

Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter



Feb. 27, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

The annual Illinois 5Essentials Survey, opened Friday, February 18, and remains open through **Monday, March 31**. I encourage our school leaders to make time for students and teachers to take the survey during the school day, and I urge parents to take this bilingual survey at home, school, or via their mobile device. The survey is completely confidential and will never be connected to a parent, teacher, or student.

Although the required threshold to generate a parent report for each school is 20 percent, we will strive to achieve at least 35 percent parent participation to obtain meaningful feedback. For staff and student participation, our goal is to have 95 percent participation from 4th through 12th grade students and 90 percent staff participation in this year's survey at each building.

To take the survey, please visit survey.5-essentials.org/illinois/ and select the relevant survey - teacher, student, or parent - to begin. For more information, please visit www.u-46.org/5Essentials.

The 5Essentials Survey is based on five components found to be critical for school success:

- Effective Leaders
- Collaborative Teachers
- Involved Families
- Supportive Environment
- Ambitious Instruction.

These components are closely tied to our goals for the 2024-25 school year, including:

- School District U-46 will maximize resources available to accelerate student growth in alignment with the U-46 instructional clarity framework.

- School District U-46 will update and enhance the wide range of college and Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways and magnet school programs.
- School District U-46 will increase access to and enrollment in high quality early childhood programs.
- School District U-46 will establish and operate inclusive, efficient, safe and equitable learning environments.

I will certainly take a moment to complete it as a proud U-46 parent. Please consider joining me in completing or promoting the survey. Your feedback helps us reflect on our practices, make informed decisions, and improve our school community.

It's a great day 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 Karen Diete, from Janelle Raine, Sarah Hansen, Kelly Roback, and Molly Carris, all at Ridge Circle Elementary School

We would like to honor Karen Diete, an amazing 4th grade teacher at Ridge Circle Elementary, for her unwavering dedication to our students. Karen goes beyond ensuring academic success; she prioritizes students' social-emotional well-being, especially those facing personal challenges. Recently, Karen supported a student dealing with difficulties by offering understanding, patience, and consistent kindness. Karen makes sure every child knows they are valued and that they matter! She creates a safe and welcoming classroom where all students find the support they need to navigate life's challenges. Thank you, Karen, for your empathy, dedication, and tireless efforts to support every student. You are making a positive lasting impact!

Kudos to the 2nd Grade Team at Hillcrest Elementary School from Sara Pletcher, in the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department

Thank you to the Hillcrest 2nd grade team for allowing us to observe your classrooms and learn from you. It is so clear that you love what you do!

Kudos to our Transportation Department, from Catherine Fletcher and the Staff at Heritage Elementary School

Heritage had a water main break outside school last week and our incredible Transportation department went above and beyond to get the word out to our families! Very few students ended up at school due to their quick response! We cannot thank you enough for your diligence for our families!

Kudos to U-46 Plant Operations Department, from Catherine Fletcher and the Staff at Heritage Elementary School

Thank you so much to everyone at Plant Operations. We appreciate your swift response and support during our water main break. Thank you for your continued on site support, Josh and Mike D!

Kudos to Rosa Trujillo, from Catherine Fletcher and the Staff at Heritage Elementary School

We are so appreciative of all you do. Thank you so much for holding down the phone lines during our water main break. We could not do it without you, Rosa. Thank you for always being there for us and our families!

Kudos to all the Staff at Heritage Elementary School, from Catherine Fletcher and Dr. Angel Brooks, both at Heritage Elementary School

We cannot thank you enough for the support last week with our water main break. What a team we have! Your collective response to our students and families did not go unnoticed. Thank you. You are tops!

Kudos to Project Access Department, from Janelle Raine, Sarah Hansen, Kelly Roback and Molly Carris, all at Ridge Circle Elementary School

Kudos to Project Access for going above and beyond to ensure that two of our students receive the education they deserve. Project Access recently coordinated transportation for three of our U-46 students who have temporarily moved to a location out of our district boundaries. It required persistent advocacy, creative problem-solving, and an unwavering commitment to putting student needs first. Navigating the complexities of working with a state agency who was hesitant to take on the extra effort was a challenge, but Project Access remained steadfast, ensuring these students weren't going to be left behind. This is what it means to truly support students – meeting them where they are and doing whatever it takes to keep them connected to learning. Thank you, Project Access, for your tireless work and for reminding us all why advocacy matters. Your impact is real, and your efforts are deeply appreciated!

Kudos to the Employees of McKinley Elementary School, from Elizabeth Jackson, a McKinley Parent

I have three children in the Dual Language program at McKinley Elementary. I wanted to share how grateful I am to both the program and the teachers at this school. When I listen to my kids hold conversations in Spanish with others, I am overcome with appreciation at the work these teachers have done. This curriculum has enriched our lives and given my family an incredible gift. I wanted to give our school the public mention that it deserves. It has been a privilege to have my children attend this school. Thank you, McKinley!

Kudos to Radwan Abordan, at Bartlett High School, from Milena Nedeljkovic in Postsecondary Success-Gifted, Accelerated, and Magnet Programs

Thank you for being my family connector, especially of Spanish-speaking parents. Your support has helped me address their concerns and, in some instances, provide more information about our

programs. I'm thankful for our friendship!

Kudos to Joey Peterson, at Bartlett High School, from Dr. Jennifer Schwardt, and the Horizon PTO, at Horizon Elementary School

Our Horizon PTO rented the BHS cafeteria for an event, and Joey the night custodian was so very helpful! He welcomed us, made sure our event was set up the way we needed, made sure to stay in contact with us throughout the evening, and checked in if we needed anything. Thank you Joey for making our Candy Bar Bingo event run so smoothly at BHS!

Kudos to Ericka Brown, Internal Auditor, Bridgid Wright, in Special Education, and Kimberly Dedeaux, in Teaching & Learning, from Melanie Peterson in Special Education

I just want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to each of you for your incredible efforts in planning and assisting with the Soul of Heritage Black Expo. Your dedication, hard work, and attention to detail truly made the night a huge success! I appreciate everything you did to bring this event to life, and I couldn't have done it without you. Thank you for your time, commitment, and teamwork — it truly means the world!



School District U-46

