

# Press Clippings - 3/22/2023

## – Chicago Tribune / Elgin Courier News – Consultants lay out search plan for next U-46 superintendent with goal of having job filled by May 26

March 21, 2023

By Mike Danahey - The Courier-News

The firm hired to do an internal search for District U-46's next superintendent will start by conducting one-on-one School Board member interviews and launching a survey to gather parent, student, staff and public input.

Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates was formally hired by the board Monday night, and their search proposal and letter of agreement calls for having a new superintendent selected by May 26.

The Schaumburg-based firm is made up of Kelvin Adams, Peter Flynn and Karen Sullivan, each of whom has extensive prior experience as school district superintendents. Sullivan retired from Aurora-based Indian Prairie School District 204 in 2020.

“As we look at the work we are going to do, that work is framed around the kind of experiences we’ve had,” Adams said.

The firm will be paid \$22,500 for the recruitment phase, which includes the cost of the survey and travel. If additional on-site assistance is requested, the fee will be \$2,500 per day, according to the letter of agreement.

Their first step will be interviewing current board members to determine the qualities they are seeking in a candidate. Any new board members elected next month will be interviewed as soon as possible after the April 4 election, documents said.

On Thursday, an online survey available in English and Spanish will go live on the U-46 website, [www.u-46.org](http://www.u-46.org), in which parents, students, U-46 staff and community members will be asked to weigh in with their priorities. The submission deadline is Friday, April 14.

Focus groups made up of students, staff, school district organizations and community members will be brought together April 5-6 to discuss what qualities they want to see in a new superintendent.

“The main idea is to hit groups that you think are important,” Sullivan told the board.

Those sessions will be held live and/or virtually via Zoom or another online platform, Adams said. A third session day will be scheduled for sometime in the week of April 10, he said.

A leadership profile report will be presented to the board on April 24 and applicant screenings will start the next day, according to the calendar presented to the board. Board members will be able to keep abreast of proceedings through a secure online portal only they can access.

Adams said the finalist pool will be narrowed down to five or six candidates by the week of May 8.

“We will ask the same set of questions that we would do at a national search for a local search. The same rigor will be there,” he said.

Interviews will be conducted the week of May 15, due diligence done the following week and, if all goes as planned, a decision made on or before May 26, the consultants said. The new superintendent would assume the job July 1.

For now, board members said they are in agreement on deferring decisions about salaries and benefits.

**Board President Sue Kerr** said that because the search is an internal one, background checks will be waived and there will be flexibility on an in-district residency requirement.

*Mike Danahey is a freelance reporter for The Courier-News.*

## – Examiner of Bartlett –

(This article appeared in the Examiner of Streamwood and South Elgin)

### U-46 referendum asks taxpayers for more debt

March 22, 2023

By Seth Hancock

Voters in the upcoming April 4 election will be asked if **School District U46** should issue new debt, totaling \$179 million.

The district claimed it can issue new bonds without increasing the property tax rate on the debt service portion of its annual levy when the Board of Education approved of placing the referendum on the ballot at a special board meeting, on Dec. 19, 2022.

Former Superintendent Tony Sanders noted at the time the district still plans to ask for the highest tax levy allowed under the law for the corporate/special use levy as usual as the district has no plans to reduce spending. This year's budget was the eighth straight with spending hikes along with enrollment declines, and spending has increased 62 percent and enrollment has declined 13.5 percent over the last decade.

District officials admitted that if the referendum fails property tax bills will decline as current debt is paid off, but Sanders said the district should remain in perpetual debt.

Sanders said: "It would behoove future boards to continue to ask voters to continue that... to make sure that the bond debt continues to remain at that viable level."

The district stated, in a memo, that the new debt "would be paid back in 20 years" with the debt service levy annually remaining just above \$30 million (about where it currently is at) through 2032 if the referendum is approved, dropping below \$20 million after that through 2042. If opposed, the debt service levy will drop below \$20 million next year and around \$15 to \$17 million thereafter until being fully paid in 2032 wiping out the debt service levy completely.

Of note is the district is estimated to receive an additional \$4.7 million in property tax revenue annually, which equates to \$94.4 million over a 20-year period, on the expiration of a Bartlett tax increment finance district, according to a Freedom of Information Act request by a Bartlett resident to the Wayne Township Assessor.

Although claiming the debt can be issued without affecting the tax rate, Sanders admitted that's with "all things relative."

Of further note, bond market interest rates are volatile and have been trending up, as the U.S. Treasury data shows the 20-year treasury rate at 3.9 percent which is up from the near 1 percent rate three years ago. No questions were asked by the board about where interest rates need to be at to maintain a flat debt service tax rate.

The Examiner did ask the district about how much of the potential \$179 million referendum funding would go to retire current bonds and what is the expected interest rate differential between any current debt being retired and the potential new debt.

“If approved by the voters, the \$179 million bond will fund new projects to make safety and security improvements, renovate and replace infrastructure, add classrooms for early childhood education, improve accessibility, and construct STEM labs” said **Karla Jiménez, director of school and community relations**. “None of the \$179 million proceeds will be used to retire/refund current outstanding bonds.”

**Jimenez** added: “The interest rate the school district will pay to service its bonds is known once the new bonds are issued. The interest rate used to estimate the cost of the proposed \$179 million bond is 4.73 percent, which includes a large interest rate cushion given market uncertainty.”

# – Examiner of Bartlett –

(This article appeared in the Examiner of South Elgin and Streamwood)

## Endorsement

### U-46 Board members

#### Maureen Morris and Heather LH Manzella

The April 4 election is right around the corner, and voters in **School District U-46** will have the chance to put accountability onto the Board of Education. Additionally, voters will be confronted with a decision on a proposed U-46 \$179 million bond referendum. The group Parents and Taxpayers for Children in U-46 (PTC) have endorsed Maureen Morris and Heather LH Manzella for the U-46 Board race which includes six candidates, two incumbents, vying for four seats. The Examiner agrees with that endorsement.

### NO on U-46 Referendum

It is clear, accountability is needed more than ever in **U-46**. This school year, the board unanimously increased budgetary spending by 5.4 percent while enrollment declined for the eighth straight year as it continues to soak taxpayers. That same evening, the board gladly patted itself on the back by accepting praise from a Democrat state representative for shutting down schools to follow the authoritarian COVID regime. Not one board member batted an eye, nor offered any pushback.

Spending has increased by 62 percent while enrollment has declined 13.5 percent over the last decade. Not one current board member has even questioned that trend. Only two of 53 **U-46** schools are above 50 percent proficiency in English, four in math and 16 in science. The trend of academic decline dates back decades in **U-46**, but again, no sense of concern is ever shown by the current board.

Instead, the board rewards the failure by approving more and more spending including added bloat to the administration. In the last decade, the administrator to student ratio has gone from 287:1 to 181:1. And now, on top of that, the board and district are asking taxpayers to further reward their failures with a \$179 million bond referendum.

The district claims, with the referendum, it can issue new bonds without increasing the property tax rate on the debt service portion of its annual levy during a time of steeply increasing interest rates. However, if the referendum is opposed, the debt service levy amount (currently at about \$30 million annually) would drop below \$20 million next

year and around \$15 to \$17 million thereafter until being fully paid in 2032 wiping out the debt service levy burden on taxpayers completely.

The election and a plea to extract yet more funding for its increased spending comes at a time where **District U-46** is positioned to extract benefit from the retirement of the Brewster Creek Industrial Park TIF district in Bartlett where it is estimated that the district will enjoy a \$4.7 million annual boost.

Taxpayers continually foot the bill for the trends of increasing costs and declining educational results. The choices appear very clear. The Examiner endorses Morris and Manzella and a resounding NO vote against the referendum!

## – Examiner of Bartlett –

(This article appeared in the Examiner of Streamwood and South Elgin)

### **U-46 students, staff speak against nixing program**

**March 22, 2023**

**By Seth Hancock**

Several students and staff voiced opposition to a potential plan by **School District U-46** to remove the automotive program from **Bartlett High School** at the Monday, March 13 Board of Education meeting.

In total, five students spoke during public comments and two staff members, as commenters noted many more were there in support of them filling up an overflow room.

Commenters said they just heard about the plan in recent weeks to house an automotive program only at **Streamwood High School**. Students from other high schools would still be able to attend, but commenters said many will not if they have to travel to another school.

**Dan Mejdrich, Bartlett's automotive teacher**, said he's taught there for 20 years.

“This is my home, and I've been crushed the last week learning about what may happen.... We're a certified program. We've already done the work to make it happen. I would hate to see that go away,” Mejdrich said, adding that **Bartlett** has had the most automotive students of any high school in the district most years. The district plans to expand academies at **Bartlett** and claims automotives needs to be removed for space, Mejdrich said, but he said there is “plenty of space” at the school to expand academies

and continue the automotives program. He also noted many of the students there to speak would not be affected as the change would occur after they graduate, but they know how helpful the program will be for future students.

**Devin Graff, a paraprofessional at Bartlett**, said she works with students with autism and “classes like Mr. Mejdrich’s class provide abundant, abundant opportunities” for those students. She added it’s “a great disservice to all of the students involved, especially those with special needs.”

**Chase Hopkins, a Bartlett senior**, said it “does not make sense” to remove a program that has over 100 students, and it’s one of the only trades program at the school.

“Rather than laying off three instructors that directly teach us at **Bartlett High School**, what about laying off three high ranking administrators that don’t teach us anything? This district could save half a million dollars and put it toward teaching autos and trades at our high schools,” Hopkins said, adding that the board can direct the administration not to shut down the program.

“The administrators work for you,” Hopkins said. “And as a registered voter, let’s hope this doesn’t become a campaign issue.”

Board members did not address the comments at the meeting.

## – Examiner of Streamwood –

### Young SHS softball team looking to top last season

March 22, 2023

By Seth Hancock

A young **Streamwood** softball team is looking forward to the start of the 2023 season.

The **Sabres**’ non conference season opener against Harvest Christian Academy was cancelled last Thursday due to weather, but Streamwood is eager to gain some experience.

“As our season starts, I would love to see the girls playing their hardest,” said **Streamwood coach Nicolle Giliana**. “For a lot of them, softball is a sport that they just picked up in a few short weeks. With that being said, I want to see the girls, working hard, asking questions, and having fun with their teammates. We have been working

extremely hard the first couple weeks to get us ready and want the girls to enjoy every game, practice, and minute they are on the field.”

To state that the Sabres are young may be an understatement as all 12 players on the roster are underclassmen, six freshmen and six sophomores. “We are a young varsity team, and one of our strengths is the girls’ ability to adapt to new situations and learn from one another,” Giliana said.

Some key players will be sophomore returners Kailey Pawlikowski (centerfielder) and Sophie Saflarski (pitcher/first baseman) as well as freshman newcomer Brianna Coffey (pitcher/first baseman). Streamwood was 1-19 overall, 0-12 in the Upstate Eight Conference, last season.

Giliana is in her first year with the team and told The Examiner a few weeks ago that growing and improving on last year’s record are some of the short-term goals.

“For this season, my goal is to grow the program and get girls of all skill-level out on the field,” Giliana said. “Some short-term goals would be to beat last year's record, and establish a community of support and fun for the girls this season at school and around Streamwood.

## – Elgin Courier-News –

### LOCAL SCOREBOARD

March 22, 2023

#### MONDAY’S RESULTS

#### HIGH SCHOOLS

#### GIRLS SOCCER

Batavia 3, Oswego 1

Batavia (1-0): Lilly Figures goal, assist.

Benet 7, Marist 0

Benet (3-0, 1-0 ESCC): Anna Casmere 3 goals.

Carmel 3, Highland Park 0



East Aurora 6, Rosary 2

Evanston 3, Stevenson 1

Geneva 7, Elgin 0

Geneva (1-0): Olivia Rawls 2 goals, 2 assists.

Hinsdale Central 4, Waubonsie Valley 3

Lake Forest 1, Lakes 0

Minooka 1, Andrew 0

Mother McAuley 7, Tinley Park 0

McAuley (3-0): Calli Edwards 6 goal.

Mundelein 3, Grayslake Central 0

Shepard 2, Oak Forest 1

Vernon Hills 6, Grant 0

## **FRIDAY'S RESULTS**

### **HIGH SCHOOLS**

#### **GIRLS SOCCER**

Crystal Lake Central 9, Grant 0

Deerfield 2, Grayslake Central 0

Deerfield (2-0): Ryane Emory, Emily Fox goal each.

Hersey 3, Stevenson 2

Stevenson (0-1): Nicole Tchorz, Sami An goal each.

Hoffman Estates 3, Dundee-Crown 1

Naperville Central 7, Belleville West 4

Naperville Central (2-0): Megan Norkett 3 goals.

Naperville North 6, South Elgin 0

Naperville North (1-1): Annie Chang 3 goals.

To read the full article, click [here](#).

Compiled by Josh Krockey.