

Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter



Jan. 30, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

This week, our team provided the Board of Education an [update](#) on our exciting construction plans. As a reminder, these plans support our goal to *establish and operate inclusive, efficient, safe and equitable learning environments*.

The Board of Education received a progress report on Hawk Hollow Middle School in Bartlett. The site was officially renamed Hawk Hollow Middle School and is preparing to welcome 7th graders in August of 2025. Additionally, Lisa Olsem has been named as the Principal and is working to create a leadership transition plan at Kenyon Woods Middle School and a welcome plan at Hawk Hollow Middle School.

There were also exciting updates about the additions at Kenyon Woods and Kimball middle schools. Both additions include more classrooms and common spaces. However, Kimball will also receive a new cafeteria and field house. We have also completed the schematic design phase for the new 193,000 square foot middle school on Rohrsen Road in Elgin that is set to welcome students in August of 2027.

Finally, we are working at establishing standards for all U-46 schools including items such as secure entries, learning commons, lab spaces, roofs, HVAC, playgrounds and parking lots. Along with the standards, timelines for the projects will be drafted and communicated to make sure we continue to invest in our buildings.

While it's currently a great day to learn in U-46, we are making sure to build a future filled with great days to learn in U-46!

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

Kudos

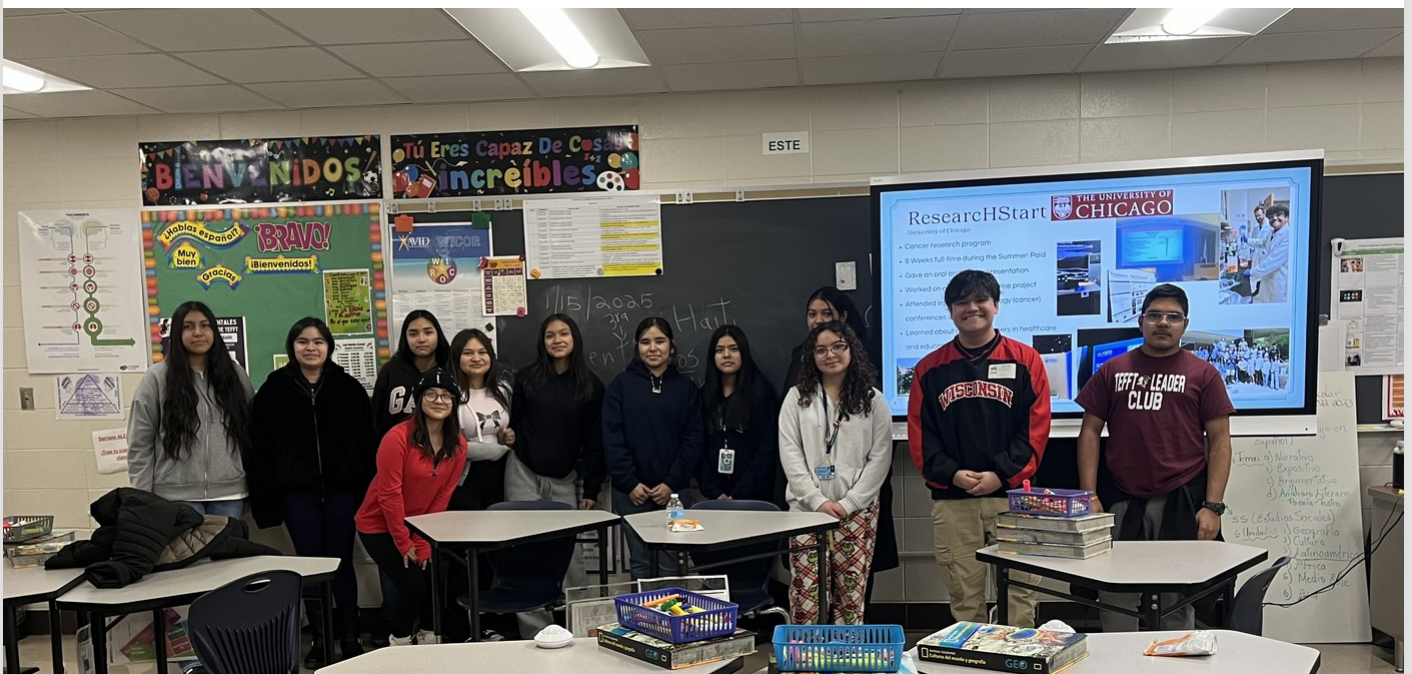
Note: We enjoy seeing the recognition and respect among our U-46 Team through the [Kudos submitted](#) in each issue of the Superintendent's Weekly. In an effort to further recognize our team members, we will be sharing select Kudos on social media each week under the hashtag #U46StaffKudos. When entering Kudos in Let's Talk, please note if you would prefer to not have your kudos shared on social media. We look forward to continuing to receive your kudos and celebrating them in this new way.

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 Leader Club at Tefft Middle School, from Leticia Yera, at Tefft Middle School

Translation: Celebrating the success of our alumni and current students, we want to recognize the incredible work of our school's Leader Club and our alumni, who showed us this week the power of perseverance and leadership. Thanks to the support of the school district, our students are equipped with the tools to build a bright future. This experience reinforced our commitment to developing leaders for our community.

Reconocemos el éxito de nuestros exalumnos y estudiantes actuales. Queremos reconocer el gran trabajo del Leader Club de nuestra escuela y de nuestros exalumnos, quienes nos demostraron esta semana el poder de la perseverancia y el liderazgo. Gracias al apoyo del distrito escolar, nuestros estudiantes tienen las herramientas para construir un futuro brillante. Esta experiencia reforzó nuestro compromiso con el desarrollo de líderes para nuestra comunidad.



Kudos to Josey Herrera, at Elgin High School, from Elizabeth Schimmel and the Culinary Department at Elgin High School

Josey is currently filling two roles in our school as both the principal's secretary and as our interim treasurer. Josey, you already had a full time job that required a lot of attention, and now you are

somehow managing to master both. We see you and we appreciate all that you do for us and our school. Thank you!

Kudos to Danielle Rubel, Network Instructional Coach, from Mariam Surtee, at Prairieview Elementary School

A big thank you to Danielle for all the incredible support you've given me as a first year teacher so far this year. I truly appreciate everything you've done. Whether that's offering guidance, brainstorming ideas, or just being there when I needed a hand, you've been a constant source of encouragement. I'm really lucky to have you in my corner. Looking forward to all the amazing things we'll continue to accomplish together! Thank you again for being so awesome!

Kudos to the Sunnydale Elementary ILP Team - Andrea Gaitan, Cody Papp, Emy Bacheller, Kimberly Donile, Suzanne Hodgkins, and Yamil Javariz, from Jessica Harrison and the Behavior Specialists, in Special Education

A heartfelt thank you to this group for their wonderful work. Your dedication, collaboration, and unwavering support in addressing student behavior and helping them reach their fullest potential is truly appreciated. It's always a pleasure working alongside such a committed team.

Kudos to James Hort, Vito Selvaggio, and Matthew Davis, at Bartlett High School, from Sara Marcason, in Health Services

I wanted to thank James, Vito and Matthew for being extremely responsive and flexible in regard to their students. Thank you for all you do!

Kudos to Mary Beth Erickson, at Bartlett High School, from Sara Marcason, in Health Services

Mary Beth is a wonderful teacher who is always open to helping other educators with new strategies for students. Thank you for your help!

Kudos to Alexa Charsha and Dominique Zewde, from Michele Chapman, all in Post Secondary Success

Thank you to Alexa and Dominique for all your hard work and dedication. Your contributions to our counseling staff and post secondary teams are truly appreciated, and it's amazing to see how much we've accomplished as a team. The effort and commitment you bring to our work makes all the difference, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such talented colleagues. Thank you for all you do for our students and staff!

Kudos to Jim Wolf, Naul Conejo, and Saju Kizhakkail, in Information Services, from Rich Bosh and the Safety Department

District Safety would like to thank the IS team - Director Wolf, Naul, and Saju, for assisting law enforcement and District Safety in using their expertise in monitoring and researching computer usage to locate a missing student. Without their expertise and skills, this could have been a different unfortunate outcome. It is of great pleasure working with a group of professionals who dropped what they were doing to help out. Thank you!

Kudos to Tricia Najera, at Lords Park Elementary School, from Stephanie Hopkins, in Early Learners

Thank you Tricia, for always being willing to open your classroom to other kindergarten teachers within the district. Not only are you welcoming, willing to share resources and answer questions, your thoughtful planning, clear procedures and growth mindset are a great model for us all!

Kudos to Tiffany Mikhail Wright, in Equity & Inclusion, from Kelly Roback and the Ridge Circle Elementary School Staff

Tiffany is dedicated to empowering young girls to become leaders through her I am LEAD group! She fosters confidence, resilience, and truly believes in their abilities. Tiffany encourages our girls to embrace their voices and pursue their dreams. Her commitment to nurturing the next generation of female leaders is paving the way for a brighter world. Keep up the amazing work!

Kudos to Jennifer Schwardt, at Horizon Elementary School, from Kyle Bunker, Executive Director of the Bartlett Network

Jennifer was recognized by Hanover Park for the work she and her staff do each year for Veteran's Day. It's been a long standing tradition at Horizon. Hanover Park wanted to acknowledge her service and the work of the staff, as they focus each November on those who selflessly serve our country. Well done!



School District U-46



