

Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter



March 21, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

Have a great Spring Recess! Please take this time to rest and recharge to return for the final quarter of the year.

It is a great day to learn in U-46!

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

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 the PTO at Oakhill Elementary School and all Those Who Supported the "One School, One Book" Initiative, from Maria E. Hull, 2nd Grade Teacher, Oakhill Elementary

At Oakhill Elementary, the spirit of community and literary adventure collided in an enchanting initiative dubbed "One School, One Book." Thanks to the thoughtful efforts of the PTO, every family received a copy of Roald Dahl's timeless classic, "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." The excitement reached its peak as our playful administrators transformed into Willy Wonka and an Oompa Loompa, personally delivering these literary treasures to our eager students. With a reading agenda in hand, each day became a thrilling journey into Dahl's whimsical world, sparking animated discussions about the antics of Charlie Bucket and the eccentric chocolatier. The air buzzed with chocolate fever as families bonded over nightly readings, igniting imaginations and fostering a love for literature that transcended the classroom walls. Oakhill Elementary's "One School, One Book"

initiative not only enriched our literary landscape but also united our school community in a shared adventure through the pages of a beloved tale.

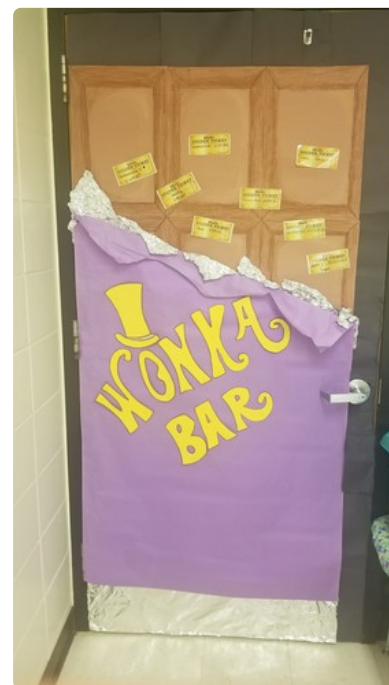
Kudos to Nicholas Lambert, Band Director at Larkin High School, from Melissa Hartley, Band Director at Abbott Middle School

The energy and excitement Nicholas brings to our combined events is seen and felt as soon as the students walk in the door. He is working hard to make the transition to high school an easy one for our students and grow the band program. His positivity, even when working long days and weeks, is refreshing.

Kudos to Abigail Silva, Bilingual Teacher, Special Education, Oakhill Elementary School, from Maria Hull, 2nd Grade Teacher, Oakhill Elementary

In a sweet twist of creativity, Ms. Silva has emerged victorious in Oakhill's recent door decorating contest! The contest, held in conjunction with our "One School, One Book" event centered around "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," saw Oakhill's staff unleash their imagination to transform their doors into edible wonders.

After careful consideration and enthusiastic voting from all the students, Ms. Silva's door stood out as the clear favorite. Her delectable chocolate design not only captured the essence of the beloved story but also captivated the hearts of all who beheld it. Congratulations, Ms. Silva!



Kudos to All Those Who Supported the Years of Service Celebration, from Melinda Leman, Administrative Assistant, Human Resources Department

I would like to take this time to recognize all of the people who helped make this year's 25, 30, 35 Years of Service event so special. Thank you to the HR team - Cynthia Keel, Jason Marcotte, Mily Cruz, Monica Escalante and Sonia Rivera - for getting the data together to send out the celebration lists to everyone. I know that there are some hits and misses, but each year, it does get better! To Tara Burghart, Cecilia Rodriguez, and Alec Barlow for doing the artwork, name tags, programs, writing up the bios for the attendees and taking photos for the evening. To Pete Marroquin, Ty Johnson, Gus Konstantinidis, Brian Leatherby and Tom Thode for making sure the room and audio was set up and ready to go for us. To Audrey Etheridge and Kelli Hitzeroth for the delicious food. Thank you to Dr. Suzanne Johnson, Mark Moore, and Karla Jiménez, Sue Kerr and Melissa Owens for being there and speaking about and to our awardees. Thank you to all the administrators who took time out to come to the event to show support. This event does not run by one person, it truly takes a village! As a 25-year honoree, if I have to say so myself, it was awesome!!!

Kudos to All Who Volunteered at the U-46 Job Fair, from Betsy Baez, Recruitment and Retention Manager, Human Resources

Thank you Cheryl Jurcy, Chris Schimpf, Elizabeth Ma, Griselda Pirtle, Karla Aycock, Kyle Bunker, Lea Russell, Marc Spacone, Marcy Murphy, Mario Pestaña Garcia, Marla Ravlin, Mary Sturgill, Matthew Palcer, Paige Moran, Pam Jewell, Pam Maxey, Patricia Makishima, Richard Lebron, Rosa Modisz, Sheri Fato, Stephanie Sylvester, Tanya Casey, Tracey Phipps, and Yvette Gonzalez-Collins for attending our Spring Job Fair at the U-46 Welcome Center last Friday and Saturday to help conduct interviews. Additionally, thanks to Jim Karras for helping set up the facility and Gilda Estevez and

my colleagues in the HR department who volunteered and helped make the event successful. Placing the right people in our District is key to our students' academic success, thank you all for contributing your time and efforts in helping make "Academic Success for All" a reality. You are appreciated!

Kudos to Tom Cordogan, U-46 School Bus Driver, from Dr. Art Fessler, Interim Executive Director of the High School Network

A few weekends ago, Tom was selected to be one of the officials for the IHSA boys' basketball state series tournament. I would like to take this moment to celebrate Tom and acknowledge that he is one of many employees who support students in more than one way throughout the District.



Kudos to Matthew Quezada, Orchestra Teacher, Larkin High School, and Larkin Students Ayaka, Jae, Ezra, and Iain, from Tara Burghart, Communications and Media Relations Coordinator, School & Community Relations

Thank you to Matthew for helping arrange for four talented Larkin student musicians to play during the reception at the Years of Service celebration and then being present at the event for support. The music from the students was a lovely addition to the evening, and all of us on the Years of Service planning committee appreciate Matthew's and the students' time, talent, and dedication to their art.

Kudos to the Tefft Middle School Leaders Club, from Christina Morales, Community Member

The Leaders Club students from Tefft Middle School have been prominently featured in Senator Cristina Castro's monthly newsletter. Their hard work and dedication have earned them recognition and we are extremely proud. We want to share our joy and pride with everyone. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tireless efforts of their teachers, Ms. Leticia Yera and Mrs. Olga Olivia Bucio. These students and their teachers exemplify excellence, and we are honored to have them as part of our community.

Kudos to the Oakhill Elementary Staff, from Maria E. Hull, 2nd Grade Teacher, Oakhill Elementary

I wanted to recognize the Oakhill Elementary staff for orchestrating an incredible Family Reading Night, flawlessly complementing our "One School, One Book" initiative in February. Working harmoniously as a unified team, our devoted teachers meticulously crafted over 14 captivating stations tailored to our chosen literary masterpiece, "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," offering 400 students and their families a truly delightful and immersive reading experience.

Special recognition goes to our imaginative third-grade teacher, Amanda Freedman, for her delightful creation of charming brown chocolate aprons for the staff, adding an extra layer of sweetness to the evening. Moreover, Ms. Bash and our dedicated lunch supervisors deserve applause for their efforts in crafting an eye-catching entrance sign and a whimsical balloon sculpture, setting the perfect tone for the event. The enchantment continued as our remarkable principal, Laura Alegria, embraced the whimsical spirit by transforming into an Oompa Loompa, while our fantastic assistant principal, Ms. Ekovich, embraced the role of Willy Wonka, truly bringing the story to life.

These collaborative endeavors vividly reflect our school's unwavering dedication to nurturing a passion for reading and fostering community engagement. Heartfelt thanks to the entire Oakhill staff for their exceptional teamwork and dedication in organizing this chocolate-themed extravaganza, which undoubtedly brought joy and literary enrichment to our school community.



 School District U-46

