

# Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter

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**Jan. 16, 2025**

Dear Colleagues,

As we approach Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we are reminded of his lasting legacy and commitment to equality and justice for all. His vision of a society where every individual is afforded the same opportunities aligns with our mission as a school district. As we reflect on this important day, we should recommit to the equitable practices that honor Dr. King's dream and prepare all students for success in their futures.

Equity is essential to our work as a school district. A primary objective of the District is that by graduation, all students will meet or exceed college and career-ready standards and be fully prepared to become contributing members of society. It is our belief that it is the responsibility of U-46 to give each student the opportunity and support to meet his or her highest potential.

We also must recognize historic and persistent achievement and/or excellence gaps, disparities in data with respect to graduation rates, and inequities in reported incidents of student misconduct when comparing students of various ethnic and racial backgrounds. Closing these gaps and addressing these disparities, while raising achievement for all students, are top priorities of the Board of Education, the Superintendent, and all District staff, and it will remain the District's responsibility to continue to address these issues per Board Policy 2:02.

In December, members of the Equity and Innovation Team presented to the [Board of Education](#) an update on some of our equity work. While we have made great progress with our equity plan, we have more to do to make sure all students are making the gains needed to be successful post-secondary.

As a team, we have continued to support a thriving dual language program. We have updated our ESL programming. We have continued to update our processes for the placement of students into

the gifted program and Magnet Schools. We have updated our Standards-Based Learning and Assessment practices. We have expanded early learning opportunities with additional PreK classrooms across the district. We have provided professional learning on cultural competency and implicit racial bias for our employees on a regular and ongoing basis. And, we have an Equity Team and an Equity Plan to guide additional enhancements for our students.

Additionally, several years ago, the Board of Education directed administration to take up equitable school funding reform as one of the top priorities. I am proud of the collaboration between our Operations and Instruction Team to support this effort with reimagined budgeting for schools and programs. Achieving this change has required cross-functional procedures and will continue to benefit students as we enhance our practices.

Thank you to each of you for continuing to recognize that in U-46 all truly does mean all and taking up the work to make sure all grow and achieve.

It's a great day to learn in U-46!

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 Sean Fitzsimmons, in Information Services, from Sandra Hancock, in Health Services, at Huff Elementary School**

Sean is always so helpful and quick when asked for assistance with IT issues. I had a new printer to install, and he came in right away to install. He made sure he came in early the next morning to make sure it was working well. I appreciate him very much!

### **Kudos to Naul Conejo and Whitney Pen, both in Information Services, from Lynn Reuter and Christine Tornabene, both at Early Learners First Steps**

Thank you so much for your support during our audit to get our videos uploaded to the state. We are so grateful to you both for making time to support us and alleviating a huge amount of stress for us. Thank you!

### **Kudos to Christine Tornabene, with the Parents as Teachers Team in Early Learners, from Lynn Reuter, in Early Learners, and the Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Team**

A huge thank you to Chris for all of her hard work throughout our ISBE audit. You kept us on track, managed a ton of evidence and kept us organized throughout the process. There is no one I would rather do this work with and we are so grateful to you.

