



Tony Sanders, Chief Executive Officer

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Students to Be Honored for Achievements

Students competed in Special Olympics, cheerleading world championships

ELGIN - The School District U-46 Board of Education Monday will recognize five students for their recent achievements, four in the Illinois Special Olympics and one in the International Cheer Union World Championships.

The U-46 BlueStars sent six students to the Summer Games of the Illinois Special Olympics, held in June at sites around Bloomington-Normal, and three returned with gold medals. The students qualified for the state competition by earning a first place in the regional competition of their sport.

Natalie Gort, who is a 4th grader at Nature Ridge Elementary School in Bartlett, received a gold medal in the 200 Meter Run, as did Laila Tran, a senior at Streamwood High School. Constantina "Tina" Hondros, who is a freshman at Bartlett High School, received a gold in the 25 Meter Freestyle Swim.

BlueStars Coach Lindsey Reynolds said all three girls are "absolute joys" to have on the team.

"Tina has a constant smile, thoughtful disposition, and always, always demonstrates good sportsmanship. In every event I have ever seen her compete in, she initiates kind conversations with the athletes she is sitting next to and competing against," Reynolds said. "Laila is a bright light and is constantly positive and lifting each person up, including her coaches! She is never without a smile on her face, and celebrates both victories and challenging events with the same vigor and positive attitude.

"Miss Natalie is a great little competitor! She may be one of our younger athletes, but she has shown that her athleticism is right up there with the more experienced athletes! And she has been so fun to watch interact with

and formulate friendships with the other BlueStars — she started off quite shy, and has really grown to be quite the interactive teammate.”

Jackson Miller, an 11th grader at Larkin High School, also competed in the Illinois Special Olympics through the the Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association and won a gold in the 50 Meter Backstroke Swim. His mother, Rebecca Miller, credited Larkin High School coach Nate Williams with helping encourage Jackson’s enjoyment of the sport. Larkin launched its swim team in 2018, and Williams made sure to find a place for Jackson on the team, Miller said.

Jackson, Natalie, Laila, and Tina will be honored during the Accents on Achievement portion of the Board meeting, along with Renee Grandstaff, who won gold with the USA Cheer’s U.S. National Special Olympics Unified Intermediate Team at the International Cheer Union’s World Championships in April in Orlando, Florida. Renee is a part of the Elite Stars, who train in Hanover Park, and is a student in the District’s transition programs, which serve students with special needs until their 22nd birthday, supporting them as they develop everyday skills through jobs, classroom activities, and community instruction.

“We are incredibly proud of Renee for all of her hard work, determination, and confidence,” said her teacher Danielle Williams. “Renee is such an incredible student and an inspiration to many people around her.”

The Board of Education will recognize the students with “Accent on Achievement” certificates at 7 p.m. Monday, August 26 in room 140 of the Educational Services Center, 355 E. Chicago St., Elgin.

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School District U-46 serves families in 11 communities: Bartlett, 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. Nearly



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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](#).