

# Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter

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**March 14, 2024**

Dear Colleagues,

This week, I'd like to celebrate our colleagues who were recently identified as Those Who Excel Educator of the Year Awardees and our Golden Apple Finalist!

As communicated by the Illinois State Board of Education, Those Who Excel Awards are presented in seven categories: classroom teachers, early career educators (teachers 1-4 years), school administrators, student support personnel, educational service personnel, community volunteers, and teams.

1. Educators who are presented with the Award of Excellence Educators have greatly improved their school community by advocating for positive change and have shared opportunities for improvement with colleagues. These educators have become an integral member of their departments and larger school culture.
2. Educators who receive the Award of Meritorious Service Educators have shaped their school community for the better. These educators frequently employ their talents and passions, but also strive to be of service in unfamiliar domains.
3. Educators who are presented with the Award of Special Recognition have connected with their school community and made a positive impact.

## **Award of Excellence**

Alicia Choi - Award of Excellence, Teacher

Marie L. McKee - Award of Excellence, Student Support Personnel

Shannon Pennington - Award of Excellence, Teacher

Yusra Sarah Said - Award of Excellence, Teacher

## **Award of Meritorious Service**

Valerie Albuck - Award of Meritorious Service, Teacher  
Kristen Allanson - Award of Meritorious Service, Teacher  
Gerardo Barrio - Award of Meritorious Service, Teacher  
Haleigh Eller - Award of Meritorious Service, Teacher  
Matt Erbach - Award of Meritorious Service, Teacher  
Erin Gamble - Award of Meritorious Service, Teacher  
Mary Mangione - Award of Meritorious Service, Administrator

### **Award of Special Recognition**

Jennifer Delgado - Award of Special Recognition, Student Support Personnel

As communicated by The Golden Apple Foundation, the Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching honor outstanding teachers who have lasting, positive effects on students' lives and school communities. Teacher finalists demonstrate – in their teaching and results – significant, positive impact on their students' growth and learning.

### **Golden Apple Finalist**

Aimee Legatske

Congratulations to our U-46 educators and thank you for making it a great day to learn in U-46! Take a look at [this video](#) to see what the nominators shared about each of the recipients.

Dr. Suzanne Johnson



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## Kudos

Send Kudos directly by clicking [HERE](#) or using Let's Talk. Remember, only Kudos with the sender's name will appear in the Weekly; no anonymous messages. Kudos are due by 5 p.m. each Tuesday.

**Kudos to Andrew Brhel, Long Term Substitute Teacher, at South Elgin High School; from Saul Vazquez, World Language Teacher; Ivan Ortiz, Math Teacher; Maria Almanza-Laboy, Attendance Secretary; Araceli De Robles, World Languages Teacher; and Jill Kacer, Clerical Assistant, all at South Elgin High School**

Mr. Brhel, your dedication, hard work and love for what you do were great assets for an amazing musical, "The Beauty and the Beast!" Students responded to your wise guidance and as a result, they shined! What a fantastic musical. You definitely proved and exhibited our philosophy set here at South Elgin High School from the day we opened - "We strive for excellence." You deserve a standing ovation!

**Kudos to the U-46 Vision Department - LillyRose Daly, Sara Uribe, Amie Fry, Brittany Payne, Chandler Clark, Jasmin Tracy, Haley Grant, Caroline Strenk, Heather Stout, Erin Purser, Jean Deptolla, and Chris Taylor, all in Specialized Student Services; from Jessica Hayes, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Illinois Park Center for Early Learning**



Thank you for working hard every day to help our students access their educational environments in the best manner. Thank you for taking the time to educate the students about their unique needs as well as the staff and families. You are all truly inspiring.

**Kudos to Brian Leatherby, Middle School Auditorium Manager; from Kari Turcan, Speech and Debate Teacher at Kenyon Woods Middle School**

Thank you to "Stick" for the many hours you spent with our novice tech crew at Kenyon Woods Middle School. Not only did you make sure we had a production where cast members could be seen and heard, but you also were a friendly adult confidant for what is normally a project held together by one woman. Thank you.

**Kudos to the Entire Centennial Elementary School Staff; from Kimberly Piper, Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, at Horizon Elementary School**

My niece is a 6th grader at Centennial School. At the beginning of the school year, she was diagnosed with stage 3 kidney cancer. The Centennial staff has been amazing throughout her entire journey. They respected the family's privacy when scary medical results were first being identified, provided a safe place of acceptance and tolerance when she began her chemotherapy treatments, and modeled compassion and empathy. The building has come together to support my niece, her sibling, and her family as they navigate these challenges. The entire building has shown their support by tying orange ribbons around the school and throughout the Bartlett community. Most recently the entire staff rallied together in yet another supportive manner by wearing Support Squad shirts. They plan to sport these shirts on the first Wednesday of the month until the end of the school year. I want to send a huge, heartfelt thank you to her teacher, the principal, social workers, and every Centennial community member who has supported and continues to support my niece throughout her battle. She is soaring to brighter days. #HarperStrong #EaglePride



School District U-46

