

Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter



April 18, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

The April 15, 2024 Board of Education meeting was a great opportunity to highlight our student voices when the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council presented a summary of the discussions from this year's Student Summit. The Student Summit was held on April 4, and 220 student leaders from all seven high schools provided direction to make sure all of our systems measurably work for all students. This presentation was one of the final activities for the 2023-2024 Superintendent's student advisors.

The students shared vital feedback concerning the following topics:

- Post-Secondary Success
 - Communication
 - College Preparation
 - Career Preparation
- Academic Opportunities
 - Grading
 - Classroom Preparation
 - Non-curriculum Based Preparation
- School Environment and Safety
 - Student Safety
 - Staff-Student Relationships
 - Mental Health

Also that evening, the Superintendent Student Advisory Council presented Mahitha Ratakonda of Elgin High School as the next Student Advisor to the Board of Education and Dylan Szatko of Bartlett High School as the Alternate. If you would like to learn more about this exciting work and these outstanding students, please watch the [Board of Education meeting](#) from April 15.

In addition to our student highlights, I would also like to take the time to recognize two of our staff members who have recently been nominated for local community awards. U-46 Planetarium Teacher Peggy Hernandez has been nominated for the City of Elgin Mayor's Awards for Preservation. Tefft Middle School English Language Arts Teacher Valerie Albuck was recently honored with the Citizen of the Year Award at the Annual Village of Hanover Park Community Awards & Recognition Banquet. We are incredibly proud of these dedicated educators who consistently go above and beyond in their work to support our students' success. Please join us in congratulating them on this well-deserved recognition!

It's 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 Clinton Elementary School Principal Jonathon Miquelon from Art Fessler, Interim High School Executive Director

Congratulations to Jonathon on his new role as principal of South Elgin High School, starting in the 2024-25 school year. He stopped by SEHS recently to meet some of his future students and staff.



Kudos to Stephanie Rosales, Assistant Principal of STEM, Elgin High School, from Tim Kolanko, Math Teacher, Elgin High School

Kudos to Stephanie for doing her best to singularly plan and prepare Elgin High for the eclipse. The event was a success and her time and efforts are appreciated. Students and staff really enjoyed getting some fresh air and experiencing the eclipse as a school. Thank you, Stephanie!

Kudos to Tina O'Farrell, Trip Advisor, Marcy Murphy, Director of Transportation, and the Entire Transportation Department; from Anna Roberts, Rigor & Equity Instructional Coach, Creekside Elementary School

I recently entered the wrong date for an all-school field trip and didn't realize it until the day before the field trip. After a lot of hard work from Tina, Marcy, the drivers, and the managers in Transportation, they were able to accommodate our all-school field trip of 12 buses. They are truly amazing! Thank you!

Kudos to All Those Who Helped Make the Eclipse Viewing Successful from the Office of K-12 Science & Planetarium

We would like to thank everyone for all of the support in making the eclipse viewing so successful. We estimate more than 20,000 staff and students participated. What a wonderful day! We want to thank ...

- Informational Services for developing the online permission form and also the management tools that made it easier for all of us to pull the data.
- Our Legal Department, who started this journey with us two years ago to ensure everyone's safety!
- Our Procurement Department, who helped us work with a vendor who was a bit frustrating at times, but ensured we got legitimate glasses that were batch-tested and certified.
- Our Warehouse and Distribution Department for keeping the inventory and then counting each school's order and delivering them. I am not sure everyone realizes that we had three different types of viewers, and all of that had to be managed.
- The APs of STEM and the Middle School Science Meetup Team for helping us work through our processes so that secondary schools could run as smoothly as possible.
- Our School and Community Relations Department for the website, the radio segments, the videos, the media attention, and all of the communication pieces you developed for staff and the larger community.
- Our Health Services, Specialized Student Services and MME departments for being our thinking partners to ensure all of our students had a high-quality experience.
- Our Transportation Department for your unwavering professionalism in handling all of the questions and concerns around student safety on the bus at the peak of the eclipse.
- All of the building leadership teams who planned for the eclipse; we know that was not easy and we appreciate your willingness to lean in to the opportunity.
- All of the teachers and other staff members for watching the safety Knovio video so your students could participate.
- Our Cabinet for helping us think through all of the details and disseminating information these past two years.
- The entire Curriculum & Instruction Department for being our partners these past two years - you kept us sane!
- And although they are part of the K-12 Science & Planetarium staff- we would like to thank Joe Kellenberger and Peggy Hernandez, our Planetarium teachers, for running all of the public shows, making the tips of the week, putting together the correct information and curriculum supports.

WHEW! Thank you, thank you, thank you all!

Kudos to Carrie Robicheaux, Daily Districtwide Substitute Teacher, from Kristen Johnson, Cross-Cat Resource Teacher at Eastview Middle School

Carrie was my sub for my maternity leave. I came back this week and I am so grateful for her. Carrie did so much for me: She planned for the rest of my year, implemented some amazing classroom management strategies, attended IEP meetings, made great relationships with the students and staff, and showed her amazing special education teacher skills. She handled things like a champ and taught multiple kids great values. Thank you, Carrie. I wish you the best in everything!

Kudos to Dave Foerster, Building Substitute Teacher at Elgin High School, from Dr. David J. Dybalski, Psychologist, Elgin High School

Dave worked one-on-one with a severely autistic non-verbal high school student for most of the school year. His compassion and sensitivity was apparent on a daily basis. He treated this young man with respect and dignity throughout. He did an amazing job that at times can get lost in our daily activities. Well done, I say, and it's an honor to work with someone like Dave.

Kudos to James "Michael" Guercio, Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher at Eastview Middle School, from Kathleen Torquato, Cross-Cat Reading Teacher, and Marsha Buvary, Occupational Therapist, both at Eastview Middle School

Thank you for extending your time and sharing your wisdom to form a strong and positive relationship with one of our students! There is appreciation beyond words for your very impressive insights, strategies and taking on so much responsibility in designing and carrying out a very effective CICO plan. We're sure that the effect you've had on this student will last for many years to come!

Kudos to Dove Holecek, Instructional Learning Program Teacher Leader, and Samantha Colando, ILP Program Assistant, from Tania Foertsch-Bays, ILP Teacher at Spring Trail Elementary School
Recently they put together a "make-n-take" session for all ILP teachers. I can't thank them enough for all the hard work and dedication in which they put into getting this all together and set up for us. The amount of work that was behind the scenes does not go unnoticed. The products we received and the ability to create work tasks for our students truly was a gift. Dove and Samantha - thank you again for all of your hard work and dedication to ensure we have the tools we need to enrich our students.

Kudos to Assistant Principal Nancy Regul, Instructional Coach Katie Mucha, and Instructional Coach Christy Craig, all at Tefft Middle School, from Valerie Albuck, English Teacher at Tefft Middle School

Kudos to Nancy, Katie, and Christy for meticulously planning and implementing all the IAR logistics! It went smoothly for our staff and students because of you. I have to add a huge thanks to the whole Tefft team for emphasizing strategies and giving encouragement to our students so they can do their best, and for supporting each other so we are at our best, too. We are an amazing team! #Tefft2gether #TefftProud

Kudos to Ontarioville Elementary School Principal Dr. Elizabeth Ma and the Ontarioville Staff, from Amber Peters, Executive Director, Elgin Partnership for Early Learning

Hip, hip, hooray for the Ontarioville School Staff! They helped kick off a successful Week of the Young Child with a mobile food pantry sponsored by EPEL in collaboration with the Northern Illinois Food Bank. Although the weather was icky, the warmth and dedication of the community partners and volunteers serving families were so very heartwarming. Thank you for being an amazing partner in serving many families with young children in Hanover Park. Together We Can!



Kudos to Lisa Hall, Support Center Agent, Nick Capaccio, Level 2 Support, and Micheal Carlson, Technology Specialist, all in Information Services, from Mark Johnson, Social Worker at Bartlett High School

Lisa was very helpful with me when I picked up my new computer. It was during spring break, and she was cheerful and friendly and made the process very easy. I'd also like to say the same about Nick and Micheal for always helping me with my computer stuff at Bartlett High School. Whenever I have computer issues, they seem to know how to fix them right away. Thanks again.

Kudos to the Office of K-12 Science & Planetarium - Deb McMullen, Peggy Hernandez, Joe Kellenberger, Cristina Rodriguez, Frankie Valenzia, and Vince Fosco, as well as Elgin High School Principal Jamie Green, Eastview Middle School Principal Annie Simon, Lordsburg Elementary

School Principal Noe Velazquez, Lords Park 1st Grade Teacher Rebeca Santana, Glenbrook Elementary Principal Rajan Sharma, and the Teams at EHS, EMS, Lords Park, and Glenbrook, from Tara Burghart, Communications and Media Relations Coordinator, School & Community Relations Department



Our Districtwide effort to give our students and staff the chance to view the solar eclipse on April 8 attracted a lot of positive media attention from television stations and newspapers. But accommodating the needs and requests of the members of the media in the weeks leading up to the eclipse, and on the day itself, certainly took a village. In addition to the media interest, the S&CR team wanted to make sure to capture moments and images from the eclipse to share on our own social media and communication channels. Thank you to all the individuals cited above for conducting interviews, answering questions, hosting TV crews and members of the S&CR staff, and helping identify students and employees who could represent U-46 and share the excitement of the experience. It was a special and memorable day!

Kudos to Jennifer Simon, Technical Specialist-Online Assessments in Information Services, from the Assessment and Accountability Department

The Assessment office extends its gratitude to Jennifer for her exceptional dedication last week during the IAR testing. Managing test voids and accommodation changes is a significant task, and we commend her positive attitude amidst this busy period.

Kudos to Aurora Scarpaci, Little Royal Preschool Director and Education Internship Coordinator at Larkin High School, from Amber Peters, Executive Director, Elgin Partnership for Early Learning

Mrs. Scarpaci coordinated a trip for future educators from Larkin High School to attend EPEL's early childhood community collaboration meeting about Color Code Connections. The students were not only respectful and prepared but also actively engaged, infusing the meeting with energy. There were lots of giggles talking about how we effectively work together based on our color code behaviors!

Having the opportunity to introduce these students to our community partners as potential future educators was a joy. The meeting provided students with firsthand experience and insight into the collaborative efforts aimed at strengthening the early childhood system in the Greater Elgin area.

Mrs. Scarpaci, your dedication to nurturing the future of these students by involving them in our collaboration is truly a gift. I look forward to staying in touch with the future educators and hope they can join us again.

Thank you again for your commitment to your students, and the young children and families in our community.



School District U-46



