

# Press Clippings - 2/28/2024

## - Chicago Tribune -

### U-46 to cover registration, instructional fees for one more year before they revert back to parents

By: Mike Danahey

Date: February 27, 2024



**District U-46** School Board members voted unanimously Monday to use COVID-19 relief money one final time to cover the cost of registration and instructional fees for the 2024-25 school year, with the expense shifting back to parents the following year.

“I (want) to make sure families were aware that we have ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funding left and that is what we’re using to cover the fees for next year,” board member Dawn Martin said prior to the vote.

Deputy Superintendent of Operations Ann Williams said that district staff will be reaching out to parents to make sure they are aware that the fee waivers will be ending.

That said, staff will research looking into other ways to continue fee waivers at the board’s request, Williams said.

“It could easily be cost prohibitive (for the district to cover the fees),” board member Kate Thommes said. “I know it’s been an advantage to a lot of families to not have to come up with the extra few hundred bucks.”

U-46 has been using pandemic relief money to cover fees since the start of the 2021-22 school year as a way offering help to families who were struggling with COVID-related job loss and the subsequent increase in costs resulting from post-pandemic inflations, which is starting to ease.

Speaking after the board meeting Tuesday, Assistant Superintendent of Finance Frank Williams said \$2.9 million has been budgeted from ESSER III Grant money to cover fees for the 2024-25 school year.

“The total for the last three school years has been \$8.5 million,” he said.

Registration and instructional material fees help cover the cost of classroom supplies for instruction, including digital resources, textbooks and repairs needed for Chromebook computers, Williams said.

For the 2020-21 school year, those fees ranged from \$245 to \$285 for high school students and \$167 to \$207 for middle school students, according to the district’s website.

Parents are still responsible for paying optional fees for high school students, which remain the same in the 2024-25 school year as they were this year. They include:

Athletic participation fee — \$150 per sport;  
Athletic fee football/lacrosse — \$200;  
Yearbook — \$45;  
Behind the Wheel Driver Education — \$250;  
Driver’s Ed textbook — \$13;  
Lifeguard course fee — \$45.75;  
Parking permit — \$100.

For middle school students, the participation fee is \$80 per sport with no student or family maximum. For high school students, there is a maximum of two sports fees per school year and a family maximum of four sports fees per year.

## **- Daily Herald - Elgin High environmental teachers to visit the Elgin Ikes March 5**

**By: Thomas Stewart**

**Date: February 27, 2024**

On Tuesday, March 5, the Elgin chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America will be hosting a program presented by the environmental teachers of **Elgin High School**.

They will be discussing the recent National Biodiversity Teach-In, organized annually by environmental science students at Elgin High School. Featuring a series of webinars in February, the event is designed to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity and inspire participants to take part in environmental protection.

The teachers also will be discussing their restoration work in the woods next to Poplar Creek, which is on school grounds.

The meeting will start at 7 p.m. at the Hanover Township Izaak Walton Center, 899 Jay St. in Elgin. This program is free and open to the public.

The chapter, known as the “Elgin Ikes,” was established in 1931. Members volunteer their time to introduce youth and families to conservation, outdoor recreation, and land ethics by building nature trails, restoring stream banks, monitoring and cleaning up creeks, planting trees, and eliminating invasive species.

The Ikes sponsor both a Cub Pack, Boy Scout Troop, and a Venturing Crew.

## **- The Examiner -**

### **Dist. U-46 policy updates ratified via board vote**

**By: Seth Hancock**

**Date: February 28, 2024**

The Board of Education in **School District U-46** voted 6-0, board member Veronica Noland was absent, to approve updates to 20 policies at its meeting on Monday, Feb. 5.

The updates were presented and approved that same evening. The updates, however, were not publicly available.

Trisha Olson, chief legal officer, said the updates were for “legal citations, legal references and information that is otherwise non-substantive in nature.” Included was one policy from Section 2 regarding the Board of Education and one from Section 3 regarding general school administration: 2:120 (board member development) and 3:50 (administrative personnel other than the superintendent).

Two from Section 4 regarding operational services: 4:90 (student activity funds and

fiduciary funds) and 4:170 (safety).

Six from Section 5 regarding personnel: 5:50 (drug- and alcohol-free workplace; e-cigarette, tobacco, and cannabis prohibition), 5:90 (abused and neglected child reporting), 5:120 (employee ethics; code of professional conduct; and conflict of interest), 5:150 (personnel records), 5:190 (teacher qualifications) and 5:200 (terms and conditions of employment and dismissal). Six from Section 6 concerning instruction: 6:15 (school accountability), 6:20 (school year calendar and day), 6:30 (organization of instruction), 6:65 (student social and emotional development), 6:270 (guidance and counseling program) and 6:280 (grading and promotion).

Four from Section 7 concerning students: 7:50 (school admissions and student transfers to and from non-district schools), 7:250 (student support services), 7:285 (anaphylaxis prevention, response, and management program) and 7:345 (use of educational technologies; student data privacy and security).

Additionally, the board voted 6-0 to approve of its board agreements which remain the same since 2021.

“A couple of weeks ago, in the middle of January, the board had its annual self-evaluation meeting,” said Sue Kerr, the board’s president. “We go over a number of things. One thing is we review our board agreement. So, we did not make any changes to the board agreements. The attachment here is what we have been going by for a while.”

## **- The Examiner - Various expenses, bills approved by U-46 board**

**By: Seth Hancock**  
**Date: February 28, 2024**

The Board of Education in **School District U-46** voted 6-0, board member Veronica Noland was absent, to approve \$8.6 million in expenditure proposals at its meeting on Monday, Feb. 5.

The expenditure items are mostly operations and maintenance/health and life safety fund items, the largest being projects at district high schools: phase two of renovations for Streamwood High School’s pathway program (\$4.2 million/Northwest Contractors, Inc.) and replacement of flooring, house lighting, sound system and seating at Larkin High School’s auditorium (\$1.4 million/Omni Commercial Group).

“Streamwood High School was identified as the second location for the Educational Pathways Program construction, and the scope of work was large enough that it needed to be performed as a phased project over two fiscal years,” the Streamwood proposal stated.

“Larkin High School auditorium’s existing stage light dimming system and house lights are antiquated, not energy efficient, and in need of replacement,” the Larkin proposal stated. “The seating and flooring in the space are also antiquated and in need of replacement. Additionally, the sound system can no longer handle the number of microphones with the clarity required to support the Visual and Performing Arts Academy (VPAA) performances.”

Additional operations and maintenance/health and life safety items include fire alarm replacement at three elementary schools (\$1 million/iWire Technologies), fire alarm replacement at 500 Shales Parkway (\$340,790/Austin Electric), intercom and clock replacement at Ronald D. O’Neal Elementary School (\$331,720/American Electric Construction), replacement of five plant operations vehicles (\$255,045/Sutton Ford) and water heater and softener replacement and installation at South Elgin High School (\$229,250/Hartwig Mechanical).

From the education fund were a bid costing \$199,756 with Quality Power Solutions for uninterruptible power supply, a contract renewal costing \$179,211 for the time clock and personal time off Workforce software, a \$78,809 contract renewal for the procurement process Bonfire software and a contract to join the Northern Illinois Independent Purchasing Cooperative costing \$1,600 for competitive bidding for food and supplies.

Two contract renewals will be paid by the nation’s taxpayers through grants including \$213,300 for dual language teachers to earn master’s degrees from Roosevelt University and \$81,497 for BlueStreak Math, a math intervention program at Title I schools.

Also approved by a 6-0 vote was \$13.3 million in itemized bills.