



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 24, 2022

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Bartlett High School Speech and Drama Coach to be Honored for Achievement

Board's 'Accent on Achievement' to recognize statewide honor

ELGIN - Anthony Zoubek, an English Language Arts teacher at Bartlett High School and the coach of its speech and drama team, will be recognized by the Board of Education Monday with an "Accent on Achievement" in honor of his recent award from the Illinois Communication and Theatre Association (ICTA).

Zoubek received the ICTA's Edith Harrod Award, the organization's highest lifetime achievement honor that an Illinois speech, debate, and theater educator can receive while still working in the field. ICTA is the state's oldest and largest professional organization for high school and college teachers of communications and drama.

In addition to his years as an educator and coach, Zoubek's award recognized his work on the ICTA Advocacy Committee, which collaborated with several state lawmakers and the Illinois Education Association to get new legislation passed in the Illinois General Assembly that centered around communication education in the Illinois School Code. The new law, which went into effect on Jan. 1, 2022, added speech and debate to a list of elective coursework students may use to meet high school graduation requirements. There are also incentives for schools that create and sustain speech-debate courses and extracurriculars.

"Anthony is a force to be reckoned with. His passion for his work, for the betterment of students and for implementing change, is such a big part of why (the legislation) passed," said IEA President Kathi Griffin.



Zoubek began his teaching career in 2006 in U-46 with a split position between Larkin and Bartlett high schools before moving to Bartlett High full time. He left the District for a few years, but has been back teaching and coaching for the last 10 years at Bartlett High, where he praises the students, staff, and administration for bringing out the best in him.

Zoubek said receiving the award from ICTA was “humbling,” especially because just as he and colleagues started their five-year campaign for changes to be made to the Illinois School Code, he was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer.

“There were physical ramifications of the illness, and they took a toll. But being entrenched in the legislative process helped me overcome the emotional ramifications. When invasive surgery kept me out of the classroom, I bided time with emails and phone calls to legislators and lobbyists, conducted phone interviews with educators, representatives of the Illinois State Board of Education and the IEA, and performed research tasks, all from my bedside. When I made enough of a recovery, I traveled to Springfield to testify before a subcommittee on education.

“Today, I am cancer-free, but not entirely out of the woods,” he said. “Teaching, coaching, and advocating for my discipline got me through one of the scariest episodes of my life. To be recognized for ‘a lifetime’ of achievement — emphasis on the word “life” — by my colleagues, few of whom knew that I was sick, struck me in a way that was deeply personal. The law was a passion project that, from an emotional standpoint, helped me heal. To be recognized for that is profoundly cathartic.”

With Zoubek as its coach, the Bartlett High School speech and drama team won six of the last eight conference championships, and an IHSA regional championship.



School District U-46

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The Board of Education will recognize Zoubek with an “Accent on Achievement” certificate at 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 24, in room 140 of the Educational Services Center, 355 E. Chicago St., Elgin. The [U-46 Board of Education meeting](#) will also be streamed live on the District’s [YouTube channel](#) and be available for the public to participate via a Zoom webinar at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82302243611>. Another Accent will be delivered to the U-46 Department of Transportation in honor of National School Bus Safety Week.

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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. More than 35,000 preschoolers through 12th 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](#).