

Press Clippings 11/24/2021 to 11/29/2021

---Elgin Courier-News-- 11/28/2021

Plans to hire private tutors and to send paraeducators to NIU for special education licenses to cost U-46 nearly \$1M

By Mike Danahey

School District U-46 will spend nearly \$1 million to hire a private tutoring firm for students quarantined for COVID-19 and to pay for paraeducators who want to earn a special education teaching license through Northern Illinois University.

Proximity Learning of Austin, Texas, is to be paid nearly \$473,000 to provide 16 licensed teachers who will tutor students who need help after being out of school because of a quarantine situation.

About 1,000 U-46 students have had to go into quarantine this school year, district documents said. The tutors will work with all grade levels other than pre-kindergarten students, who will continue to work with their assigned teachers should they miss any school, officials said.

Information on how the district's quarantine process and procedures work can be found online at www.u-46.org/Page/18418.

Tutoring sessions would be conducted through Zoom video conferencing, Deputy Superintendent of Instruction Suzanne Johnson told the U-46 School Board when the contract was approved in November.

Sessions could be held during or after regular school hours, whatever works best "to meet the needs and interests of students and households, realizing that not all households have someone available to support the online tutorial during the school day," Johnson said.

The tutoring is meant to support, not replace, the curriculum provided by a class teacher, she said.

“The more flexibility we create, the more likely it is students will be successful in logging in and taking part in these tutorials,” Johnson said.

About 65% of district schools across all grade levels have requested additional tutoring support beyond what some teachers already have been providing, she said.

Special education licenses

At its Dec. 13 meeting, the U-46 school board is to consider approving an 18-month contract with Northern Illinois University that would allow 35 U-46 paraeducators to participate in its Licensed Educators’ Accelerated Pathway program.

Successful completion would result in the employees earning their Learning Behavior Specialist 1 (LBS1) licenses, allowing them to become special education teachers by June 30, 2023, Johnson said.

The goal is to develop staff who can fill vacant existing or future special education positions resulting from retirement and attrition.

Johnson said the LBS1 license is “required for (someone who wants to teach) students with a range of disabilities, ages 5 to 21, in various instructional settings.”

The district will pay for the paraeducators to receive the training in exchange for a commitment that they remain with U-46 for five years. The commitment includes the time they participate in the NIU program, Johnson said.

“Historically, we have been short about 10 special education teachers annually,” she said. “This year, with the significant staffing shortages and in alignment with COVID, we are short about 40 special education teachers.”

The need for special educators is projected to grow nationally by 6% over the time between 2014 and 2024, according to a U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report. Money for both the Proximity Learning and NIU contracts will come from the district’s Educational Fund and will be reimbursed with money from the federal government’s Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, officials said.

---Daily Herald-- 11/28/2021

Meet the Daily Herald’s inaugural Diversity Advisory Panel members

By Madhu Krishnamurthy



Toya Webb

The Daily Herald has created a Diversity Advisory Panel to better represent our suburban mosaic and help us broaden our understanding and coverage of diverse communities.

Our inaugural group is made up of people from varying walks of life, ages, experiences, various ethnic, racial, religious, educational, professional and public service backgrounds.

As Diversity Editor, I will be leading this volunteer panel of advisers to help us identify what we do well and where we can improve in better representing the communities we serve.

The panel's mission is to help the newsroom identify stories about underrepresented groups and to better reflect them in our coverage, keying in on the important issues affecting those communities, as well as to help monitor our coverage for matters of sensitivity and accuracy.

The 13-member panel will interact in private group conversations, giving feedback on various topics to the newspaper's editorial staff.

Here are our advisers:

•**Jo Ann Armenta**

Age: 71

Hometown: Elgin

Background/community involvement: Retired Illinois state trooper, former Gail Borden Public Library Board member and third-generation Mexican American.

"Newspapers and magazines are the conveyors of the essences of society and the building blocks of history -- or at least they were before social media took over. To me, it is important to have many perspectives, including mine, on what happens in my community, or in society at large."

•Dennis Avelar

Age: 38

Hometown: Addison

Background/community involvement: Digital content developer for Underwriters Laboratories and a self-published author. The youngest first-generation, American-born son of Guatemalan immigrants.

"I hope that my contributions can lead to ideas in which we can tell great stories that make a difference, and that more of us are able to access positive news and content, which highlight the accomplishment of our residents, the success stories of our local businesses and the tireless efforts for those who want to see their cities/towns/communities flourish."

•Marcus Belin

Age: 34

Hometown: Huntley

Background/community involvement: First Black principal of Huntley High School; 2020 Principal of the Year for the Illinois Principals Association Kishwaukee Region; the first Black

president to lead the Illinois Principals Association, which serves more than 6,000 educational leaders statewide.

•**Keith Cross**

Age: 51

Hometown: Yorkville

Background/community involvement: Aurora police chief and a 27-year veteran of the Aurora Police Department. Past president of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives Northern Illinois Chapter based in Aurora.

•**Wilbur Dumas**

Age: 37

Hometown: Elgin

Background/community involvement: Owns Lincoln Avenue Barbershop in Elgin. A product of the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin and graduate of **Larkin High School**. Volunteers with the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin and teaches part time at the Cosmetology and Spa Academy in Elgin. One of six barbers for the Chicago Bulls.

•**Mark Hellner**

Age: 69

Hometown: Arlington Heights

Background/community involvement: Senior counsel/executive director emeritus for the Center for Disability and Elder Law, which provides free legal services to low-income seniors and low-income adults with disabilities. Served on the Arlington Heights Housing Commission and ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 2013.

•**Faraz Khan**

Age: 19

Hometown: Park Ridge

Background/community involvement: Undergraduate student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign pursuing a bachelor's degree in political science with minors in legal studies and public relations. Evanston native born to Indian-Muslim immigrant parents. Former candidate for Des Plaines Park District Board. Volunteered with organizations related to environmental action, youth and civic involvement, and Muslim community groups.

"Growing up, I never saw people who looked like me positively reflected in the media. I hope that the work this panel does will lead to a newspaper where everyone reading can see themselves reflected in it."

•**Megan Lavery**

Age: 44

Hometown: Grayslake

Background/community involvement: LGBTQ+ middle school teacher and coach in Lake Forest. Member of Grayslake District 46 Equity Committee, PFLAG, LGBTQ+ Resource Center of Lake County, LCDW

Local media plays a critical role in presenting balanced, reliable information within communities, and newspapers have the power to shape behaviors and opinions. Because of this impact on civic life, it is essential that news outlets are representative of the entire community and not just dominant culture. I believe we are more alike in our human condition than we are different, and community-based news outlets like the Daily Herald are in a position to help foster empathy and awareness, while still providing sound, factual reporting.

•**Marjorie Logman**

Age: 73

Hometown: Aurora

Background/community involvement: Taught at private elementary schools in Batavia and Aurora. Member of the Together is Better Alliance and Come Unity, and state Sen. Karina Villa's Senior Advisory Board and Education Board; treasurer of the Batavia Historical Society. White with predominantly Swedish heritage.

"I am an advocate for the aging population as I see we are becoming more and more marginalized and discounted by American society. It is more important than ever that we are all represented in journalism through articles and photographs. Journalism is one of the windows to the world and we all like to see ourselves and our interests through the window."

•**Marti Sladek**

Age: 75

Hometown: Downers Grove

Background/community involvement: Retired lawyer with a former practice in employment law. Worked as a broadcast journalist and in public relations. Member of several women's rights organizations and an owner at Prairie Food Co-op.

"This project interested me as an established fighter for equity and diversity. But more than that, gradually coming out of the parallel caves of grief and COVID, I wanted to reinvent myself to be both relevant and visible, something that is very difficult in the suburbs for a single, older woman."

•**Ashfaq Hussain Syed**

Age: 47

Hometown: Naperville

Background/community involvement: Vice president of a private bank in Naperville. Formerly associated with Times Bank and ICICI Bank in India and RAK Bank in Dubai. Appointed to the Naperville Public Library Board. Member of Islamic Center of Naperville; former board member of American Association of Retired Asians, and general secretary of Glory of Hyderabad.

•**Gina Walsh**

Age: 51

Hometown: Crystal Lake

Background/community involvement: Retired Bartlett police officer who is half Korean. Member of Immanuel Lutheran of Crystal Lake.

"This work is important because I feel when there is more diversity and we share our perspectives, we can start to understand and appreciate others more."

•**Toya Webb**

Age: 42

Hometown: Barrington

Background/community involvement: Chief marketing and communications officer at Elgin Community College, certified life coach. Past or current member of: Diversity and Inclusion committee, Public Relations Society of America-Chicago; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, National Council for Marketing and Public Relations; ethics chair, Public Relations Society of America-Chicago; small group leader, Willow Creek Community Church; Elgin Community College Transition Academy youth mentor.

"Everybody has a story. However, not everyone sees themselves accurately represented in the stories that we tell. And these are not stories exclusively told by the media, but stories that we tell one another and even ourselves. As a former reporter, I understand the important role that journalism plays in informing and oftentimes influencing societal perceptions."

• Share stories, news and happenings from the suburban mosaic at mkrishnamurthy@dailyherald.com.

---The Examiner of Bartlett--- 11/24/2021
U-46 enrollment report summarized at meeting
By Seth Hancock; Note- This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood

Enrollment dropped by 533 students to a total of 36,090 in 2021-2022 in **School District U-46** according to data presented to the Board of Education on Nov. 1.

Brian Lindholm, chief of staff, said the numbers were as of Sept. 29. This is the seventh straight year of enrollment declines as the district has lost 10.9 percent in enrollment since 40,487 in 2014.

Last year, the district lost 1,391 students and Lindholm said “many families scrambled to make other arrangements for their students” because of distance learning, but this year is “more in line with the declines that we’ve been experiencing in recent years.”

Lindholm said the state lost over 70,000 students overall. He said declining birth rates since 2006 and the EMSA charter school, which he estimated has 350 students now, attributes to the downward-enrollment trend.

Census data showed that 90 percent of Illinois communities’ lost population and population has declined annually for seven years, polling showing that high taxation has contributed to many leaving.

Lindholm said the district projected enrollment to continue declining to a “new normal” of an average of 2,500 students per class for a total enrollment in the low 30,000s.

State data was presented earlier in the meeting showing U-46 enrollment at 35,958.

Lindholm said: “This is fairly typical as we report our data up to the state and they do their own categorizing of enrollments by program, by demographic. So, there’s usually some reconciling.”

Total high school enrollment was the only level that saw an increase at 184 students, 12,217 to 12,401. South Elgin (160), Elgin (51) and Larkin (30) all saw increases but Streamwood lost 14 students and Bartlett 10.

Elementary lost 545 students, 17,540 to 16,995, with 29 schools losing students and nine with losses greater than 30, Elgin’s Hilltop and Hoffman Estate’s Timber Trails each losing 48 to top the list. Wayne saw the largest growth at 39 new students.

Middle schools lost 159 students, 5,777 to 5,618, with six of eight losing populations including three over 40, Elgin’s Ellis losing 60. No school saw an increase greater than 40.

Early childhood dropped by 13 students, 1,089 to 1,076.

---The Examiner of Bartlett--- 11/24/2021

Capital projects report presented to U-46 board

By Seth Hancock; Note – This article also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood

Over \$40 million has been spent on completed or in-progress capital projects during 2021 in **School District U46**.

Sheila Downs, director of plant operations, presented the projects to the Board of Education last month.

“U-46 made an investment of over \$40 million in the infrastructure,” Downs said. “Those projects include an array of everything from window replacement projects to parking lots to roofing, playgrounds. There were several projects that took place this year.”

Included was work at a new welcome center which houses transportation, registration, district record, Project Access and Early Education Station.

Flooring projects, like carpeting, were done at eight sites and stripping and waxing district wide, and roof replacements at two sites.

All five high schools had auditorium projects including curtain replacements, laser projector and lens, wireless intercom purchases, painting, seating, carpet replacement and sound board replacement projects. For athletics, South Elgin had a tennis court reconstruction and light replacement, and Elgin’s Memorial Field has mechanical systems upgrade and stadium upgrades.

Playground projects were done or scheduled for nine sites, mechanical upgrades at seven sites, parking lot repaving at four sites and exterior upgrades at six sites.

Canton and Larsen middle schools had gymnasium projects and Lowrie Elementary School a library relocation and renovation. Other projects, like countertop replacements, were done at all middle schools and five additional sites.

Downs said that the district had \$639,755 in savings additionally which included \$460,206 through incentives and rebates. It also included \$179,549 through a “robust energy efficiency

program” through CLEAResult and Cenergistic which offers an “incentive program” for finding “ways to conserve energy.”

Also, 14 schools received Energy Star certification for energy efficiency, Downs said.

Downs said that the district has an internal energy program in which it awards schools for “behavior modifications.” Five schools received awards including a custom bench, tree planting, outdoor trash receptacle, salt spreader and rotary drill set, playground fencing, nurse’s office conversion, technology for building automation and tools.

---Daily Herald-- 11/28/2021

DGN handles Bartlett for title at Wheaton Academy

By Craig Brueske, Daily Herald Correspondent

Downers Grove North's boys' basketball team executed its game plan to near perfection Saturday night.

While making it tough on **Bartlett's 7-foot-3 senior center Conrad Luczynski**, the Trojans' defense made it even tougher on the rest of the Hawks during the Trojans' 68-42 victory in the championship game of the Wheaton Academy Thanksgiving Tournament in West Chicago.

"Our main goal was to attack their shooters and help on the big guy," said junior guard Max Haack, who also provided a huge boost on the offensive end with a game-high 20 points on perfect 8-for-8 shooting from the field.

Haack got the ball rolling, knocking down his first three 3-pointers on his way to a 12-point opening quarter as the Trojans (3-1) grabbed a 20-12 lead.

"Max did a great job and our guards setting him up also did well," said Trojans coach Jim Thomas. "A lot of times, Max gets the threes because guys make screens, and he just has to execute the shot. Everyone sees the end result of Max making the shot but it's an effort of the screener and passer."

The Hawks attempted a comeback early in the second quarter, cutting their deficit to 5 at 22-17 midway through following an inside basket by Luczynski, who finished with a team-leading 20 points on 10 of 17 shooting and 4 rebounds.

But the Trojans had an answer to every little progress Bartlett could make, going on a 6-1 run, fueled by a driving layup from Haack, to extend their lead to 28-18.

Downers Grove North led 32-23 at halftime.

Back-to-back buckets by Luczynski helped the Hawks trim the Trojans' lead to 7 at 36-29 with 4:45 left in the third quarter.

Downers Grove North responded with 7 unanswered points, including a 3-point play from Jack Stanton (11 points) and a steal and layup from Haack, to make it 43-29.

The Trojans pulled away late, outscoring the Hawks 20-8 in the fourth quarter.

"We thought that we could pressure their guards a little bit just so they couldn't get the ball to the big fellow deep into the post," said Thomas. "At times, we were able to execute it and made it hard on him."

The Trojans employed a pair of 6-7 sophomore forwards -- George Wolkow and Jake Riemer (10 points, 5 rebounds) on Luczynski, who impressed Thomas with his skill level.

"My goodness -- he's got great hands, great feet and great touch," said the coach. "I'm just happy we've got two kids that are willing to play defense before the catch."

Ethan Thulin was the Trojans' fourth player to reach double figures with 10 points.

"They came out with a great game plan," Hawks coach Jim Wolfsmith said of the Trojans. "Conrad got 20 (points) but he really had to work for those 20. It wasn't just how they defended Conrad. I thought they pressured our guards into some tough looks and turnovers.

"We've got talent, but we graduated a few guys who could handle that type of pressure in Clark Lewis and George Betevis.

"The film is out on how to attack us so now we've got to find a way to handle it."

---The Examiner of Streamwood--- 11/24/2021

Sabres girls hoops open with three tourney losses

By Seth Hancock

The **Streamwood girls' basketball team** struggled to hit shots as the Sabres opened the season with a 46-14 loss to Crystal Lake South at the Dundee-Crown Thanksgiving Tournament on Wednesday, Nov. 17.

The Sabres fell behind 16-4 after one quarter and played from behind the rest of the night. Streamwood coach George Rosner, who announced his 41st year coaching will be his last, said it was "a first game that we will remember for a while" after shooting 15 percent from the field and 1-for-10 from the freethrow line. The Sabres were also out rebounded 42-27.

However, Rosner said: "It sounds funny, but we really played well overall. We just could not make a basket of any kind. This will get better for sure."

Junior Jasmine Zuno scored seven points and sophomore Jamaia Gatlin, a returner, and freshman Angelina Sagadraca each had three points.

Rosner said Sagadraca is the team's fifth starter which "will be a lot on her, but she has the ability to do the job." Along with Gatlin, the Sabres return senior starters Sayuri Ishikawa and Sariah Dixon as well as senior Nicole Barcenas.

"Our goals are to improve as the season progresses," Rosner said. "We have three starters from last year returning. After that we are all new players with no varsity experience."

Streamwood went on to fall 50-23 against Dundee-Crown, Ishikawa scoring eight, on Friday, Nov. 19. The Sabres then fell 54-17 to Jacobs on Saturday, Nov. 20.

Rosner said: “In my final season, I finally have the smallest team I have ever had to coach. No one is over 5-foot-8. So, rebounding will be a key for us. Jamia rebounds big, but the others will have to give her help or we will be in trouble. We will have to run and hit our outside shots. The (Upstate Eight) conference is so tough again, so our goal is to compete each game as best as possible. This is a great group of girls to coach, so I really hope they find success.”