

Press Clippings - 4/3/2023

– Chicago Tribune –

Elgin News Digest: U-46 to spend \$6.8M on summer programming

March 28, 2023

By Mike Danahey - The Courier-News

U-46 to spend \$6.8M on summer programming

The **U-46 School Board** has approved spending more than \$6.8 million on summer recreational programs to be offered through various agencies.

Among the programs being funded are: STEAM/STEM programming provided by New Jersey-based Black Rocket, \$748,000; Boys and Girls Club of Elgin, \$1.8 million; city of Elgin, \$430,000; Golden Corridor Family YMCA, \$2.068 million; Hanover Park Park District, \$270,900; Next Wave STEM, \$57,600;

Also, Premier Early Childhood Partners, \$63,000; Three Fires Council, \$877,625; The Learning Tree of Elgin East, \$105,000; Side Street Studio Arts, \$119,064; Streamwood Park District \$135,880; and the South Elgin Parks and Recreation Department, \$154,800.

The programs will be open to students enrolled in **U-46** in the 2023-24 academic year who are 5 to 11 years old, district documents said. The programs can accommodate up to 3,161 students.

The effort is being funded through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.

To read the full article, click [here](#).

– Chicago Tribune –

March 30, 2023

By Mike Danahey - The Courier-News

U-46 Planetarium program to explore 2024 solar eclipse

The **School District U-46 Planetarium** in Elgin will present “The 2024 Solar Eclipse: 367 days and Counting” at 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m Thursday, April 6.

Admission is \$2 per person and a maximum of \$10 per family with five or more members. No reservations are required but seating is limited.

The planetarium is at 312 Watch St. For more information, go to www.u-46.org/Domain/2920, call 847-888-5019 or email debbieperryman@u-46.org or peggyhernandez@u-46.org.

To read the full article, click [here](#).

– Chicago Tribune –

Elgin News Digest: More than 200 U-46 seniors named Illinois State Scholars

March 31, 2023

By Mike Danahey - The Courier-News

More than 200 **U-46 seniors** named Illinois State Scholars

A total of 214 seniors at **School District U-46’s five comprehensive high schools** recently were named Illinois State Scholars.

Locally, there were **45 students from Elgin High School, 10 from Larkin High School and 62 from South Elgin High School**, a news release said.

The recognition represents the top 10% of academic achievers among the Class of 2023 in Illinois. Scholars are selected based on a formula that includes ACT/SAT test scores, class size and class rank and/or the unweighted GPA, the release said.

To read the full article, click [here](#).

– NBC 5 Chicago –

Here Are the Referendums That Will Appear on Ballots Across the Chicago Area on Election Day

April 2, 2023

Thousands of suburban voters will head to the polls this week for the 2023 municipal elections, and dozens of municipalities will have referendums and advisory questions on their ballots.

Whether voting on school funding, sales tax increases, home rule status or even cannabis sales, these questions will play a pivotal role in shaping the future in numerous communities.

You can find more details on your county's specific referendums by visiting the county clerks' website, which is linked at the top of each list.

Cook County

Elgin:

-Shall the board of education issue bonds in the amount of \$179 million to pay for a variety of construction projects and improvements in area schools?

DuPage County

School District U-46:

-Shall the school district issue \$179 million in bonds to implement a new middle school model, ensure schools have up-to-date safety and security features, equitable access to school programs, and update buildings with new preschool opportunities, new playgrounds and greenspaces, and an enhanced maintenance and repair budget?

Kane County

Elgin:

-Shall the board of education issue bonds in the amount of \$179 million to pay for a variety of construction projects and improvements in area schools?

To read the full article, click [here](#).

– Daily Herald –

Nicor Gas to help United Way initiative

April 3, 2023

Submitted by Allison Gregoire

The Nicor Gas Foundation has made a four-year, \$1 million commitment to United Way of Metro Chicago in support of the expansion of their Neighborhood Network Initiative, with a special focus on growing workforce development through these networks.

The commitment was announced Wednesday, March 15, at the Elgin Neighborhood Network launch event with lead partner agency Alignment Collaborative for Education.

The establishment of this Neighborhood Network empowers local leaders to identify and solve issues important to their community.

“The Nicor Gas Foundation is honored to join United Way of Metro Chicago to advance equity in education through this network with a multiyear commitment,” said Wendell Dallas, president and CEO of Nicor Gas.

“As the founding supporter of the Elgin Neighborhood Network, we are proud to work in partnership with Alignment Collaborative for Education to provide workforce training opportunities and job readiness programs to better prepare high school students to pursue fulfilling careers.”

As a leading supporter of community-driven efforts, United Way of Metro Chicago launched its Neighborhood Network Initiative in 2013 as an “inside-out,” place-based approach to neighborhood transformation.

At the Elgin Neighborhood Network, Alignment Collaborative for Education will lead the vision and work to address critical student needs in **Elgin Area School District U-46**.

The district estimates that more than 30% of its students live through multiple adverse childhood experiences and approximately 60% of its students are low income.

Backed by the Nicor Gas Foundation’s investment, Alignment will address these issues by guiding the Network’s focus on increasing early education preparation, building trauma-informed care school cultures and ensuring students leave high school prepared for the global workforce.

To learn more about Nicor Gas' commitment to the community, visit www.nicorgas.com/community.

– Chicago Tribune –

A smackdown of athletic stereotypes: Emma Engels of Bartlett High wrestles girls and boys, winning accolades and matches

March 31, 2023

By Zareen Syed - Chicago Tribune



Bartlett High School sophomore Emma Engels, named IHSA girls wrestling state champion, between classes at school on March 23, 2023. (Antonio Perez / Chicago Tribune)

It's clear that wrestler **Emma Engels** doesn't do it "for the 'gram," and certainly not for the attention.

The 15-year-old sophomore from **Bartlett High School** is fresh off an Illinois High School Association wrestling championship victory, but you likely wouldn't guess that based on how quickly she shoves her gold medal back into her backpack. She's just not the type to brag about her victories on outlets such as Instagram.

“Next year, it won’t matter,” said Engels, of Elgin. “And I go play softball now, and they’ll make an announcement about it, but the girls across the (softball) field aren’t going to care that I won the championship in wrestling.”

On Feb. 25, Engels won the 100-pound championship match of the girls wrestling state meet in Bloomington, becoming only the fourth state champ in **Bartlett High School** history.

Previous state champions include a female bowler, a student journalist and a male wrestler 11 years before Engels joined the ranks.

During the high school wrestling season, however, Engels mostly competes against boys, having wrestled girls only a few times.

“I just see them as another opponent across the way. I definitely hear, after I win, (boys saying to her opponent) ‘Oh, you’re wrestling a girl and you lost!’ Things like that,” Engels said. “I don’t really care. If I win, I win.”

IHSA allows competition between male and female athletes in wrestling, but students have to choose which gender to compete against at the end of the year going into the state series, where Engels chose to compete in the girls’ championship.



Bartlett's Emma Engels, top, works against Oak Forest's Alex Sebek during the 100-pound championship bout of the girls wrestling state meet on Feb. 25, 2023, in Bloomington. (Vincent D. Johnson/*for the Beacon-News*)

From the looks of it, Engels is a shy, unassuming teenager in the throes of high school athletics and STEM Academy classes. She's kind to classmates and teachers alike.

"You'd wonder, like, 'She's the state champ?' but she'll beat up kids in the wrestling room," said **Bartlett High School's wrestling head coach, John Glorioso.** "She's a competitor — nice, humble, respectful, does what she has to do. And when you watch her, it's like, 'Holy crap — this is the nice girl that's in class?'"

During the regular season, Glorioso said, coaches generally determine which opponents will better prepare their wrestlers for higher-level competition. Engels, who competes in the 106-pound varsity division, often has to go against a male wrestler at the same level because there aren't enough female wrestlers in her weight class.

Dawn Engels, Emma's mom, said her daughter wrestling against the guys and beating them comes as no surprise.

"If she wants to do it, she's going to do it," Dawn Engels said. "It's never been about competing against a boy or a girl for Emma; it's been about competing against another athlete."

Unfazed by her shiny medal and soon-to-be banner in the wrestling room, Emma Engels is already thinking about next season.



Bartlett High School sophomore Emma Engels, named IHSA state champion at the Illinois High School Association girls wrestling finals, shyly displays her medal at school on March 23, 2023. (Antonio Perez / Chicago Tribune)

“I definitely just want to get back there. I guess next time, a better record,” she said. Her record this season was 35 wins and 12 losses.

Only one of those 12 losses was to a female wrestler, whom Engels ended up beating on Feb. 25 to win the state title.

“I knew in the first match, I could have beat her,” Engels said. “I was winning and then I got pinned in the third period, but I knew I could beat her and I knew what I had to do differently.”

Engels said most of her friends are busy playing high school sports, which leaves little time for after-school hangouts, and when she’s not practicing in the wrestling room, she helps coach the Scorpion Wrestling Club, a program for elementary and middle schoolers, including her younger brother, Cameron.

Seven years ago, Engels decided to jump into the club herself after “getting tired of sitting in the stands” to watch her brother compete. Cameron, who’s in eighth grade and plans on trying out for the **Bartlett High School wrestling team** next school year, has been Engels’ built-in teammate and competition since they were children, Engels’ mom said.

Matt Pancamo, Bartlett’s girls wrestling coach and the faculty sponsor of the Scorpion club, said Engels’ humility is reflective of the **Bartlett High School** wrestling community.

Pancamo said wrestlers are encouraged not to boast or brag about victories, but instead celebrate the journey and progress it takes to win.

“She’s exactly what a coach wants in an athlete,” he said. “She speaks her mind when she doesn’t like something and she’s very smart and calculated.”

A fun, yet not-so-hidden-anymore fact about Engels (which she giddily reveals), is that she was the high school mascot for the 2022-23 football season.

While in the hawk suit, she said she tapped into her extroverted side more freely.

“There was an announcement about finding someone to be the mascot and my friends were like, ‘You should do it!’” Engels said with a laugh. “So I went down there and (the athletic director) was like, ‘Yeah you should do it,’ and so I did it.”

– Daily Herald –

Scouting DuPage and Fox boys track and field

March 31, 2023

By John Bumbales

After winning the Class 3A state championship last spring for the first time in school history, Batavia is already off to a fantastic start to the 2023 season as the Bulldogs recently rolled to the title of the DuKane Conference indoor meet with a staggering 155 points.

Senior Alec Crum set personal records at the meet in winning high jump (6 feet, 5 inches), long jump (21-11.25), and an incredible 44-8.5 in the triple jump. Seniors Quintin Lowe (1,600/3,200) and Weston White (55 sprint/200 meters) both won two races at the meet while sophomore Nathan Whitwell (22.98) was a close second to White (22.54) in the 200. Gabriel Benkers won the pole vault while teammate Ben Mathews won the 55-meter hurdles for coach Dennis Piron's powerful squad.

There is still a very long way to go until the 2023 state meet, but the Bulldogs hope to be in the hunt for at least another top-three trophy when the meet is held in late May.

Bartlett finished near the middle of the pack last year in the UEC. **The Hawks** have some experienced athletes back this season as Alex Brown (100/200), Steven Conforti (100/200), Arturo Martinez (400/800), Issak Morales (1,600/3200), Luke Regalado (800), and Sam Mancilla (won shot put and discus at UEC indoor meet) are hoping to take **Bartlett** to the next level this season.

Elgin placed third in the UEC indoor season this spring while Noah Mack (class of 2021) is now the top sprinter at College of DuPage. The **Maroons** have a great nucleus back in seniors Jack Allen (400/800/1,600), Diego Valdivia (1,600/3,200), Dawayne Evans

(long jump /hurdles/sprints), Nick West (400), and Zane Warkel (pole vault). Juniors Matt Lawson (100/sprints), and Aramys Lopez (shot put) will also help boost team scoring for coach Anthony Mason.

Kaneland really shined in 2022 by winning the Interstate 8 Conference, taking second at the Kane County meet, and finishing second at sectionals to Burlington Central (96 to 89.5) before the Knights sent four individuals and three relays to the state meet. Elijah Pflipsen (eighth in state shot put) graduated, and Kaneland placed third in the state in the 4x400. Seniors Chris Ruchaj (sprints), Brayden Farmer (pole vault), Jake Gagne (sprints), and Trevor Neal (hurdles) will be strong leaders. Juniors David Valkanov (distance), Logan Ehlers (jumps), and Collin Reutimann (mid-distance) will also provide great support. Sophomore Evan Nosek (distance) should also make an impact on the Knights' young squad according to coach Andy Drendel.

Larkin is in for a tough battle in the UEC, but the **Royals** have a strong triple jumper in junior Michael Barton to help lead their squad. **Larkin** junior Jaydis Frazier is the top performer in the 200 while senior teammate Omar Salazar is the team's front-runner in the 800. Jamari Stubbs (fourth in 300 hurdles) is now playing football at Quincy College.

South Elgin has an abundance of talent in its lineup, including Elias Cole-Williams (high jump), Lucas McMillan (pole vault), and De'Angelo McCullough (triple jump). The **Storm's** 4x400 team of Jacob Yachinich, Noah Callahan, Zach Meyer, and Harry Carr have been outstanding as is their 4x200 team of Donovan Smith, Kendall Andrewin, Jabari Pruitt, and McMillan. Senior Andrew Strama (1,600/3,200) is a steady distance runner for **South Elgin**.

St. Charles East was competitive in the recent DuKane Conference indoor meet with only 16 points separating the 2-5 teams. Senior sprinter Josh Evans has been a huge force in the 55, 200, and 400 while teammate Mitch Garcia is strong in the 1,600. The Saints also

have Matt Hall running well in the 55-hurdles, and Jack Sheley performing well in the long jump. St. Charles East's 4x400 team of Hall, Charles Bolsoni, Niko DiGuilio, and Conner Blaine are looking good in the early stages of the season.

Streamwood was really hurt by massive losses to graduation. But in spite of that, the Sabres are ready to start rebuilding in the UEC behind senior Dakota White in the 800 and 400. Sophomore Alex Harrison is another bright spot in the young **Sabres'** lineup as Harrison will be the focal point in the 3,200 and 1,600.

To read the full article, click [here](#).

– Daily Herald –

Plenty of coaching jobs springing up

April 3, 2023
By John Radtke

One of the greatest challenges a high school athletic director has this time of year is getting their school's coaching lineup set for the next school year.

Coaches retire. Coaches move on to different jobs. Coaches call it quits for myriad other reasons, like to spend more time with their own families.

That has become a major reason a head varsity coach steps down these days as, to do it right, being a head coach — especially in a high-profile sport — is a 12-month commitment.

We reached out to ADs around the suburbs to check in on what coaching openings remain for the 2023-24 school year and found a plethora.

A couple of major ones first.

Lake Park girls basketball coach, Brian Rupp, resigned his position.

Lancers AD Pete Schauer relayed this to the Lake Park basketball families.

“It is with regret that I am writing to inform you I have accepted the resignation of Head Varsity Basketball Coach Brian Rupp. After leading the Lancers girls basketball program

for the last decade, Brian felt it was time to devote more time to his own family after coaching for many years in multiple roles at our school. As I shared with him when we discussed his desire to step down, any decision that prioritizes your family is the right decision. I am very happy for Brian and thankful for his passion and dedication

to our program. Coach Rupp will remain at Lake Park as a PE Teacher and Department leader, using these roles to continue to positively impact our students.”

In his 10 seasons as Lake Park’s head coach, Rupp amassed 149 wins and led his teams to three regional titles, including this past season. The 2019-2020 team became the first Lake Park basketball team to advance to the IHSA state finals.

“More importantly, Brian positively impacted hundreds of student-athletes while leading our program and formed personal relationships with his players that extended beyond the basketball court,” Schauer wrote.

Hampshire AD Mike Sitter, who spent several years as **Elgin’s head boys basketball coach**, is looking for a new head football coach after Jake Brosman accepted the job at Plainfield South after five years at the helm of the Whip-Purs’ program. Brosman was Sitter’s first hire at Hampshire.

“The big thing is my family is all from central Illinois and my kids are getting older and getting into sports,” Brosman told Shaw Media’s Joe Stevenson. “So it was getting a little closer to family to make the travel to come see them in sports and everything will be a little easier.

“It was an extremely tough decision. The kids, the faculty, all the coaches I’ve worked with, everything I love at Hampshire. As far as the coaching and everything it was a super tough decision, but thinking about doing what’s right for my kids and family made it a little easier. It definitely was a tough decision to leave a great school, a great community, great kids and great coaches.”

Sitter told me this week the job is posted and he’s had roughly a dozen inquiries so far.

We’ve reported on some coaching changes in [football](#) and [basketball](#) in zoned editions of the sports section and online recently and here’s a look at some of the other openings around the area, based on information supplied by athletic directors.

Libertyville is looking for a new head boys golf coach to replace Sean Matthews, who is retiring after leading the program for 18 years.

Stevenson AD Tricia Betthausen is still looking to fill openings for the head girls basketball coach, as well as an opening in a non-IHSA sport, fencing.

Aurora Christian and Burlington Central each have openings for a head boys wrestling coach, while BC is still seeking a head girls basketball coach.

At Naperville North, AD Bob Quinn said: “Coach Erin Colletti has resigned after four years as the head girls basketball coach. We are currently accepting applications and letters of interest in our search for our next head coach. I am working with other school administrators to fully understand our anticipated FTE openings/positions for the 2023-2024 academic year. It continues to be our belief that hiring a coach who is a full-time teacher in our school is the best model for athletic department leadership positions. We would anticipate the hiring process to begin in early April.”

That becomes yet another challenge. Getting qualified coaches who are also teachers is not an easy task.

And neither is being an AD today.