



School District U-46

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Class of 2024 to Step Into Spotlight at Graduation Ceremonies

U-46 to host commencement ceremonies on May 25

ELGIN - More than 2,700 students will mark the end of their high school careers on Saturday, May 25, as School District U-46 conducts five high school graduation ceremonies at the NOW Arena in Hoffman Estates.

The U-46 Board of Education, Superintendent Dr. Suzanne Johnson, Deputy Superintendent of Instruction Lela Majstorovic, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Dr. Annette Acevedo, and many other District administrators and principals will join families and friends in recognizing the Class of 2024.

"We are looking forward to celebrating this important milestone with our graduating seniors, their families, and the educators who supported their learning journeys," said Dr. Johnson. "These students leave high school with the knowledge and skills to create a bright future for themselves and make a positive impact on their communities and the world."

The graduation schedule for Saturday, May 25, is as follows:

Bartlett High School - 8 a.m.

Larkin High School - 11 a.m.

Streamwood High School - 2 p.m.

South Elgin High School - 5 p.m.

Elgin High School - 8 p.m.

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The District will continue its tradition from 2018 of honoring seniors who enrolled in the full-time Dual Credit program on the campus of Elgin Community College. These students must demonstrate certain college readiness benchmark scores for acceptance and take all of their courses at ECC. They earn both high school and college credits for each class in the program.

A group of 35 Dual Credit students will graduate with the equivalent of an associate's degree in addition to their high school diploma. Another 12 will graduate from high school with at least a year's worth of college credits. For graduation, they will wear special stoles they will receive at an end-of-the-year recognition ceremony being held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, May 22, at Elgin Community College.

Avi Patel, who attended South Elgin High School, said he decided to join the Dual Credit program after he saw how beneficial it was for his older sister. He'll be graduating high school with 67 college credits.

"The best part of Dual Credit was being able to associate myself with a great group of people," said Avi, who plans to study engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "The people I made connections with here are people I could see myself being friends with for the rest of my life."

Also wearing special stoles will be more than 650 students who participated in the District's award-winning Dual Language program; many of them have been a part of Dual Language since kindergarten, when the current Dual Language program first became available to them.

One of those students is Alexis Serrano, a Streamwood High School graduate who plans to attend University of Wisconsin and major in biomedical engineering.

Alexis said his first language at home was Spanish, and he's grateful that he is still proficient in it. He said it allows him to easily communicate with his parents, who speak Spanish, but the Dual Language program also benefited him intellectually, challenging his brain to master concepts in math and science, for example, in both English and Spanish. He also treasures the friendships he made in the Dual Language program.

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“Our friends who came from English-only families now know Spanish. We can connect even though our cultures are different. We grew up in our classes together; the program is very tight knit. I really love that about the Dual Language program,” he said.

For the ninth year, U-46 will also issue a special honor to 289 graduates who have earned the State of Illinois Seal of Biliteracy, showing that they’ve demonstrated proficiency in one or more languages besides English. Another 254 students earned the Commendation, given to students who have demonstrated significant progress toward achieving a high level of proficiency. Languages that students earned the Seal for include Spanish, Polish, Japanese, Tagalog, Urdu, Lithuanian, Chinese, Punjabi, Russian, French, Hindi, Hungarian, Turkish and Gujarati.

Students who earn the Seal can qualify for two years of foreign language credit at any Illinois public university; that translates to a combined total of \$570,711.42 in tuition savings for this year’s Seal recipients, using the credit hour cost at ECC for calculation purposes.

Elgin High School’s Stephanie Nieves earned the Seal in Spanish; she said an older cousin told Stephanie’s mother that the Seal had been a benefit to her in her career.

“It seemed like a cool opportunity,” said Stephanie, who plans to attend Augustana College. “It could be really helpful later on when you’re looking for a job, to show employers that you know more than one language.”

Another member of Elgin High School’s graduating class, Gabriela Bautista, earned the Commendation in French. She plans to major in nursing at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

“I’ve been in the French Club, I was in the French Honor Society, and so I thought I should test for the Seal,” Gabriela said. “It could lead to more opportunities for me in the future. I want to see where it takes me.”

The Class of 2024 graduates includes 30 Superintendent’s Scholarship recipients, a program that honors first-generation college students. They

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were honored at a springtime reception hosted by the U-46 Educational Foundation and will receive \$2,000 to put toward college costs. Those students are highlighted in [this video](#) posted on the District's YouTube channel.

Larkin High School's Tyler Luu said he was "shocked and overwhelmed" when he learned he had won a Superintendent's Scholarship. He plans to attend the University of Illinois at Chicago to major in kinesiology and pursue a career as a physical therapist.

"Winning the scholarship gives me a little confidence boost. It makes me feel great about myself," said Tyler, quickly adding that he wants to stay "humble" because he knows the next four years will be important as he charts his path as an adult.

Another scholarship winner, Elgin High School's Bryanna Cole, said she's grateful for the financial support.

"It's a weight off my shoulders. The financial aspect of college is just as hard as getting in, so having that assistance from U-46 and the Educational Foundation is appreciated," said Bryanna, who plans to attend the University of Notre Dame to study political science.

Forty-nine graduates rank among the top two percent of their graduating class within the five high schools. These students will attend top universities, including Northwestern University, Stanford University, Notre Dame, Cornell University, Fordham University, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The top two percent graduates appear in a section on the District's Class of 2024 section at u-46.org/2024top2percent.

One of the students graduating in the top two percent of her class is Larkin High School's Malena Davis, who said her favorite class was a Certified Nursing Assistant course she took at Larkin.

"It reassured me in my passion for nursing and connected me to a community that helped me greatly," said Malena, who plans to study nursing

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at the University of Michigan. "My teacher got to know me and brought me into a healthcare club, HOSA, that provided me with close friends, experiences, and knowledge in the field."

Another top two percent graduate is Bartlett High School's Saranya Ganne, who plans to study neuroscience at Washington University in St. Louis. She said some of her favorite high school memories come from the various extracurricular activities she participated in, and she'd advise an incoming freshman to make sure to get involved in clubs, sports, or other activities right away.

"You should take advantage of all of the opportunities that you're going to be given and try your hardest to participate," Saranya said. "It's a great way to figure out what you want to do with the rest of your life and to make some life-long connections!"

In order to continue to run five smooth and efficient high school graduation ceremonies, School District U-46 is requesting students and families ride together in the fewest possible number of vehicles to the NOW Arena, 5333 Prairie Stone Parkway in Hoffman Estates. Graduates, families, and guests are also asked to arrive 45 minutes prior to their graduating ceremony. More details about the graduation ceremonies can be found at u-46.org/classof2024.

Class of 2024 Graduation Facts

Total number of graduates: 2,783*

Number of Bartlett High School graduates: 568

Number of Elgin High School graduates: 639

Number of Larkin High School graduates: 511

Number of South Elgin High School graduates: 670

Number of Streamwood High School graduates: 395

**Numbers are not final until Graduation Day*

Total Graduates in the Full-Time Dual Credit Program: 47

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Total Graduates in the Dual Language Program: 661

Graduates who earned Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy: 289

Languages: Spanish, Polish, Japanese, Tagalog, Lithuanian, Chinese, Punjabi, Russian, French, Hindi, Hungarian, Turkish and Gujarati

Total Top Two Percent Graduates: 49

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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 34,000 preschoolers through 12th graders attend the 55 District schools and programs. To learn more, visit the U-46 [website](#), or like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).