

# Superintendent's Weekly Newsletter

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**Mar. 6, 2025**

Dear Colleagues,

During the February 24 Board of Education Meeting, a summary of feedback concerning boundary recommendations was presented. One of our primary goals for the 2024-2025 year indicates “U-46 will establish and operate equity-focused, inclusive, efficient, and safe learning environments.” To complete this work, and the inclusion of new schools, boundaries will be updated. To view initial boundary recommendations, please visit our [U-46 Mapping Our Future Webpage](#). Feedback for the boundary updates is included below:

Elgin Network Feedback and Common Themes:

- Desire for more communication about the transition process for students moving to new schools.
- Need for clarification on the future of Ellis Middle School, particularly for students who will be impacted by the opening of the new middle school.

Bartlett Network Feedback and Common Themes:

- Preference to:
  - Keep students at the same middle school for both years.
  - Align high school boundaries with elementary attendance areas.
- Ensure Ignite program remains available, and that there are dual language options within the network
- Would like the ability for incoming 9th graders to start at their new high school in 2025-26.

Larkin Network Feedback and Common Themes:

- Participants are still digesting the retirement of schools in this area.
- Suggestions focused on:
  - Keeping 7th graders at their current middle school for both years

- Maintaining consistent feeder patterns, particularly Lowrie Elementary students.
- Concerns and additional clarity needed about the transition for students attending Abbott Middle School and whether 8th graders will remain at the school.

#### South Elgin Network Feedback and Common Themes:

- Significant number of suggestions focused on keeping specific neighborhoods within their current school boundaries, including:
  - Neighborhoods in the Fox Meadow Elementary area.
  - Keeping students from Walnut Hills at South Elgin High School.
  - Nature Ridge community members expressed concerns about moving to Eastview Middle School because of the need to cross train tracks.
    - Could increase travel time, traffic congestion, and pose safety risks.
- Desire for clear communication about the transition process.
- Questions included the rationale for specific boundary changes, impact on class sizes, and possibility of grandfathering students into their current schools.

#### Streamwood Network Feedback and Common Themes:

- Concerns raised about Hanover Countryside students being redistricted into four different schools.
  - Strong preference for keeping existing student groups and neighborhood communities together.
- Recommendation to allow current students and their siblings to remain at their current schools, even if boundaries change, with the option for families to arrange transportation if needed.
- Questions and concerns about commute times, potential bus delays, and safety at key intersections, highlighting the importance of careful transportation planning during this process.

We plan to bring back a revised attendance boundary proposal to the Board of Education on March 24, 2025. The Board of Education is then expected to take action on the boundary proposal in April or May.

Together, we are making sure it is always a great day to learn in U-46!

Dr. Suzanne Johnson

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## 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 our Amazing School Social Workers, from Mary Abbott and Kim Neilson Social Work Leads**

We celebrate your amazing work throughout our district. Your compassion, dedication, empathy and commitment to helping students thrive, both academically and emotionally, are truly appreciated. You create safe spaces, offer guidance and empower students to navigate challenges. Thank you for being the advocate and support system that our students, families, and staff can rely on. Your hard work makes a world of difference in shaping a child's future and fostering a caring, inclusive environment in our schools. We are truly grateful for all that you do!

**Kudos to School Social Workers in our Buildings, from Ryan Lemanski, in Special Education**

I'd like to take a moment to recognize the incredible school social workers in our buildings who support students and staff every single day. Their dedication to our communities is invaluable – they tirelessly connect families with resources and ensure every student has the support they need to thrive. Our social workers have some of the biggest hearts in our district, often taking on the most challenging situations without hesitation. Their compassion, commitment, and advocacy make a profound difference in the lives of so many.

Please join us in celebrating this extraordinary group of professionals during School Social Work Week, March 2-7. When you see a social worker, be sure to take a moment to say thank you for all that they do!

**Kudos to Angel Cueva, Isabel Reyna, Ana Lafuente, Xaquin Rodiles, Neha Ohja, Kelly Rysavy, Julio Valero, Maritza Cabello, Payel Bathacharjee, Laura Azcoitia, Lydia Florez, Bertha Hopkins, Laura Padilla-Lopez, Ravneet Kalia, from Geraldene Hernandez, all Teachers at Tefft Middle School**

I want to recognize these individuals for their kindness and always giving positivity to my days. They are great professionals who go the extra mile for their students and also collaborate with their colleagues. I'm grateful for you because, in one way or the other, you make my days better and full of smiles.

**Kudos to Mary Abbott, from Kim Neilson, both Social Work Leads**

During this School Social Work Week I want to celebrate, and especially thank, Mary Abbott for her leadership and commitment to the School Social Work Department. Not too many people get to see the behind the scenes of all she does to support the District as a whole; the school social work staff and myself in being new to this role as well as U-46. Mary, the Social Work Lead for Secondary, tirelessly advocates for the school social work needs of our district, while making strong contributions to SEL, MTSS, and Specialized Student Services. She has developed numerous things for our department that makes it run so smoothly. Her experience, work ethic, and knowledge in the field as well as in our communities is such an asset.



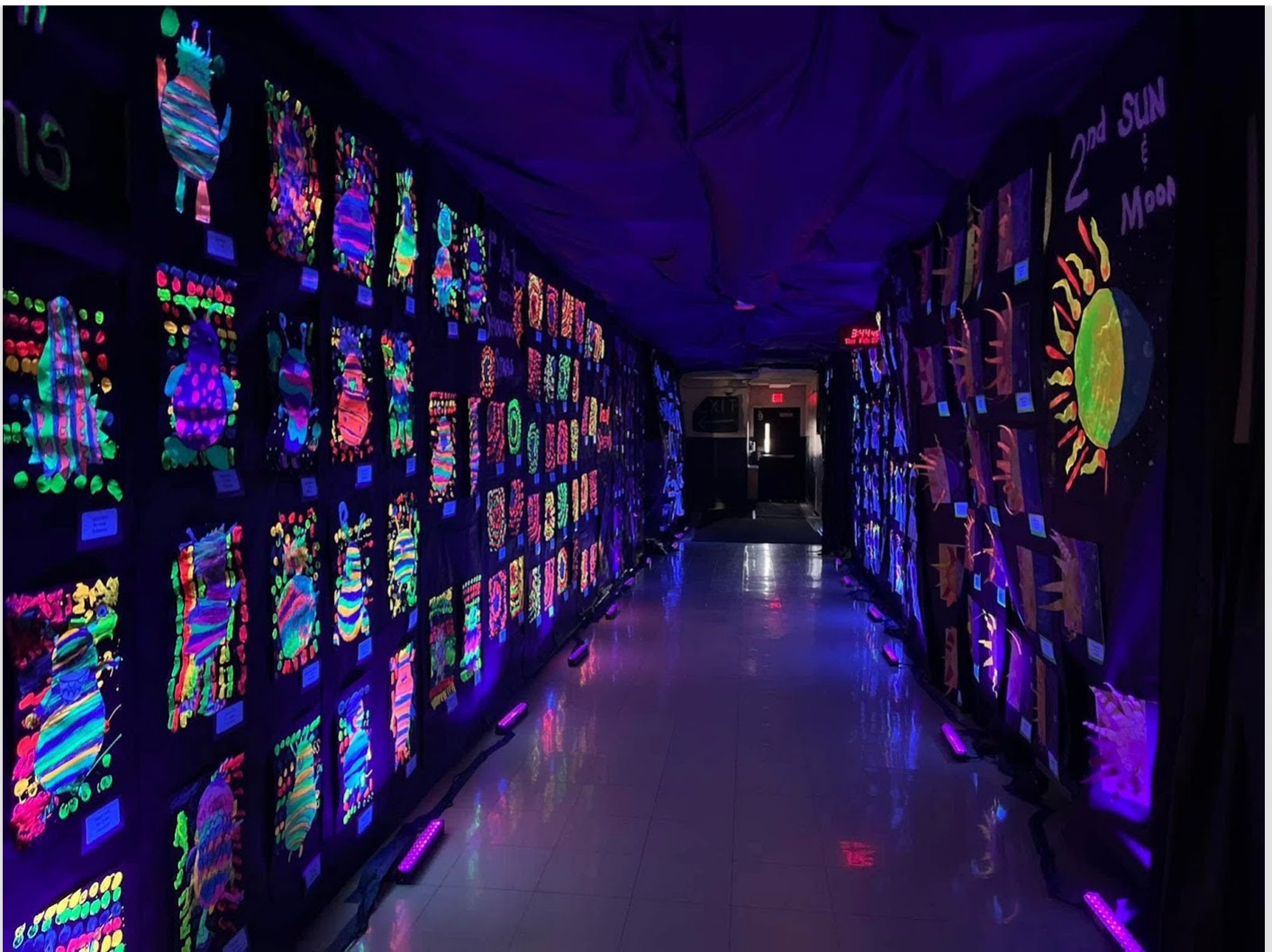
**Kudos to Viviana Valdez, from Lea Russelle, both at Ronald D. O'Neal Elementary School**

Vivi is our home school liaison, and I just want to share how appreciative I am to have her support this year. She is so organized and on top of the ACCESS testing, it couldn't have gone any smoother. Ronald O'Neal is so lucky to have her! Thank you, Vivi!

**Kudos to Christina Amato and Nickolas Basich, from Sara Henry, all at Willard Elementary School**

Willard had the most amazing Fine Arts Night on Feb. 27 thanks to our talented fine arts team. Christina Amato (art) and Nickolas Basich (music) created a family night that was nothing short of magical! Students performed for their parents on stage and then were able to showcase their artwork which was out of this world. Willard is so lucky to have the best fine arts team in the district! Their passion for the arts, dedication, and hard work do not go unnoticed by staff and the community. Thank you for another amazing night!!





**Kudos to Andrew Jachim, Nicole Maciorowski, Andrew Kamienski, Emily Driessen, Ann Miller, and Beth Brands, all at South Elgin High School, from Mary Perkins, at Tefft Middle School**

This is a rockstar South Elgin High School team. We appreciate your support during the middle school girls' basketball championship game! The experience for our students is one worth remembering. We appreciate all you did to make the event memorable. Thank you!

**Kudos to Kaleb Carter, at South Elgin High School, from Mary Perkins, at Tefft Middle School**

Thank you Kaleb for all your collaboration and support while hosting two huge events for our middle school athletics – the middle school cheer clinic and basketball championship. The cheer clinic was a huge success, bringing more than 40 cheerleaders together with the high school cheer teams and teaching them valuable skills. Our girls' basketball championship was also a huge success with Eastview taking home the district championship at both levels. We appreciate all your support for these two successful events.

**Kudos to Jenna Mellinger, Rachel Myers, Alyssa Manzari, Jean Sloat, Savannah Bennett, and Julia Coduto, from Mary Perkins**

Thank you to the high school cheer coaches for all you did to support our recent cheer clinic. Without your dedication and teams being present we wouldn't have been able to host. We are looking forward to our continued collaboration and advancement of our cheer teams. Thank you so much!

**Kudos to the Exceptional Food and Nutrition Services Team, from Lisa Jackson, in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Thank you for contributing to the creation of a welcoming environment for learning, sharing your insights and perspectives, and for allowing me to be a part of such a wonderful culture built on meaningful connections and mutual respect. It was an honor to learn and grow with all of you.

**Kudos to Emmalie Hall-Skank, at Streamwood High School, from Lisa Jackson, in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

I am incredibly grateful for your support. Your expertise and professionalism played a crucial role in helping me perform at my best. Because of you, I was able to focus entirely on the amazing people in front of me. Your contributions made all the difference, and I truly appreciate it.

**Kudos to Kelley Thomas, Carolina Lerner, Julie Hill, Rosalia Cornejo, Michelle Sweeney, Denise Halleran, Tracy Jorgenson, Lindsay Taylor, Sarah Schrandt, and Estela Vazquez, from Stephanie Hopkins, all in Early Learners**

As Early Learners resource itinerants, thank you for all you do each and every day to support students and classrooms. Your knowledge, flexibility, and creativity are truly invaluable, and your dedication does not go unnoticed. You are one of the hardest-working groups of educators I know, and I am grateful to collaborate with you!

**Kudos to Noemi Perez, in the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department, Doreen Roberts, in Career & Technical Education, Kimberly Dedeaux, in Teaching & Learning, Navi Gonzalez, at Creekside Elementary School, and Dr. Leatrice Satterwhite, Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Innovation, from Linda Mitchell Taylor, in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for your support at Elgin Community College during the Kane County Institute Day. It was invaluable. You all readily assisted participants in finding their sessions, welcomed our outside presenters, and addressed any room mix-ups that occurred. Your presence significantly contributed to the smooth operation of the day for both participants and presenters.

**Kudos to Those who Supported Creekside Elementary School's Black History Celebration, from Debra Ross, at Creekside Elementary**

I would like to thank our principal, Dr. Joel Pollack for all of the support that I received during the creation and execution of our Black History Celebration. I also have to thank our Creekside team and students for creating the best ever displays for our Black History Gallery. And finally, thank you to our families who showed up in great numbers. We had the best time ever!

**Kudos to Melinda Leman, in Human Resources, and Brenda Gomez, Alec Barlow, Cecilia Rodriguez, and Teagan Pompa, in Communications & Community Relations, from Tara Burghart, in Communications & Community Relations**

Thank you all for doing such a great job with our Years of Service celebration at Kenyon Woods Middle School. I'm sure our honorees felt appreciated and enjoyed gathering to mark all the years they have dedicated to our school district. I hated to miss it, but I knew everything was in great hands with a team like this on the job!

**Kudos to Specialized Student Services Team Members, from Amy Durkalski, in Specialized Student Services**

Thank you to the following Specialized Student Services department team members who supported a HUGE task to help me complete a recent State response:

Thank you, Kelli McGee and Anabela Largo, Lead SLPs, for taking on the bulk of the work and spending countless hours, above and beyond, to get this work done and ready on time.

Thank you, Kate Olson, Independence SLP, and Meghan Dorka, AAC dept., for helping Kelli and Anabela with some of the tasks where they needed a little more man-power.

Thank you, all SLPs district-wide who ensured their service logs were updated, organized and available when I needed to pull identified logs.

Thank you, to Jim Medcalf, SSS Data Manager, for your brilliance with spreadsheets and data! We couldn't have done it without you!

Thank you, to the SSS dept. secretaries: Amanda Olszewski, Andrea Ceron, Cheryl Domokos, Jenny Swan and Melanie Patterson for taking time away from their daily duties to help sort, organize and ensure the correct paperwork (thousands of pages) was submitted correctly. Special shout-out to my secretary, Melanie, who then had to scan them all.

And finally, thank you Ryan Lemanski, Assistant Director of SSS - Operations, for co-leading the charge with me and always having my back!

**Kudos to the DUEA (ParaEducators) Professional Development Committee and Heather Fellows, in Professional Learning, from Lorie Estanislao, DUEA PD Chair**

Thank you for a phenomenal day of learning at ParaPalooza! Thank you to Ana Reich, Karina Marin, Margaret Boghossian, Sara Moeller, Tina Pizzitola, and Heather Fellows and her Professional Learning Team, for your dedication, leadership and teamwork to provide quality professional learning for your colleagues. Most importantly, our students benefit the most! We offered 40 different topics and 72 sessions at ParaPalooza – plus a phenomenal keynote speaker! My sincere gratitude and appreciation for all you did for ParaPalooza!





### **Kudos to Staff Supporting ParaPalooza, from Heather Fellows and the Professional Learning Team**

A huge thank you to everyone from BHS and ESC who provided logistical support to make Parapalooza on Feb. 28 a success. Emily Johnson and Janet Greshock provided invaluable support, while Lawrence Molenda and Erik Hidaka ensured a smooth tech setup. Eric Peterson and his team kept things running behind the scenes, and Pete Serpe, Jeff Bral, and Aaron Wichman offered key leadership (even in unexpected situations). David Goldman managed the auditorium setup seamlessly, and Anna Miranda and Rosa Villegas kept everything clean and organized. Miranda Gasca and the BHS Main Office Staff made us feel welcome and helped with last minute needs, and we also appreciate the BHS teachers who made space for us to accommodate the event. Your teamwork and flexibility made the event possible. Thank you!

### **Kudos to the ParaEducators who Presented Professional Development at ParaPalooza from Lorie Estanislao, DUEA PD Chair, and the DUEA PD Committee**

Kudos to Sara Moeller, Tina Pizzitola, Karina Marin, Elizabeth Ramirez, Maria Belt, Renee Sweeney, Sheryl Nemec, Eileen Trusk, Carrie Westerman and Lorie Estanislao. Also, Kudos DUTU's President Heather Weiss who presented with Tina Pizzitola. Heartfelt gratitude to all for sharing your expertise. And for some, "saying yes" not fully knowing what you committed too! You all are rock stars!

### **Kudos to the ParaEducators Who Assisted their Colleagues at ParaPalooza, from Lorie Estanislao, DUEA PD Chair**

Kudos to Korin Stocker, Sue Meek, Karina Marin, Lorrie McDonough, Ana Reich, Michelle Baldwin and Tammy Datisman, Kathy Chwee, Isela Gonzalez, Sara Moeller, Margaret Boghossian, Tina



Pizzitola, DeLona Yucuis, Reyna Pena, Sue Gonia and Teresa Sobenes. With your support, we had a fantastic day of professional learning!



School District U-46

