful of college level courses per semester at the high school they already attend.

A prominent lure of the program is its supposed affordability. For every enrolled student, their school district pays for tuition. Depending on their district, students may even receive assistance in paying for textbooks each semester. While this credit is typically not enough to cover the costs of materials for one semester, it will inevitably help students save money compared to if they enrolled normally. In the event that a student needs to take summer classes to make up for credit deficiencies, they will have to pay out of their own pocket.

"I actually knew nothing about the program other than the fact that I would end up with an associate's degree at the end of it," said Jaqueline Funes, a **Bartlett High School** senior. "My thought process at the time was 'If I don't end up transferring to a university, at least I'll have a degree with my name on it.'"

ECC's dual credit program opens up doors to make college more accessible and affordable. Whether a student is from a low-income family or unsure whether college is the right choice for them, they are welcome to explore their options in a safe environment.

"In the next couple of years, I think this program will be expanding considerably," said Angelina Peralez, who has worked directly with dual credit students while filling in for U-46's lead counselor. "The goal is to eventually have this program expand to every school district in the state."

In May 2022, the first round of two-year dual credit students from U-46 will be graduating with their college degree and high school diploma. U-46 declined to provide specific statistics on enrollment but estimated that approximately 30 students from the foundational group will be graduating with an associate's degree. This is one of the most recent milestones marking

the success of the program. It serves to prove that high school students who are willing to put in the work have a real chance to take command of their academic careers.

“I feel like the best part besides getting a degree so young is the independence,” said Sarah Hall, a Bartlett High School senior. “I’m able to be fully in charge of my education and classes in a way you really can’t be while in high school.” Hall is among the first group of two-year graduates. The achievements she and her peers have made during the past two years will be recognized by U-46’s superintendent Dr. Tony Sanders in late May at the college’s dual credit celebration.

“In general, I think the program has exceeded my expectations,” Hall said. “After going through college and scholarship processes it looks really great on my application and helped show me as a committed student.” Hall has committed to Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis, which has granted her a Presidential Scholarship that will cover the majority of her tuition. She will also be able to transfer the majority of her college credits, cutting down significantly on the costs she would have incurred had she not participated in the dual credit program.

The freedom students gain from the program has been a major factor in encouraging prospective students to apply. Though dual credit students are unable to craft their own schedules by picking specific class sections, there are more course options available than at any of the high schools. Students have the chance to explore unfamiliar subjects that may interest them more than the traditional courses offered at their high school. They also have the potential to discover new interests that they would not be exposed to outside of a college setting.

“I love that I get to have some more freedom with the classes I take!” said Vanessa Pitsenbarger, a **Streamwood High School** senior. “I have to meet certain requirements for the associate’s degree along with the district requirements, but I still feel like there’s more options for classes. For example, to fulfill the behavioral science requirement of my degree, I am currently taking an introduction to anthropology, which I really enjoy.”

Similar opportunities are still fairly uncommon across the country, so dual credit students have a unique edge over the competition in regards to college applications. The program enables students to adapt to the rigors of college coursework while still being able to rely on the comforts of home.

“I remember my first semester I was falling asleep while doing English homework,” Pitsenbarger said. “My mom came in and asked me if I was sure I should be in this program. After a week or two, though, I understood the work that I need to be putting in.”

The coursework expectations of ECC are distinctly different from what incoming juniors and seniors are used to. Late assignments, which tend to be easily forgiven in the high school environment, are taken more seriously at the college level. It is essential to master time management skills early on so as to avoid any late work penalties professors may impose.

“I didn’t really get homework in high school,” Funes said. “When I got to ECC it was like if you don’t do your work, then you can’t succeed in your classes. I remember I would get so stressed and spend literally my entire day doing work at the kitchen table.”

For many students, ECC is able to act as a stepping stone between high school and a four-year institution. They are able to gain crucial experience managing demanding and time-consuming coursework while getting a real sense of a professor’s expectations compared to a regular teacher. Dual credit students are treated as adults by their professors. The full weight of their educational responsibilities lie on their shoulders alone. With such early exposure compared to the average high schooler, the transition to another college or university can be less daunting.

“I looked at numerous out-of-state colleges throughout high school, so I knew getting a head start on college courses was necessary for two reasons,” Pitsenbarger said. “I would be more alone if I went out of state, so I would need to be mentally prepared for college, and the financial savings from taking these courses would be extremely helpful for the future.”

While ECC has relationships with other Illinois colleges through the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) to ensure an easy transfer of credits, dual credit students may find themselves in a difficult position because they do not graduate as transfer students. Many prestigious schools, such as Northwestern, do not recognize credits that overlap with high school requirements. According to Northwestern’s registrar office, “[c]ourses completed through dual credit enrollment programs...due to credit sharing, are not eligible to transfer.” They also require a significant amount of paperwork to be filled out should a student wish to transfer any of their electives.

The majority of classes students are completing at ECC are typical core classes. This forces students to be selective with what they are able to transfer. There may be a negative incentive for some students to attend prestigious institutions if they will be required to repeat more than a full year’s worth of classes. Students may encounter additional conflicts if they move on to an out-of-state school.

With a wider range of subjects to choose from, some students seem to share the sentiment that their coursework is engaging and worth the extra troubles. The dual credit program can serve as an escape from the mundanity of a regular high school schedule. It is also a more fruitful alternative to AP classes for students looking for more challenging courses and to earn college credits. Unlike an AP class, completed dual credit courses guarantee credits to passing students without having to complete additional testing. Each class also only lasts one semester rather than a full school year, meaning that dual credit students are able to earn college credit more efficiently.

While the program presents a unique opportunity for students to get ahead in their post-secondary education, there are a few major setbacks that deter prospective applicants. A common reservation students hold is the impact the program has on an individual’s social life. The program displaces students from their existing circles. In turn, this requires them to form new relationships in an unfamiliar and more independent environment. This type of

commitment can be intimidating, especially for incoming juniors who may find themselves sitting next to adults in class.

“It was a difficult decision my sophomore year. I didn’t want to leave my friends and the ‘high school experience,’” said Kaitlyn Esteban, a Streamwood High School senior on the one-year track. “Quarantine happened junior year and it already distanced me from the idea of high school. So applying for my senior year wasn’t that hard of a choice anymore and I wish I did it junior year.”

For students who have deeply embedded themselves in their school communities, the dual credit program may not hold any appeal. Not everyone will be interested in more schoolwork and fewer chances to see their friends every day. One potential area of improvement several dual credit students have suggested for the program is the fact that there is no easy way for high schoolers to connect with each other at ECC. While all dual credit students are required to complete COL-101 College Success which facilitates team building activities in their first semester, meetings only take place once a week for eight weeks.

“The main reason I wasn’t interested in it was because I wanted the real high school experience,” said Rachel Petsinger, a South Elgin High School senior who will be attending ECC for the 2022/23 school year. “I wanted to be there every day and actually feel like I was a part of the school.” Petsinger has been an active member of South Elgin’s art, orchestra, choir, and theater departments since her freshman year. As a sophomore, the relationships she had already cultivated at her home high school were more important than the academic and financial advantages of starting college early.

“Dual credit might be a smart choice to get ahead but personally I value the community and didn’t want to leave all of my favorite teachers and classes behind yet,” Petsinger said. Her sentiment of valuing community is one that has been echoed by some dual credit students.

Like many other eligible students, Petsinger has maintained a 3.00 cumulative unweighted high school GPA that is “strongly [recommended]” for prospective applicants by U-46’s program guide. However, she was also disinterested in the additional testing required by the admissions process. Students must demonstrate “college readiness” by either completing ECC’s reading and math placement tests or submitting qualifying SAT scores.

“I think prospective applicants should start planning a few weeks or even a month in advance because the placement tests do discourage people from completing the process,” Pitsenbarger said. “It’s also necessary to discuss transportation with friends or family since the school bus does not take you to ECC.”

Despite being allowed to participate in sports and events held at the high school or the college, dual credit students are expected to be responsible for their own transportation. This presents a barrier to incoming students who do not have their driver’s licenses or a car available to them in the middle of the day.

“At my high school I was in one or two clubs and I was in orchestra as well,” Hall said. “Now I can’t really be as involved because I’m not ever there. I no longer am able to do orchestra just because I can’t be driving back and forth every day.”

Participating in the dual credit program undoubtedly requires some trade-offs on the student’s end. The program offers many freedoms to students at the cost of some benefits offered to those who attend in the regular sense. One must be willing to weigh their priorities against each other and fully commit themselves to a complete change in their day-to-day academics.

“The people who started as juniors have definitely mastered the whole college environment,” Peralez said. “The more that I talk to students about the program, it seems like they’re not missing out.”

Whether one’s choice to apply is based on academic, financial, or social reasons, their experience will be largely individual. The program has many areas for potential improvement.

It is still fairly new, so it will likely take several years to develop a system that is equitable and fulfilling for every student. However, current students seem to agree that their hard work will pay off in the long run.

The Examiner of Bartlett

South Elgin baseball wins series over rival Bartlett ---

5/18/2022

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

The **South Elgin** baseball team has bragging rights over its rival Bartlett after a three-game series sweep in Upstate Eight Conference play.

However, the final game was played under protest by the Hawks (11-12, 10- 8 UEC) after a controversial call late in the game. The Storm (18-3, 16-2) won the finale 11-8 on Tuesday, May 10 at Bartlett.

For now, the final score stands and South Elgin’s destiny for a conference crown remains in its hands with a three-game series against UEC leader Glenbard East (17-1) this week.

“We’re starting to play better. After the second inning, we got a little lethargic and lost some of our energy and allowed them to get back into the game. They were hitting the ball well today. I’m very glad our group persevered,” said South Elgin coach Jim Kating.

The game was a back-and-forth battle with both teams blasting some long balls. Jordan Green and Matt Jachim both cleared the fences for South Elgin, and Mario Prieto did the same for Bartlett.

It appeared that Patrick Nelson had also hit a home run to tie the game in the bottom of the sixth, but that's where the controversy occurred. Bartlett trailed 8-7 when Nelson hit his blast, but after the umpires conferred it was ruled that Kyle Steinhofer made a catch after he went over the center-field fence.

Hawks coach Christopher Baum argued it was unclear that Steinhofer was unable to maintain the catch, and the out call stole the momentum the Hawks would have had with the home run. The Storm did add three insurance runs in the top of the seventh inning before Bartlett rallied for one in the bottom half and left the tying run at the plate.

"That changes the momentum," Baum said. "They're high school kids, they feed off the momentum, and that was a game-changing decision."

The Storm earned a 7-4 win in the opener on Saturday, May 7 at South Elgin. Tyler Glowacki got the win and Ben Karpowicz the save for South Elgin, and Colin Swalley took the loss for Bartlett.

Green (2-for-3) and Owen Cutinello (2-for-4, two doubles) led the Storm at the plate. Swalley (2-for-3, triple, RBI), Nelson (2-for-3, RBI) and Prieto (2-for-3, RBI) led the Hawks.

Under the lights at the Kane County Cougar's Stadium, the Storm controlled the second game in a 14-0 win on Monday, May 9.

The Examiner of Streamwood

Sabres soccer top Larkin to win regional opener ---

5/18/2022

By Seth Hancock –

The **Streamwood** soccer team downed Upstate Eight Conference foe **Larkin** twice within 48 hours including the most important one, a regional quarterfinal victory hosted by the Sabres on Friday, May 13 at Millennium Field.

The No. 14 Sabres built a 5-0 lead by halftime on the way to a 6-0 win led by two goals and an assist from Diana Herrera, a goal and two assists from Daniela Sanchez, a goal and an assist from Dayanara Huerta and a goal each from Emily Colula and Emma Skrgic. Goalie Selina Chavez had one save.

Just a few days earlier on the same field, the Sabres defeated Larkin 6-2 to end its UEC schedule at 4-4-1 on Wednesday, May 11. Sanchez (two goals, one assist), Huerta (two goals, one assist), Esther Cardenas (one goal, one assist), Reyna Saldivar (one goal) and Diana Herrera (two assists) led the offense while Chavez stopped four shots on goal.

The Sabres, who are now 7-12-1 overall, have won six of their last nine games, which also included a tie.

One of the losses in that stretch was a 2-0 nonconference game against Batavia on Tuesday, May 10 at Batavia. Despite the loss, the Sabres showed why they've been streaking giving a tough Batavia squad all it could handle.

"I was extremely pleased with the team's performance," said Streamwood coach Matt Polovin. "Batavia is definitely one of the top teams in the state this season, and we stuck to our plan but just needed to finish a couple of our chances. They had a couple chances they put in, but defensively the girls kept their speedy players close to them and knocked them off the ball multiple times so they wouldn't be in a race all night long in the heat and humidity."

Polovin added: "They were subbing four, five players at a time and I subbed one player twice, and the team had great energy throughout the game. Selina Chavez also played great in goal making five saves, but on one she made an absolutely highlight reel diving save to the upper corner on a shot from 25 yards out."

Daily Herald

Girls soccer: St. Charles North blanks Streamwood in regional opener --- 5/17/2022

By Jake Bartelson, Shaw Local

Kaitlin Glenn's minutes on the pitch appear set to take off for St. Charles North.

The rise in confidence and dedicated refinement to her skills are just part of the equation for the North Stars' freshman. Glenn's finishing tally in the North Stars' Class 3A **Streamwood** regional semifinal 8-0 win over the Sabres is perhaps an example of her putting it together.

"Megan McGuire dropped the ball wide, picked her head up, had great vision to find that ball," North Stars coach Brian Harks said. "First touch out of Glenn, the composure to find the back of the net. What a great way to start your playoff career in high school with a goal."

Bella Najera and Sophia Hein each scored two goals in the first half for the North Stars (17-2), who continued to pour it on in the second half. Juliana Park, Sidney Timms, Sophie Sutherland and Glenn all found the back of the net in the dominating playoff opener.

Streamwood (7-13-1) struggled to generate much offensive chances against the North Stars, but goalie Selina Chavez kept busy with eight saves.

The No. 1 seeded St. Charles North will face either Elgin or Bartlett in the regional final at 4:30 p.m. Friday.

Glenn's adjustment to varsity skill and speed has been a steady progression as minutes were hard to come by at the start of the year.

"My touch on the ball was really poor," Glenn said. "But I feel like over the season my touch has become better and I've been getting more minutes."

Gaining confidence has flipped that switch.

"At the beginning of the season, I really wasn't confident in myself," Glenn said. "But more toward the end of the season, where we are now, I began to build more confidence in myself and just be strong on the field."

"Coach [Eric] Willson, he's a very good coach," Glenn said. "I feel like he's definitely one of the coaches who has pushed me to be a better player. He's willing to stay after school to help players get a better touch on the ball. He's constantly telling you how to improve and get better."

McGuire, for her part, "is a player who is super aggressive."

"There's never a moment -- whether it be in a game or practice -- where you know she [isn't] giving you absolutely everything she has," Harks said. "It just doesn't go unnoticed by the coaching staff and by her teammates and it's such a blessing to have on our team because her teammates see that and feed off it."

"I absolutely love Megan," Glenn said. "She's one of the players that welcomed me on the team. She's one of the players that's really helped me get to where I am today. She's been constantly helping me grow, improve and give me feedback and [her assist on my goal] was a good cross, too."

Streamwood coach Matt Polovin juggled the lineup all season with varying player combinations, but they still found a way for seven wins.

"Just definitely proud of how we came out every game. It was a weird season," Polovin said. "I didn't have a back-to-back game where I am the same lineup because of injuries, vacations, family emergencies, that's how it's been. We had some really good games. I mean, we played Batavia [lost] 2-0 [last week]. We easily should've tied that game ... can't take anything away from North. They're stacked. They're a great team. They're a No. 1 seed for a reason."

"... Our girls, they did everything they could," Polovin said. "... for me personally, I've been doing this for 21 years. I've never had a season like that [with the lineup changes]. I have some seniors I'm going to miss who have really given a lot to this program."