

Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter



May 16, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

This past Monday evening, the Board of Education recognized our top 2% of Graduating Seniors! It was exciting to learn about the accomplishments and future goals of these 49 students as well as see their families, friends and teachers there to celebrate this accomplishment. These students are scholars, athletes, artists, musicians, leaders, volunteers, entrepreneurs, caregivers and our future! I cannot wait to see where they go and what they do next. Read more about these impressive students at u-46.org/2024top2percent and find the schedule for the May 25 graduation ceremonies [here](#).

TOP 2%



Bartlett High School
Emma Bulatek

Saranya Ganne
Shreena Patel
Macy Medendorp
Anusha Dharia
Ashwitha Sankar
Gurshaan Singh
Raiyan Hasan
Sarayu Manne
Arav Patel

Larkin High School

John Catalan
Malena Davis
Amy Kramarczyk
Maya Nail
Catherine Payleitner
Lucy Roller
Nadia Schultz
Kimberly Ta
Aiden Weeks

South Elgin High School

Emma Blondin
Emma Clarke
Ella Dihel
Emma Greenberg
Yumna Hashmi
Sophie Karpowicz
Nora Kulak
Avi Patel
Julia Prorok
Thomas Roath
Felicia Skwirblies
Allison Yung

Elgin High School

Melissa Rendon-Maganda
Paolo Paez
Lorelei Lynott
Benjamin Hall-Skank
Adhraa Arastu
Madison King
Carlo Andrade
Anusha Shah
Robyn Kopeny
Emily Lureau
Lucio Avila

Ivan Ear
Cristian Sandoval
Kaleigh Allender
Amber Perez
Lindsay Strauss
Ryan Lindsay
Paola Jasso

Thank you to the families and friends for supporting these students. And, thank you to our U-46 colleagues for making this celebration possible. Your commitment to providing a safe, welcoming and rigorous learning environment for our students made these successes possible. Thank you for transporting our students across our 90 square miles and beyond. Thank you for greeting our students with smiles as they arrive at school and enjoy their lunch. Thank you for making sure our schools are inspiring spaces to learn. Thank you for the hours of planning, teaching, coaching, mentoring, listening and encouragement that have provided these students the skills they need to be successful as they begin their new adventure.

Lastly, congratulations to Richard Bosh, Director of School Safety, Kimberly Gongola, Food Service Field Specialist, and Karla Jimenez, Director of School and Community Relations! Last week, Karla received the YWCA Leadership Award for Communications and Technology. This recognition is well deserved as Karla works tirelessly to keep us all connected across the vast U-46 networks! This weekly communication is only one example of the critical work Karla oversees on a weekly basis. Kimberly was named the 2024 Illinois School Nutrition Association Manager of the Year due to her outstanding outreach and communication with parents, students, and schools in providing the best service possible. Rich received the Distinguished Service Award from the Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association for his belief in the power of teamwork and dedication to helping ensure that transmitted information is clear and accurate in times of crisis. Thank you, Kimberly, Rich, and Karla!

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 Audrey Etheridge, Manager-Food Service, Food & Nutrition Services, from Evelyn Bevins, Assistant to the Superintendent

A huge thank you to Audrey for all of her help with the food and beverages for both the Superintendent's Scholarship event and the Top 2% Recognition event. Audrey definitely has an eye for providing a beautiful display of food as well as a variety of food. While I know catering for these events is no small task, Audrey does so with such beauty. Audrey, thank you! I appreciate your willingness to help!

Kudos to all the Registered Nurses, Certified School Nurses, and the Health Services Administrators in School District U-46, from Desiree Herrera, Registered Nurse, McKinley Elementary School

I wanted to send a huge thank you to these groups for all their hard work. Our nurses not only help with illnesses and injuries, but also make sure that our U-46 students are healthy. I have worked with some of the best and kindest nurses in this district. I am so proud to be a part of a great group of nurses. I hope you all had a happy Nurse's Week last week!

Kudos to the Coleman Elementary School "Girls on the Run" Teacher Leaders - Daisy Cintora, Lisette Pena, Lisette Calderon, Jessica Jaime-Martinez, Leslie Villa, and Team Leader Erika Maloney, from Dawn McCusker, Gifted Specialist, and the Entire Coleman Team

You all created lots of enthusiasm and excitement this year for Girls on the Run. Congratulations to your team and to all of your student participants who have worked so hard! They were very organized with shirts, bows, and a pair of new shoes for each runner! You are all so amazing! Bravo!

Kudos to the Art Department at Streamwood High School - Ana Sainz de Murieta, Alyssa Coy, Katie Potter, Lynette Dubovik, and Dan O'Malley, from the Streamwood High School Administration and Lisa Baran Janco, Assistant Principal of Humanities

We want to thank this group for their leadership. They have organized a wonderful Art Show 2024. So many students, staff and community members have walked through and been awed by the great work of Streamwood High School students. Thank you!

Kudos to Amy Alviar, Student Success Advocate, Curriculum & Instruction, Lords Park Elementary School, from Terry Brill, 1st Grade Teacher, Lords Park Elementary

Thank you, Amy, for going above and beyond to make the teachers of Lords Park feel very appreciated during Teacher Appreciation Week!

Kudos to Rosalia Trujillo, Home School Liaison, and Tanya Meza, Principal's Secretary, both at Heritage Elementary School, from Melanie Patterson, U-46 Parent

I just wanted to take a moment to acknowledge how nice the secretaries are when I come into the office at Heritage. Their warm smiles and friendly greetings always make me feel welcome and appreciated. They make the office light up with their friendly and professional demeanor!

Kudos to Leticia Sotelo, Bilingual Speech Therapist, Special Education, Highland Elementary School from all the Bilingual Speech Therapists

Thank you, Leti, for your dedication to your students and for your unconditional friendship throughout all these years. Your passion for your profession is truly inspiring. We wish you all the best in your new journey. We will miss you!

Kudos to the Tier 1 Team at Timber Trails Elementary School from Elisa Biancalana, Principal, and Todd Duty, Assistant Principal, at Timber Trails Elementary

Thank you for organizing a successful family event at Timber Trails. The Glow Dance was a fun time and enjoyed by all! Thank you for all your hard work in organizing this event and getting everyone together - it is much appreciated!

Kudos to Barry Paxton, Elementary Maintenance Technician, Plant Operations, from Charity Diliberti, 6th Grade Teacher, Century Oaks Elementary School

Kudos, kudos, and more kudos to Barry! Every time he comes to Century Oaks, he makes sure the repairs he is doing are done quickly so students and staff are not inconvenienced. Barry is very conscientious in his work. When he comes to work on a current issue, he checks work completed

in past visits to make sure things are still running smoothly. Barry always has a smile and "hello" for faculty and staff when he sees us. He does so much behind the scenes. We don't always know what Barry has done; we do know, though, that he is working hard to keep things running smoothly. Thanks, Barry!

Kudos to Lori Nommensen, Retirement & Pension Specialist, Payroll Department, from Lisa Steinberg. Daily Substitute, Districtwide

Since I retired five years ago, Lori is always available for any questions I have had. She also always submits health insurance reimbursements quickly. She is so kind in all of her notes. Thank you, Lori!

Kudos to Julie Radcliffe, Resource Teacher, and Pasty Martin, 2nd Grade Teacher, at Century Oaks Elementary School, from Amanda Higgin, Pareducator, Century Oaks Elementary

Thank you, Julie and Patsy, for all you have done to make our kids outstanding students. We will all miss your contribution to our Century Oaks family! Enjoy your retirement!

Kudos to Heather Rocen, ELL Math Teacher, Lisa Lee, Science Teacher, and the Staff at Larsen Middle School, from Marc Spacone, Principal, Larsen Middle School

You put together an amazing evening for our Honor Roll Banquet. It was a fun event of more than 400 people to recognize and celebrate our students. Thank you to everyone for making Larsen a special place to live and learn.

Kudos to Elizabeth Kiskinov, Psychologist, Special Education, from Kristen Johnson, Cross-Cat Resource Teacher, Eastview Middle School

Liz, you are an amazing psychologist. You have been an asset to many teams this year. You share your knowledge with us and always keep your cool. It has been a pleasure working with you at Kimball Middle School and now at your overload with Eastview. You took all of that on while working your normal things. You care about each kid you evaluate and run meetings like a champ. Your knowledge and professionalism are admirable. We are lucky to work with you.

Kudos to Students in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program from Zainab Sheth, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher, Horizon Elementary School

U-46's Deaf and Hard of Hearing program participated in the statewide annual community service day last week. The middle and high students joined the elementary kids at Horizon Elementary School in making dog toys, bedding and dog treats. A representative from the A Heart for Animals Rescue Center presented to the students, who then donated the items they made to the rescue center. This event was sponsored by Illinois Service Resource Center. We had a fun day giving back to the community.

Kudos to Katie Park, Art Teacher, Oakhill Elementary School, from Maria E. Hull, 2nd Grade Teacher, Oakhill Elementary School

As we near the end of another school year, we would like to send kudos to our amazing art teacher, Ms. Parks, for her collaboration and hard work at Oakhill! Ms. Parks' efforts have enriched our students' art experience and brought creativity to life. Here's to another year of inspiring and fostering a love for art in our students! Thank you, Ms. Park!

Kudos to Dr. Amy Kendryna, Retired Administrator, from Jennifer Schwardt, Principal, and Tanya Casey, Resident Administrator, both at Horizon Elementary

Thank you, Amy, for your dedication and support to our PreK program this school year! You are a valued member of our administration team, and you have implemented so many positive shifts to support our youngest learners. We appreciate you coming out of retirement to "play" at Horizon!

Kudos to Melinda Leman, Administrative Assistant, and Sonia Rivera, Secretary, both in Human Resources; Retirement & Pension Specialist Lori Nommensen; and Cecilia Rodriguez, Secretary, and Digital Communications Specialist Alec Barlow, both in School & Community Relations, from Tara Burghart, Communications and Media Relations Coordinator, School & Community Relations

The Dream Team strikes again! The 2024 Retirement Dinner drew more retirees than ever, and I'm proud that we were able to offer them such a lovely celebration and tribute to all the years they dedicated to School District U-46. It was a pleasure working with you all, from our checklists and check-ins, to wrapping the frames and packing the gift baskets, to providing background support on the night of the dinner. Now let's schedule that debriefing session - I'll bring the pastries!

Kudos to Mrs. Coleman, Principal; Mr. Tovar, Assistant Principal; Mr. Cobbs, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mayers-White, Mr. Luca, and Detective Ramirez, all of Kimball Middle School, from the 6th Grade Teachers at Century Oaks Elementary School - Charity Di Liberti, Rebecca Salvato, and Christa Fox

We want to thank the above individuals for reassuring our students on our visit to KMS. We are grateful to them and everyone who helped coordinate the Century Oaks 6th grade visit. Ms. Martinez was especially helpful with our 15 Dual Language newcomers. The KMS personnel were reassuring to our students while explaining middle school procedures and expectations. The students enjoyed seeing various classrooms and watching a transition between classes. The students were impressed with how quickly students were able to transition between classes. It was an enjoyable excursion for our students. Thank you, all, for easing some worries as our students prepare to go to KMS in the fall

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 arranging for four talented Larkin student musicians to play during the social hour of the Retirement Dinner. The music provided just the right backdrop for the start of the celebration. All of us on the Retirement Dinner planning committee appreciate the time, talent, and dedication of Matthew and his students.



School District U-46

