

# Press Clippings - 6/20/2024

## - The Examiner -

### Expense proposals await District U-46 board vote

By: Seth Hancock

Date: June 19, 2024

The Board of Education in **School District U-46** is set to vote on \$3.9 million in expenditure proposals at its upcoming meeting on Monday, June 24. The items were presented at the June 10 meeting.

The costliest proposal is \$1.4 million (operations and maintenance fund) with MG Mechanical Contracting for mechanical upgrades at the South Elgin High School pool.

The proposal states the pool's mechanical equipment, which has a 10-15 year life expectancy, is original to the school's opening in 2002, and "is in need of replacement."

Costing \$805,249 (education fund), a proposal from Gordon Flesch Company was presented to lease "56 black and white copiers, 36 color copiers, 124 Paper Cut licenses (This program provides us with secure printing for our staff), 10 card readers, and 57 multifunctional desktop printers" for five years, the proposal states.

A bid from Ascend Electric costs \$585,435 (operations and maintenance fund) for overhead electrical service replacement at Elgin High School.

"Elgin High School receives its electrical service from overhead powerlines that run from East Chicago Street to the building," the proposal states. "The lines will be moved underground in order to prevent a loss of power for an extended period of time if these overhead lines are damaged."

Two items will be paid through national grant funds, if approved. They include \$471,686 to Apple Inc. for 475 iPads to "support our district's transition to a fully digital educational environment," the proposal states, and \$140,431 for a contract renewal with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for its Read 180 reading intervention.

Other education fund contract renewals include \$188,208 with Brecht's Database Solutions for its IEP and 504 plan data management system and \$158,400 with Notable, Inc. for Kami, which allows "students and teachers to mark-up text without the need to print, scan, etc.," the proposal states. Costing \$63,113 (school safety fund), the district is

seeking to replace 225 two-way radios from Alpha Prime Communications. With Metronet, the district is seeking \$34,980 (education fund) for internet access at Kenyon Woods Middle School.

A contract renewal with Brecht's is for its Medicaid database system. Specifics on costs were not presented with Brecht's receiving 5 percent of Healthcare and Family Services reimbursements.

## **- The Examiner - U-46 strategic plan items met with mixed support**

**By: Seth Hancock**

**Date: June 19, 2024**

The Board of Education in **School District U-46** could vote on a strategic plan proposal at its upcoming meeting on Monday, June 24 after a discussion at its June 10 meeting.

Updates to the Student Code of Conduct and a math curriculum proposal will be voted on at the June 24 meeting.

As for the strategic plan, two companies were interviewed at the May 20 board meeting and their proposals were discussed on June 10. The board asked for more information, and a vote is not certain at the next meeting.

The two proposals were from Performance Fact and Creative Entourage. Costs were not presented, but several board comments said Creative Entourage was "substantially higher" and suggested its cost was up to \$200,000.

Between the two, five board members said they rated Performance Fact higher and two rated Creative Entourage higher.

Board member Sue Kerr preferred Performance Fact because "they were really focused on improving student achievement and looking at data," which was a common agreement with those that supported them.

Kate Thommes, the board's vice president, preferred Creative Entourage partly because she was offended by Performance Fact who "really, really frustrated me because they spent the first five to 10 minutes... telling us all the things that we're doing wrong" by presenting the district's failing scores in the state report card.

However, Thommes liked Performance Fact because of their “diversity” as Creative Entourage had too many “middle-aged white people.”

On the code of conduct, Mark Gonnella, coordinator of culture and climate, said: “Most of the changes are in regards to updating the language throughout the code of conduct, updated procedures for out-of-school suspensions, updated procedures for expulsion hearings, dress code, guidelines, high school student parking, random searches, restraint and isolated timeouts and seclusions, hate speech and harassment.”

Thommes asked that the district “make sure... all gender-specific language” is removed as the district used “his or her” in one update. She wanted “their” instead.

The math curriculum proposal is a revision to middle school math to “standardize our expectations for student instruction across the district,” the proposal states. The current resources are expected to remain, and there is no cost estimated for the proposal.