

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U-46, Alignment Collaborative for Education to Host Fourth Annual Career Expo

*Explore 2018 to be held on a school day, introduce
eighth graders to more than a dozen career pathways*

ELGIN - School District U-46 will showcase curriculum and career pathways for U-46 students at the annual expo on Wednesday, Sept. 12, but for the first time, eighth grade students will attend with teachers as part of their school day.

As in recent years, the Alignment Collaborative for Education (ACE) is partnering with U-46 to organize the event. But to accommodate the large number of students being transported by U-46 to the free weekday event, it is being held in a new location, the Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates. In previous years, Explore was offered on a Saturday at Elgin Community College, and in most cases, parents were responsible for bringing their students to the venue.

"Explore has always done a great job of helping students consider how high school courses will connect with careers and college programs that might interest them, but the event was dependent on families fitting it into their already busy weekend schedules," said U-46 CEO Tony Sanders. "I'm excited that this year, all of our eighth grade students will be able to experience our curriculum and career expo with their teachers."

The Citizens' Advisory Council helped the District launch the first expo three years ago. The Alignment Collaborative for Education, a non-profit local organization that brings together community resources and initiatives to support District priorities, has since helped expand the expo in the past three years. Nearly 3,000 eighth grade students from all eight U-46 middle schools are expected to attend Explore 2018 next month. U-46 buses will be used to transport the students to the event.

“Students attending this year’s expo will be able to explore among 16 industry clusters,” said Nancy Coleman, executive director of Alignment. “Community and business leaders, along with U-46 faculty and staff, will be prepared to help students connect their career interests with their educational experiences in U-46 and beyond. By making Explore 2018 part of the school day, it will also be better integrated into the classroom curriculum.”

Explore 2018 supports the District’s ongoing efforts to improve college and career readiness. The first aspiration outlined in the District’s Strategic Plan focuses on student achievement and educating the whole student by providing an enriched, high-quality experience that empowers graduates to be competitive members of the global society.

Another part of that effort is the adoption of Naviance, a web-based college and career readiness platform that helps students explore their strengths and interests. U-46 is putting Naviance into use at middle and high schools for the 2018-19 school year. Before Explore 2018, guidance counselors will be visiting eighth grade classrooms, helping students use the Naviance tool to determine the “career cluster” they want to focus on at the event. Students and parents will be provided ahead of time with tips about how they can discuss the student’s career interests at home, as well as an expo map so that students can plan their route.

Once at Explore 2018, U-46 faculty and staff will be present to explain core classes, electives, and popular course sequences that are based on students’ career interests, such as courses in automotive, welding, healthcare science, and manufacturing, as well as additional college and career preparatory curriculum.

Exhibitors will be provided with suggestions for how to best interact with students. About 85 local business and industry partners will lead students in discussions and hands-on demonstrations, such as knot-tying exercises and climbing gear students can try on from [Davey Tree](#); an interactive baby mannequin and other medical equipment from Advocate Sherman Hospital; a structure-building exercise from [HLR Engineering](#); and an exercise in DNA fingerprinting to highlight STEM options at [Elgin Community College](#). Students will also have the opportunity to learn more about public safety

careers from the Elgin Police Department, who will bring a SWAT truck, the Elgin Fire Department, and the Kane County Sheriff's Office. To see highlights from last year's event, please visit: [Explore 2017](#).

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School District U-46 serves families in 11 communities: Bartlett, Elgin, South Elgin, Hanover Park, South Elgin, Streamwood and Wayne, as well as portions of Carol Stream, Hoffman Estates, St. Charles, Schaumburg, and West Chicago. In total, the District encompasses 90 square miles within the Fox River Valley, approximately 45 minutes west of downtown Chicago, and includes communities within Cook, DuPage and Kane counties. More than 39,000 pre-K through twelfth graders attend the 57 District schools and programs. To learn more, visit the [U-46 website](#), or like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).