

Champaign Unit 4 Schools Distribute 1,000 Chromebooks To Students

Lee V. Gaines, April 9, 2020

The Champaign and Urbana school districts are distributing Chromebooks to students who need the devices. Champaign schools have so far distributed about 1,000 Chromebooks to district families, according to Unit 4 spokesperson, John Lyday.

Courtney Harmon, an Urbana District 116 parent, picked up a Chromebook for her six-year-old son last week. Her son attends Yankee Ridge Elementary and is on the autism spectrum. She says he doesn't know how to use her desktop computer, and she worried he would not be able to access online learning material as a result.

Harmon says she learned Urbana schools were distributing Chromebooks through social media. She reached out to her son's school and was able to obtain a Chromebook after answering a series of questions posed by the school's principal.

"I was very relieved because otherwise I had no idea how he was going to be able to do all this," Harmon says.

She says her son understands how to use a Chromebook and having the device at home has made a positive impact on his ability to continue learning.

"Without the Chromebook, I don't know if I'd be able to do it because I'm not that patient. And I don't know exactly where they left off in school, so I couldn't really pick up and teach. Even helping him with homework is a struggle," Harmon says. "Since he's able to read his books on (the Chromebook) he's loving it because he loves to read when he's actually sat down and given a book."

The spokesperson for Unit 4, Lyday, says parents and guardians have picked up the devices from schools and district staff have also delivered Chromebooks to family homes.

He says Unit 4 families will have another opportunity to pick up Chromebooks on Thursday, April 16. Lyday says school building principals will continue to review the needs of their families.

Champaign school board's search for superintendent's successor starts Monday

Ben Zigterman, March 7, 2020

CHAMPAIGN — The search for the search firm that will help Unit 4 identify its next superintendent will begin Monday.

At its meeting that night, the school board will hear about a request for proposals to find a firm, with the goal of having a new superintendent chosen by January 2021. That person would succeed Susan Zola that July.

An item on the school board agenda served as the public announcement that Zola will be retiring at the end of the 2020-21 school year when her four-year contract is up.

“Internally, this hasn’t been a secret,” district spokesman John Lyday said Friday. “This is a scheduled transition.”

“We knew this was in the works,” school board President Amy Armstrong added. “This work is not for the faint of heart. It’s hard, and it’s exhausting. She has done a tremendous amount of work in four years.”

Zola, 57, wasn’t available for comment Friday.

She was promoted to superintendent in 2017 after spending five years as assistant superintendent for achievement, curriculum and instruction.

Before that, she served as principal at Jefferson Middle School (2003-12) and Dr. Howard Elementary (1990-96).

“She’s been dedicated to the school district,” Armstrong said. “Her leadership has been thoughtful, considerate and with so much grace in the process. She leads by example, and she leads with integrity. She’s taught me a lot through her leadership.”

Like Zola’s predecessor, Judy Wiegand, the district paid the Illinois Association of School Boards \$22,400 to identify candidates, but ended up hiring from within.

“Almost every school district I know of uses a search firm that is specialized in superintendent searches,” Lyday said. “They keep good track of the market and help the board identify good candidates and establish a process that helps move the process forward.”

This search is beginning earlier than the last one, Armstrong said.

“Four of us on the board were here when we searched for the last superintendent ... and we realized this is a really long process,” she said. “It’s the most important work a board of education does. We want to make sure the community is with us along the way.”

The agenda item lays out a detailed timeline of the search process, beginning with Monday’s meeting. The next day, the request for proposals will be sent to prospective firms and posted on the district’s website. Applications from search firms will be due March 24, and a firm is expected to be chosen April 14.



Parents, community want Unit 4 to address achievement gap

by Haydee Clotter, Jan. 8, 2020

CHAMPAIGN, ILL. (WCCU) — Tuesday's listening session hosted by the Champaign Unit 4 School District got heated. It was to discuss swapping two area school buildings, but many opposed the idea.

Hundreds packed the Garden Hills Academy cafeteria saying this isn't the way to go. They said the district needs to address the achievement gap it's facing first. Especially at Garden Hills where more than 60% of students are black.

"It's kind of putting brown against black," one man said.

There were strong opinions from those who were at the first of two Champaign Unit 4 School District listening sessions about a proposed building swap between Garden Hills Academy and International Prep Academy.

Unit 4 Chief Communications Officer John Lyday said this is an option to address some of the district's issues: a growing middle school population, student performance, and Garden Hills being an under chosen school.

Many at the session were concerned about the achievement gap. It was also on the radar of state Representative Carol Ammons, D-Urbana. "The primary issue is that some children are getting some of the education that others are not," Ammons said.

According to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Garden Hills Academy is an underperforming school. Teachers notice it too.

"The standards for academic achievement are not being met, we understand that," a Garden Hills Elementary teacher said. "We live that day in and day out."

ISBE defines an underperforming school as "a school in which one or more student groups is performing at or below the level of "all students" group in the lowest performing 5% of schools."

Black students are listed as the only underperforming student group at Garden Hills. "What we've got to do is take charge that our kids will excel," one woman said.

The achievement gap for Garden Hills on a district level for English Language Arts is about 40% for low income and non-low-income students. As well as black and white students. "It doesn't have anything to do with color, everybody should be learning something," another woman said,

The conversation continues Thursday, Jan. 9 at 6 p.m. when International Prep Academy will host the second listening session.

FOX Illinois reached out to Unit 4 for comment. Unit 4 Chief Communications Officer John Lyday said Superintendent Dr. Susan Zola will respond to us after the second listening session.

CHAMPAIGN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Social media threat investigated

Tim Ditman, Oct.3, 2019

CHAMPAIGN -- Champaign police said a preliminary investigation found a social media threat toward Centennial High School to be not credible.

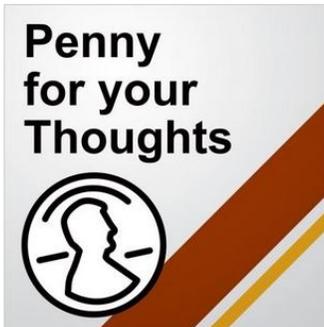
Still, there was an increased police presence at the school Wednesday.

CPD spokesperson Tom Yelich said investigators were also looking into several fights that broke out Tuesday at Centennial, where multiple people were intentionally struck. Yelich said Wednesday it wasn't known whether the fights were connected to the social media threat, which was discovered Tuesday night. No arrests have been made in either incident, and police are investigating.

Unit 4 spokesperson John Lyday said school administrators sent a message about the threat to parents "out of an abundance of caution." He said the school was not placed on lockdown, and classes continue to be held during homecoming week.

Penny for your Thoughts interview, Sept. 17, 2019

Penny for Your Thoughts



Penny for your Thoughts

Brian Barnhart hosts guests from our community and takes your calls on a wide variety of current affairs topics.

WDWS is Champaign's news and talk radio station. Penny for your Thoughts, its popular morning talk show, airs weekdays from 9 to 11 am. The Sept. 17, 2019 show featured an open line in the first hour. In the second hour, host Brian Barnhart interviews Champaign Unit 4 School District administrators John Lyday, Chief Communications Officer, and Elizabeth Stegmaier, Director of Capital Projects & Planning.

Crime Stoppers: Electronics stolen from Unit 4 classroom

Mary Schenk and Ben Zigterman, Aug. 26, 2019

CHAMPAIGN -- Champaign County Crime Stoppers needs help finding the person or people who stole thousands of dollars worth of electronics from a Unit 4 classroom trailer in Champaign.

Between May and August, numerous Chromebooks, iPads and ThinkPads were stolen from a trailer at Franklin Middle School, 817 Harris Ave., C.

The theft of those went unnoticed until mid-August.

A second burglary happened Wednesday, Aug. 21, when additional Chromebooks and laptops were stolen from the same classroom trailer.

In each case, there were no obvious signs of forced entry.

The stolen computers are valued at more than \$22,000.

The Champaign school district has filed an insurance claim, Unit 4 spokesman John Lyday said.

"So the units will be replaced at no cost to taxpayers, beyond the deductible for insurance," he said.

The trailer had locks on it, Lyday said, but was apparently broken into through the rear exit door, so it has "already been secured more securely than it was before."

"It's prompting a good look at our practices overall to make sure we have appropriate procedures in place," he said.

If you have any information about these burglaries, contact Crime Stoppers at 217-373-TIPS, 373tips.com or via the P3 Tips mobile app.

Tipsters are always completely anonymous when contacting Crime Stoppers.

All tips are electronically stripped of any personally identifying information and processed by a third-party answering service.

Tipsters will never be asked their name and are given a secret code number to use when checking on a possible reward. Cash rewards of up to \$1,000 may be paid on tips that lead to an arrest.

\$17K+ paid to financial consultant so far: Meanwhile, CFO still on paid leave

Lyndsay Jones, Aug. 23, 2019, page A-1

CHAMPAIGN -- While its chief financial officer remains on paid leave, the Champaign school district has spent more than \$17,000 for an outside consultant to help manage its finances this summer.

Peoria-area consultant Guy Cahill has been working with Unit 4 since late May, providing financial services at a rate of \$750 per five-hour day worked.

Cahill's first contract with the district, approved at a June 10 school board meeting, called for him to work "until the end of June."

But after Unit 4 CFO Tom Lockman was placed on leave on June 17 -- and Superintendent Susan Zola drafted a recommendation to fire him at a July 8 school board meeting -- Cahill's work extended past the end of June.

To date, Cahill has been paid \$17,707 for his services from May 21 to June 28, Unit 4 spokesman John Lyday said.

Lyday said that total doesn't reflect a "pending" invoice for Cahill's services past that date.

Meanwhile, Lockman said he remains on administrative leave -- he's still being paid but not actively working for the district -- and still hasn't received an explanation for the move.

"Despite having been placed on leave by Dr. Zola more than two months ago, I still have not been provided with any explanation for this decision," Lockman said in a statement to News-Gazette Media. "Further, despite the board having now met three times since Dr. Zola notified me she would be recommending termination of my employment, this recommendation has not been presented for action."

Lockman said he believes his role in documenting, addressing and publicizing rampant spending by Unit 4 employees on district-issued purchasing cards is what prompted the decision to put him on leave.

But documents obtained by News-Gazette Media this summer via an open-records request show that Zola expressed concerns about Lockman's job performance on at least two occasions prior to placing him on leave.

In a May 6 memo to Lockman, Zola wrote: "I have lost confidence in your ability to provide me with clear, accurate and timely information to support my leadership of the district."

Meanwhile, Cahill is slated to continue working for the district at the daily rate, this time with no set end date. Per the new contract -- approved at an Aug. 12 school board meeting and signed this week by board President Amy Armstrong and Cahill -- his services extend "from July 1, 2019, until terminated by one or both parties."

Tablets, laptops stolen from portable classroom at Franklin STEAM Academy over summer

Ben Zigterman, Aug. 21, 2019

CHAMPAIGN — Someone entered a portable classroom at Franklin STEAM Academy over the summer and stole close to 50 tablets and laptops.

The theft was discovered Wednesday, the day before classes began, according to a police report.

“The burglary, which resulted in several iPads and Chromebooks being stolen and thousands of dollars in missing property, is under investigation and has been assigned to a detective,” said Champaign police spokesman Tom Yelich.

The police report said the theft occurred May 31, though it might not have happened specifically on that date.

“We presume the incident occurred during the summer,” said John Lyday, spokesman for the Champaign school district.

Some petition to make replacing old playgrounds Champaign schools' job, not the PTA's

Lyndsay Jones, June 10, 2019 (Updated June 26, 2019)

CHAMPAIGN — Work a job. Raise children. Join the PTA. Then, find the time to raise up to \$100,000 for a new school playground.

It's a familiar routine to many in the Champaign school district: Members of parent-teacher associations in Unit 4 have long been the catalyst of fundraising that replaced aging or outdated playgrounds at schools across the district, including Kenwood, Bottenfield, Westview and now Robeson Elementary.

But some parents wonder if this is how it should be — if it ought to be their responsibility to raise the majority of the money needed and if it should really take years for things to improve while children cycle in and out of the school.

A petition signed by Robeson families argues that it's not.

To be presented during public comment at tonight's school board meeting, the petition denotes frustrations with Robeson's facilities and the efforts parents have taken thus far to improve the situation for their children and school staff.

Unique to Robeson's plight are long-term drainage issues in the grounds where children play — creating standing water, deep mud and icy conditions in the winter — and unsafe playground components cordoned off. While the Robeson PTA has followed the lead of others by raising money for replacement facilities — around \$37,000 so far — members say the district has yet to address the drainage issues that lead to canceled outdoor recesses or provide a timeline as to when Unit 4 will do so.

"... we find it unacceptable that the district seems content to wait on community members to raise enough money for replacement equipment before they act to address this issue," the petition reads in part. "The loss of outdoor recess time, coupled with the dangers of using the existing equipment and grounds, is detrimental to the Robeson students for whom Unit 4 is tasked with providing a safe school environment."

Members worry that by the time they're done fundraising, they'll be ready to install new facilities and the district will have yet to fix the drainage issues — effectively halting the process. Robeson PTA President Kristi McDuffie said fundraising members hadn't heard of a solid "commitment" to fixing the issue or developing a timeline when they'd reached out to district officials on their own or via the building principal.

"I think it's been an acknowledgment, but I think no one is able to give us: 'This is going to happen on this day,'" she said.

There still isn't a settled date for repairs, district spokesman John Lyday said. But since the district hired civil engineering firm Berns, Clancy and Associates in late May to prepare a report on the flooding and potential repairs, Lyday said the district has "taken this issue very seriously."

Credit card policy proposal drafted: Goal to prevent further alleged 'P-card' abuse

Lindsay Jones, June 8, 2019, page A-1

CHAMPAIGN -- As the state appellate prosecutor weighs whether it will file criminal charges against any member of the Champaign school district, Unit 4 officials have drafted policies designed to prevent further instances of alleged credit card abuse that led to a state police investigation.

Documents released by the district prior to Monday's school board meeting contain the first drafts of policies setting parameters for Unit 4-issued credit card use, purchases and approval. Since purchasing cards, or "P-cards," were introduced in 2014, the district hasn't had a formal policy on how they were -- and were not -- to be used.

The drafts come a little more than a month since a News-Gazette Media analysis of 81 people's P-card charges over a 19-month period revealed that Unit 4 staffers charged scores of catered meals, working lunches and snacks, flowers for funerals, and thousands of dollars in gift cards for student and staff "incentives."

The district's chief financial officer, Tom Lockman, said he registered an official complaint about misspending to Superintendent Susan Zola via email in August 2018. That's the same month the school board learned that Assistant Superintendent Angela Smith had allegedly made thousands of dollars' worth of personal food purchases on her district-issued card.

Since then, the board hired Chicago-based Sikich to conduct an internal audit of P-card use, and Smith wrote checks to the district to pay back at least \$2,526.05 in personal purchases, according to the district.

Now, district policy makers have responded to the controversy by drafting language that specifically prohibits all personal purchases, stating that P-cards "shall only be used for those expenses that are for the district's benefit and serve a valid and proper public purpose," which include "certain job-related expenses" or "purchases on behalf of the board or district or any student activity fund or for purposes that would otherwise be addressed through a conventional ... fund."

Cards would be distributed by the district's business office, which would be formally charged with monitoring cardholder purchases for abuse, waste or fraudulent spending. The business office would also be allowed to block certain vendors and set limits "for each purchase, transaction and the balance total on each card." It could also reduce spending limits on certain cards when deemed "necessary."

In addition, the policies would limit certain purchases -- notably food, flowers and gift cards.

Specifically:

- Food purchases at schools or school events would be limited to "those events or types of events receiving the prior approval of the superintendent or deputy superintendent." Flowers would be restricted by the same language.
- Meals, such as those ordered by out-of-town staffers at a conference, would be prohibited expenses on the cards. Instead, the district would pay up to \$40 for meal reimbursements, but only via expense forms for "mid-fare" food.

- Gift cards would have to be approved by either the superintendent or deputy superintendent and be limited to \$20 in value, tracked and not charged to a personal P-card. Under the proposed policies, they would have to be "purchased through the office of" either superintendent.

The drafts prepared for Monday also include language that all purchases -- and card users -- could expect "random analyses to determine whether board policy is being followed." While Smith's purchases resulted in a disciplinary letter permanently attached to her file, the new policy would allow methods "up to discharge" for those who misuse their card.

Monday's presentation to the board will be the first formal hearing of the policies.

District spokesman John Lyday confirmed that the board would not vote on the issue Monday, but would do so at "the next appropriate meeting." He said officials would not comment further prior to Monday.

Eighth-grader killed days after 14th birthday: Support staff available at school Monday; probe in early stages

Mary Schenk, May 12, 2019, page A-1

CHAMPAIGN -- A 14-year-old boy has died and a second teen was injured as a result of an early morning shooting Saturday inside a home in northwest Champaign.

Champaign County Coroner Duane Northrup said Elijah James Booker of Champaign died from a gunshot wound he received about 1:30 a.m. at a home he was visiting in the 1600 block of Hedge Road.

Police found him in the house. He was taken to Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana, where he was pronounced dead at 2:07 a.m. An autopsy was scheduled Saturday.

Mr. Booker was an eighth-grade student at Franklin STEAM Academy. Champaign Unit 4 spokesman John Lyday said the district will have support staff on hand Monday for students and families reacting to the tragedy.

Lt. Nate Rath said whether Mr. Booker, who had just turned 14 on Monday, was the intended target of the shooter or shooters remains under investigation.

It was later that police learned a 17-year-old also in the house had been shot but was treated and released from a local hospital.

Rath said detectives are interviewing the young people and adults who were in the house when the shootings occurred to piece together what happened. Rath was unable to say how many people that was. Because the investigation is in the early stages, Rath declined to say much about what police have learned. "We are continuing to conduct additional interviews and are open to listening to any information people have," he said.

Rath said police had "nothing" to indicate that the fatal shooting in the Garden Hills neighborhood was related to one that occurred shortly after 10 p.m. Friday in the 1100 block of North James Street.

Police were sent there at 10:12 p.m. for reports of gunfire and were told that a 26-year-old man was being treated at a local hospital for non-life-threatening injuries that appeared to be the result of gunshots.

Meantime, city council member Clarissa Fourman, who represents the Garden Hills area, said her nephews knew Mr. Booker to be "very well-known and active in the community."

She urged any adult or child who has information about what happened to tell the police. "I'm tired of the people protecting the people who are doing these shootings. If you are a friend, a family member of a shooter, if you don't turn them in, you are just as guilty as the person who did the shooting," she said.

Darrion White, 19, of Champaign, remains jailed in lieu of \$1 million bond for the first-degree murder of Mr. Sankey after being arrested on May 2.

(Excerpted from a news roundup- Only Unit 4 content is included for this example)

Instagram threat under investigation

Lyndsay Jones, Mar. 30, 2019

CHAMPAIGN -- Champaign police are investigating an alleged Instagram threat made by a Centennial High School student.

The Unit 4 School District sent a letter to parents Thursday informing them of the situation.

"CPD has visited the house of the student who made the threat," a letter to parents read. "They did not find anything and continue to investigate the situation."

The student's threat, sent via Instagram on Wednesday, was directed toward another student and not the school itself, according to the letter. That student is currently "banned" from returning to school until the investigation is complete.

Unit 4 chief communication officer John Lyday said that any possible disciplinary action, depending on the results of the investigation, would go through the "normal process." Further comment was unavailable due to the on-going investigation.

Adult dispute in parking lot disrupts show: Talent event organizer laments student impact

Mary Schenk, Feb. 25, 2019, page A-1

CHAMPAIGN -- Skirmishes among adults outside Centennial High School Saturday night apparently brought a premature end to a student talent show going on inside.

Unit 4 spokesman John Lyday said Sunday that to his knowledge, no students were involved in the conflicts.

"There was an altercation in the parking lot as the talent show was going on in the auditorium. It was initiated by adults attending the event. Minor events occurred, and a bystander called police," Lyday said.

Several officers responded about 9 p.m., restored order and left without making any arrests or writing reports about the call, he said. There were no reports of injuries.

News-Gazette Media was unable to reach Cessily Thomas, a Centennial staff member affiliated with the popular annual fund-raiser in which African-American students, both individually and in groups, sing, recite poetry and perform dance routines.

However, in a video on her Facebook page, Thomas expressed her anger, disappointment and frustration at the adults responsible for the interruption.

She noted it prevented some students who had put in long hours of practice and paid for their own costumes from performing.

"I'm not even going to talk about the way the parents (were) acting. At school every day, we wonder why are these kids acting like that? And we just saw. We had kids trying to fight adults, administrators. We had parents trying to fight each other, kids fighting each other.

"Over a dance? For real? So of course, now we have a new rule: no outsiders can participate in any of the things we do," she said.

Thomas said even before whatever happened in the parking lot, there were adults in the audience being loud as a student tried to recite a poem she wrote about oppression.

"More than angry, more than embarrassed, I'm really sad for our students, really hurt our students were just so disrespected," she said.

"Thank you Centennial Students for being amazing! I'm so sorry I allowed people in our space who did not care about you and your talents! I am so sorry that you did not get the opportunity to showcase your talents. I promise I will make it up to you, with the help of some amazing folks who are already trying to make that happen! You all are amazing! You are resilient! You are brilliant! You are worthy of love, attention and affection!" Thomas wrote.

She reported the event raised \$3,400 to support student groups at the high school.

Warrensburg-Latham School District to ask voters for funds to upgrade schools

Valerie Wells, Aug. 7, 2008

WARRENSBURG - Elementary students start lining up for lunch at 10:30 a.m. because the district's kitchens and cafeteria are too small to support a convenient lunch schedule. They have to use a storm cellar for a gym.

Due to those and other needs, Warrensburg-Latham's school board voted unanimously at its July meeting to put a referendum on the November ballot.

"One kitchen is 52 years old, and the other is 38, and they look like it," said Superintendent Emmett Aubry. "You can imagine somebody having a kitchen they haven't changed in 52 years."

The board has discussed a referendum off and on for several years, he said, and finally decided the need was so acute that they should go ahead and place it on the ballot.

If it passes, it will raise property taxes by about \$150 annually for a \$100,000 home, and provide the district with \$12 million to add 60,000 square feet to the district's schools.

The addition would connect the elementary building to the middle and high schools, provide extra classroom space, more science labs, a new gym for the high school students and modernize the kitchens and cafeteria.

The new gym would allow the middle school students to take over the existing high school gym, and the elementary students could have the middle school gym and get out of the storm cellar they're using now.

"It's not the best time to go, with a general election, but the need is there, and we've been stepping around it for some time," Aubry said.

The last referendum in the district was in 1996, he said, and paid for additions to the buildings and two new science labs. However, with three science teachers at the high school, one teacher has no lab, and the middle school students also don't have up-to-date labs.

Student population has remained steady, but technology and needs have changed, Aubry said. "The community has generally been supportive when asked (for more money)," he said. "We're hoping they realize that we have been fiscally responsible, and we don't ask very often."

School districts are restricted by law from campaigning for the passing of a referendum, said John Lyday of the Illinois Association of School Boards. The school board may only provide information on the issue, as long as the members do not advocate for a particular vote.

A citizens' committee headed by Lory Wentworth with the goal of convincing voters to approve the referendum is not bound by that restriction. The committee has ideas but no firm plans yet for convincing voters, Wentworth said.

"It's always tough when you're asking for more money, but hopefully, when they hear all the details, they'll find it's a worthwhile and needed project," she said. "In the past, our voters have been supportive."

Planned Audit May Be Band-Aid for ‘Corrupt’ System

Meg White, Feb. 21, 2008

A call by Chicago’s Better Government Association for an audit of Chicago Public Schools magnet school applications was heeded this week. But the watchdogs aren’t satisfied.

Sabin Magnet School Principal Barton Dassinger blew the whistle on 12 cases of application fraud at his school earlier this year. Parents and one clerk at the school falsely claimed student applicants had siblings already attending the school, increasing the prospective students’ chances of enrollment.

Sandra Alverio, a former Sabine clerk, resigned last year, denying allegations she put her niece’s name as a sibling on student’s applications to the school. Some parents admitted to fudging applications to Sabin without intervention by Alverio.

After calling the incident isolated, Chicago Public Schools said no inquiry would take place regarding application fraud. Two days later, after calls from the Better Government Association to do so, Chicago Public Schools said they would perform a random audit several undisclosed magnet schools.

Michael Vaughn, Chicago Public School’s press secretary, confirmed the forthcoming audit Wednesday, Feb. 13. Jay Stewart, executive director of the Better Government Association, was not convinced the planned audit would go far enough. He was concerned about the timing of the audit. A widely publicized audit of applications may serve as a warning to school officials and parents to avoid impropriety in the application process for one year, but he said he doubts it will clean up any widespread fraud that may be occurring.

“Who’s going to do the follow-up?” Stewart asked.

The audit will review whether applicants’ assertions of having siblings at a school are accurate. Such a connection enables prospective students to participate in a “sibling lottery.” The audit will also examine whether applicants live within 1.5 miles of the school, a requirement for participation in the “proximity lottery.”

The audit will not look at the 5 percent of students admitted at a principal’s discretion, another area worth investigating according to Stewart.

Stewart also advocated including a parent verification signature area on the application. At selective enrollment schools, parents must affirm the information on the application is correct, but magnet schools do not have that requirement.

Vaughn said such suggestions are under consideration. A “boxed statement” which would require a parent’s signature to verify that the information on the application is correct and true is “something which we’re looking at doing,” said Vaughn.

Vaughn said the audit will occur over the next few months and will be run by the Office of Academic Enhancement.

Stewart criticized the source of the audit. He compared Chicago Public Schools’ investigating its own schools to the proverbial fox watching the hen house.

Despite such objections, the Illinois State Board of Education would have little investigatory control. Though the State Board did not return calls for comment, John Lyday, associate executive director of the Illinois Association of School Boards, said the culture of education would likely be a barrier to a state audit.

“Local control is a venerated part of Illinois, and frankly national, education; magnet schools exist at the discretion of an independent school district,” Lyday said, explaining that how to organize and operate magnet schools remains the decision of individual municipalities.

About

Chicago Talks is a non-profit, local news source for Chicago and its many neighborhoods. Our stories come from all corners of the city; our reporters are young journalists learning to cover their communities and community people with a story to tell. It was started in 2006 by Barbara Iverson and Suzanne McBride with grants from J-Lab and the Knight Foundation, to be a working lab for journalism students as well as a community and citizen news site. Columbia College continues to support ChicagoTalks.org and its sister publication, AustinTalks.org.

Top D200 candidate drops out

Terry Dean, March 13, 2007

The front runner for superintendent at Oak Park and River Forest High School withdrew from consideration last week leaving the school board to contemplate its options.

Barbara Erwin, superintendent of Community School District 303 in west suburban St. Charles, had been the top choice of the school board to replace Dr. Susan Bridge according to multiple sources. In a voice mail left with Wednesday Journal last Thursday, Erwin announced her withdrawal but offered no explanation for it. She has not returned subsequent phone calls.

There are two names remaining on the district's list of finalists. Sources report that after Erwin, the school board ranked Attila Weninger, director of human resources for Lyons Township High School, as its second choice. JoAnn Wooden-Roberts, an administrator with the Chicago Public Schools, was the third ranked choice. Wooden-Roberts has been the source of considerable positive and critical buzz in the education community with some questioning her credentials. District 200 board president Barry Greenwald Monday defended Roberts saying the board had verified her resume and had talked with people who had worked with her in the past. "I don't have a feeling that this was not a viable candidate. The credibility of the candidate is fine," said Greenwald.

All three candidates were selected by BWP & Associates, the school's search firm. This is the second group of finalists in the last six months chosen by BWP. Three previous finalists were passed over by the school board in December. After the current candidates finished appearances at community forums on Feb. 22, school board members were to conduct site visits to the school districts of the candidates before making a hire.

On Monday Greenwald would not discuss details about the dates or where the visits took place, but sources close to the school indicate that site visits began as early as last Tuesday to Erwin's district. John Lyday, interim director for school and community relations for Dist. 303, on Monday said that he was not aware of any site visits to the district last week.

In regard to Roberts, questions have been raised by some about her position and previous work experience with the Chicago Public Schools. Of the three candidates, Roberts was the favorite among some of the forum participants. APPLE President Wyanetta Johnson said Roberts was the best of the candidates. Johnson and other parents were critical that there were no black finalists among the first group of candidates. Roberts is the only black among the current finalists.

If the school fails to choose a superintendent from the current roster of prospects, Greenwald said the school would explore naming an interim to the post. That move would also postpone the hiring of a building principal, which won't come until a superintendent is hired, the board has insisted. Also in limbo would be the possible hiring of an additional administrator.

The board could ask Bridge, who will retire effective June 29, to serve as interim on a part-time basis. Bridge said it would be something she would think about, but added that it was too early to have that discussion. She said that she would like an adjunct teaching position at a college or university after her retirement from OPRF.

Erwin, superintendent of the consolidated St. Charles school district since 2004, was set to retire this year, but was persuaded to seek out OPRF's top post by Ronald Barnes, a consultant with BWP & Associates who's handling the high school's search.

Spokesman says goodbye to Dist. 303

Josh Stockinger, Nov. 3, 2006

The voice of the St. Charles school district has a new gig. After five years of working in , St. Charles, district spokesman Tom Hernandez is leaving Nov. 10 for a job closer to home.

Hernandez said the decision to go "wasn't made lightly" but that he couldn't pass up a chance to do community relations in Plainfield District 202, where he lives with his family. "It (working in St. Charles) has been the highlight of my professional career," he said. "This is a great school district to work in with a lot of talented and dedicated people to work for."

The biggest headache of all, Hernandez joked (presumably), was dealing with a certain spiky-hair reporter who shall remain unnamed here. Really, though, answering questions — from reporters, residents or colleagues — was a big part of Hernandez's job.

Chances are good that if you needed information from District 303, no matter who you were, he was the go-to guy. The former newspaper reporter, who also had experience as a communicator for the state board of education, was brought into District 303 amid a highly publicized mold crisis at East High School, during which he tried to improve communication between district officials and the public.

There were other controversies, but Hernandez also was tasked with getting the word out about all the good news, from improved test scores and finances to student awards.

Superintendent Barbara Erwin said Hernandez was an asset to the district in that he was timely and effective in relaying the district's message. "Tom has been an asset to our community," she said.

The vacant position has been posted at www.d303.org. School board President Bobbie Raehl said Erwin will recommend a candidate. Meanwhile, former Elgin Area U-46 spokesman John Lyday has been hired as interim communications director. He can be reached at (630) 513-2593 or by e-mail at Iohn.Lyday@d303.org.

Lake County road plan, interactive map available on Web site

Russell Lissau, Feb.9, 2005

You can learn more about a proposal to relieve traffic congestion throughout lake County by visiting the county's official Web site.

An interactive map identifying roads and intersections that could be improved is among the site's features. Also included are transcripts of recent public meetings about the proposal and copies of comments that came in by fax, e mail and traditional mail. The information is available at www.co.lake.il.us. To access the map, click on the link reading "road improvement program map." Citizen comments and meeting transcripts are viewable by clicking a link for those public records.

County officials are hoping to pay for the proposed projects, which include road widenings and traffic signal improvements, with a new sales tax voters will be asked to approve April 5. The tax, if adopted, would result in an additional half cent in sales tax for every \$1 spent on most goods in the county. It could raise \$30 million annually. Typical Lake County residents would pay an extra \$44 in sales tax annually if the proposal is approved.

Voters rejected a similar request, one that called for a new 0.25 percent tax, in March 2003. The interactive map splits most of the proposed projects into two color-coded categories: blue ones would be paid with sales-tax revenue, and green ones would be funded by current revenue sources. The map also identifies large areas on the eastern side of the county that would, if the sales tax is approved, see a significant number of traffic signals become synchronized, among other improvements.

More information about the possible road improvements and the sales-tax plan will be added to the county's Web site this week. Among the pending features are: detailed information about the road improvements, an explanation of the ballot question itself, news releases and an archive of media reports.

"We have a great deal of detail that people can look to to find as much or as little information as they are inclined to find," county spokesman John Lyday said. "They can drill down to the level of detail that suits their level of interest."

Daily Herald

Sept. 16, 2004

County team investigating road concerns, referendum

BY RUSSELL LISSAU

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Lake County voters soundly rejected a plan to increase the region's sales tax to pay for road improvements this past March, but the proposal is far from dead.

County leaders may again seek community support for a transportation plan as soon as the April 2005 election, County Administrator Barry Burton said Wednesday. The next proposal likely will have a sales-tax increase at its core, too, he said.

In preparation, a team of county board members and administrators will hold five or six public meetings about the issue next month. They want residents and municipal leaders to tell them where congestion-related improvements are most needed and what's necessary to win voter support.

"Obviously, we still feel there's a need for more road-capacity projects," Burton said. "We should have public forums and hear their ideas and thoughts ... prior to us forming a plan that we'll bring back to

the board."

Three county board members sit on the panel: Republican Suzi Schmidt of Lake Villa, Republican Diana O'Kelly of Mundelein and Democrat Carol Spielman of Highland Park. So do Burton and four other members of the county's administrative staff: assistant administrators Pete Austin and Gary Gibson, Transportation Director Marty Buehler and Communications Manager John Lyday.

One of the team's main goals is to list potential improvement projects. Officials believe such an inventory may have helped persuade more voters to support the last proposal.

That plan, to create a new quarter-percent sales tax that would raise \$15 million a year for road widenings and other projects designed to ease gridlock, was opposed by nearly 55 percent of voters.

"One of the things we heard (after the first plan failed) is that people wanted lists of projects," Burton said. "They want to know what they're getting."

Such a list would get started at the upcoming public meet-

ings, which have not yet been scheduled but will be held throughout the county.

Team members also want to learn about congestion-prone streets beyond the ones in their neighborhoods.

"We all know the ones that are right by our house, but I might not know the ones that are (elsewhere)," said Schmidt, the board's chairwoman.

The team wants to ensure potential voters are well-informed about the next road plan, too. After the first proposal failed, some local residents complained they didn't know enough about the plan, what types of projects would be considered or how the money would be used, officials have said.

"What we heard very clearly the last time around was that they wanted very specific information about how the additional dollars might be utilized so that they could, in turn, make an informed decision," Lyday said. "This is an opportunity to ask people what they think the issues are and what they think the priorities should be."

Daily Herald

Sept. 1, 2004

Forest board may take meetings to TV screen

BY RUSSELL LISSAU

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Lake County Forest Preserve District officials again are considering broadcasting board meetings on local cable television.

Commissioners also are weighing whether a videotaped, semiannual show about district programs and projects would be a more effective way to communicate with the public.

"It's very conceptual right now," said Tom Hahn, the district's interim executive director. "We felt this was a way to give the commissioners two different views of what will reach the most people."

District leaders occasionally have debated the merits of televising board meetings.

Last summer, one committee recommended broadcasting meetings for one year on a trial basis, but sessions never were televised. All five of the forest district board's committees will discuss the issue this month. The first session is scheduled for 9 a.m. Thursday, when the education, cultural resources and public information committee will take up the matter.

The revenue facilities committee will discuss it in a second meeting set to begin whenever the education committee session ends. Both meetings will occur at the district's main office, 2000 N. Milwaukee Ave., Libertyville.

Activists who have pushed for local governmental boards to

televising meetings believe it helps inform the public about community issues. Such broadcasts also hold officials more accountable for their words and actions, advocates say, because the audience expands from the audience in the meeting room to whoever is watching on TV.

Some board members support the idea, as well as the concept of a promotional show about district activities.

"We want to show the people what we do. People need to see their government in action," said commissioner Diana O'Kelly, a Mundelein Republican. "And a feature program on exactly what's going on at the forest preserve district would be a great amenity."

If approved, a district program would be aired on LCTV, a county-owned cable station that reaches most local cable subscribers. LCTV already broadcasts county board meetings and programs about local issues.

"The primary benefit of televising county board meetings is to give citizens an opportunity to watch their elected board members conduct county government," said county spokesman John Lyday, who oversees LCTV's operations. "And the primary benefit of a magazine-format show is to showcase, via television, the various programs and services that are offered by county government and to cover issues of general public interest."

Lyday said his office will work with the forest district board and administration on the issue.

THE DENVER POST

November 7, 2001

Tribune Co. attuned to radio-TV swap

Tribune Co., owner of Denver radio stations KOSI-FM, KKHK-FK and KEZW-AM and TV station KWGN-Channel 2, is exploring the possibility of trading the radio properties for one or more additional television stations.

The company announced Tuesday it has retained a financial adviser to "evaluate trade alternatives."

"Our Denver radio stations are great businesses run by great people," a news release quoted Dennis J. FitzSimons, Tribune president and chief operating officer, as saying, "and we plan to find the best way to maximize the potential of these valuable properties while further expanding Tribune's core media assets."

Tribune spokesman John Lyday said that while the radio properties are valuable, "Tribune has been a consolidator in the newspaper and TV industry." Further, Lyday said, "this is not a performance issue. The stations are performing well. We could end up actually keeping the radio stations."

Tribune owns 23 major-market TV stations nationwide and 11 daily newspapers, including the Chicago Tribune and Los Angeles Times.

The Hartford Courant.

August 7, 2001

FCC Lets Tribune Buy Waterbury TV Station

By Matthew Kauffman

The Federal Communications Commission has approved Tribune Co.'s planned acquisition of WTXX, Channel 20. But in the same breath, the agency appears to have ordered the company to give the television station up within six months.

The complicated ruling follows Tribune's request for permission to buy WTXX, a struggling Waterbury station, while also owning WTIC, Channel 61, in Hartford. Federal rules typically prohibit companies from owning two television stations in the same market, but the FCC agreed that the Tribune purchase represented WTXX's best chance for survival.

Commissioner Michael J. Copps said he was "extremely troubled" by the prospect of one company owning two television stations in a small market.

But he wrote: "It seems to me better for one company to own two stations in this market than for one of those stations not to exist at all."

The 5-0 ruling, issued Friday, paves the way for Tribune to buy the station from Counterpoint Communications. No sales price was disclosed.

But while the FCC was considering the petition, Tribune last year completed its purchase of Times Mirror, which gave it control of The Courant. That implicated a second FCC rule that generally bars cross-ownership of newspapers and television stations in the same market.

Tribune's dual ownership of The Courant and WTIC is not expected to come before the FCC until WTIC's license renewal in 2007. But the FCC said the cross-ownership rule applied immediately to WTXX.

"We are aware of the FCC ruling, and are studying our options for complying with it," said John Lyday, a Tribune spokesman.

Lyday noted that the FCC is reviewing its rules on media ownership, many of which were drafted before the Internet and cable TV expanded the number of voices in the marketplace.

"We remain hopeful and confident that cross-ownership regulations will be relaxed when the review is completed," Lyday said.

Despite the six-month deadline, Tribune could likely stretch the time frame by filing a petition to reconsider and other appeals, according to people familiar with television licensing.

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June 26 2001

Freelance writers win online rights to works

Staff and wire reports

NEW YORK · In a copyright battle affecting tens of thousands of articles, the Supreme Court ruled Monday that freelance writers have online rights to their work. Some publishers prepared to pull affected files off their databases.

In a 7-2 ruling, the court said writers can control whether articles sold for print in a newspaper or magazine may be reproduced in electronic form.

The court said compilation in an electronic database like Lexis-Nexis is different from other kinds of storage, such as microfilm. That means publishers must get the author's permission before posting the work online.

Within hours of the ruling, the New York Times Co. and Time Inc. said they would start deleting files from their databases to avoid any liability.

“We are disappointed in the decision,” said John Lyday, spokesman for Tribune Co., the *Sun-Sentinel's* parent company. “We are assessing the impact the decision will have.”

The case was filed in 1993 by free-lance writers against *The New York Times*, *Newsday* and Time Inc.

The case largely affects articles, photographs and illustrations produced a decade or so ago, before free-lance contracts provided for the material's electronic use.

While the court handed a victory to writers, questions remain about how the ruling will be implemented. The judges suggested that the two sides may be able to reach a settlement or that Congress could pass a law covering the issue.

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April 9, 2001

Tribune Co. plans to alter domestic policy, will offer domestic-partner benefits

By Mark Fitzgerald

Effective next January, the Tribune Co. is opening its health insurance and welfare benefits to both the same-sex and the unmarried heterosexual domestic partners of employees in all its business units, including its daily newspapers.

The change comes about a year after Chicago-based Tribune -- which had not offered domestic-partner benefits despite years of lobbying by gay journalists and other employees -- bought Times Mirror Co., which offered the benefits.

At the time of the merger, Tribune vowed to keep all benefits in place for at least a year, and a corporate team began to examine new welfare packages. "This gave us the chance for an orderly and thoughtful process," company spokesman John Lyday said.

To be eligible, employees must declare they have been in an "exclusive, committed relationship of at least 12 months that is expected to last indefinitely," Lyday said. About 22,000 employees will be covered by the new benefits.

"It's gratifying to know that our education efforts and the lobbying conducted by gay and non-gay employees has resulted in tangible success," said Karen Bailis, a National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA) board member who is an assistant news editor at Melville, N.Y.-based Newsday, which is a former Times Mirror paper.

From 1997 to 2000, the number of news organizations offering domestic-partner benefits almost tripled, to 73 from 26, according to an NLGJA study.

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ELECTRONIC MEDIA

The broadcast, cable, interactive weekly

Dec. 11, 2000

Nielsen de-lists KSWB from November book

By Karissa S. Wang

Tribune-owned WB affiliate KSWB-TV, San Diego, has made history by being the first station to be de-listed by Nielsen Media Research for an entire sweeps book.

A client notice was sent last week to all Nielsen stations informing them that KSWB conducted activities during the November book that were “designed to influence or change the viewing habits” of Nielsen homes in San Diego.

The station will be excluded from the November 2000 “Viewers in Profile” report that goes out in tape and diskette form. But the client notice also stated Nielsen “will make available, on a delayed basis, a separate custom tape containing only KSWB-TV data.” Nielsen spokesman Jack Loftus said KSWB data will be available a week after the VIP report is released.

“We felt we had an obligation to the market to provide the market with the information,” Mr. Loftus said. “You have to weigh what you're doing here. Yes, you're concerned about one station, but we're very concerned about making sure the market gets the data it needs to operate effectively. It's the first time we de-listed an entire station for an entire survey period. We have in the past de-listed time periods.”

A Tribune Broadcasting spokesman said the company still supports KSWB's management.

“KSWB has established an enviable track record of success, and credit for this goes to the General Manager Lise Markham and the talented people with whom she has surrounded herself,” said Tribune spokesman John Lyday. “We do not expect the de-listing to have a materially adverse impact upon the station's revenues, since KSWB will be able to use both household and demographic ratings from the November survey period for its advertising sales.”

As reported by Electronic Media (Nov. 13), KSWB sent out a promotional tape at the start of the November book to 75,000 homes in the area. The tape touted a car contest and KSWB's programming, but the box it came in had instructions that read: “Attention Nielsen Homes: See Inside.” Inside was a card that read: “Attention Nielsen Homes: Please watch KSWB 5/69. Diary Homes, please write down KSWB 5/69 in your Nielsen Diary. Thanks to all Nielsen Homes for watching KSWB 5/69.” Several employees at competing stations received the package at their homes and reported it to Nielsen.

Then on Nov. 4, rival stations were surprised to see KSWB broadcasting on-air promotional spots with an accompanying voice-over that said: “Attention Nielsen family households. You're watching KSWB 5/69. Please write it down in your Nielsen diary. Thank you for watching.”

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The New York Times

October 13, 2000

Times Co. Withdraws Plan for Online Unit's Stock Offering

By FELICITY BARRINGER

Investors' disenchantment with Internet investments prompted The New York Times Company to back away yesterday from its plans for an initial public offering of a stock that would track the performance of its online subsidiary, New York Times Digital.

The company announced that it was withdrawing its registration of the proposed tracking stock until market conditions improved. "This is a symptom of the marketplace's reaction" to Internet companies, Martin A. Nisenholtz, the chief executive of New York Times Digital, said yesterday. "It went from irrational exuberance to unqualified pessimism."

Earlier, in a prepared statement, Mr. Nisenholtz said, "If we proceeded with the offering now, we would not receive the valuation we deserve."

The Times Company had been one of several media companies that planned or at least had laid the groundwork for issuing stock based on Internet assets. Some industry analysts applauded such strategies in 1999 and the early weeks of 2000, before the first sharp dip in technology stock prices last spring.

The Times Company announced its intention to issue a tracking stock in January; it won shareholder approval of the plan at the company's annual meeting in May. At the time, a company statement said executives would "carefully consider market conditions prior to proceeding" with the offering.

The Times Company made its announcement on the same day that another large media company, the Tribune Company, announced it was eliminating 80 jobs at its Tribune Interactive group, laying off 34 people, 20 of them at Los Angeles Times.com. The move was made to consolidate "operating efficiencies" possible because of Tribune's acquisition of the Times Mirror Company, said John Lyday, a spokesman for the company.

New York Times Digital — which includes the Web sites NYTimes .com, Boston.com, NYtoday.com and Abuzz, a unit which seeks to match user queries with expert answers — posted third-quarter revenue yesterday of \$12.1 million, a gain of 97.8 percent compared with \$6.1 million in the period a year earlier. Operating losses grew to \$20.7 million for the quarter, compared with \$8.1 million in the quarter a year earlier.

However, Mr. Nisenholtz said, the group expects to have positive cash flow in 2002 as the number of revenue sources continues to expand beyond the traditional banner advertising into new areas like classified advertising or advertising to special e-mail clients.

NYTimes.com, the site with the largest single audience of the company's offerings, had 12.8 million registered users in August. About 4.2 million individual users visited the site that month and, on average, each of these visited the site about four times.



Oct. 12, 2000- Updated 2:31 PM ET

Tribune Interactive to cut jobs

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Twenty employees of the *Los Angeles Times* Web site will be laid off as part of a 12% cut in the Tribune Co.'s Internet operations.

Chicago-based Tribune will lay off 34 employees of Tribune Interactive and 46 open positions will not be filled from its workforce of 650, according to Tribune spokesman John Lyday. Earlier this year, Chicago-based Tribune bought Times Mirror, which publishes the *Los Angeles Times*.

Lyday said the cuts are necessary to help the interactive division “focus its resources on revenue-driving initiatives, realize operating efficiencies from its merger with Times Mirror Co. and accelerate its progress toward profitability.”

Lyday said the cuts would affect reporters, production workers, sales and marketing employees and other workers, including eight employees of Tribune Interactive's central organization.

Tribune Interactive publishes Chicagotribune.com, ChicagoSports.com and Latimes.com.

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April 12, 2000

Tribune To Take 'Strategic' Look At Education Group, Contemplates Sale

Tribune (Chicago) may place its education group on the selling block following the \$8 billion mega merger of the multi-media company with the equally diverse Times Mirror.

Plans for the education group were conspicuously left out of statements last month announcing the deal, which indicated the education group might have a short future within the merged enterprise. The likelihood of a sale strengthened last week when Tribune announced it would be “exploring strategic alternatives” for Tribune's education group that included a possible sale and hired Salomon Smith Barney as its financial advisor for this matter.

“We are looking to maximize the value of our non-core assets,” said Tribune spokesperson John Lyday. “We will be taking a hard look at their strategic fit.”

The education group stands apart from Tribune's traditional media holdings of broadcasting, publishing and interactive media. Following the completion of the merger, which is expected to close in the second or third quarter of 2000, Tribune's core assets will consist of 11 daily newspapers, 22 television stations and four radio stations that include companion Web sites.

Although Tribune Education's roots are planted in traditional supplementary materials, the business unit has begun to enter the electronic education market. The group continued to look at all areas, but began to focus on K-12 distance learning and similar products.

In mid-1999, Tribune Co. acquired Academic Software, which develops software products that facilitate online interaction among students at the university level, and made it a business unit of Tribune Interactive (EER, July 21). Tribune Education began making some online-oriented investments of its own this summer when it spent \$10 million in capital to invest in VarsityBooks.com.

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December 20, 1999

Tribune Education Expands Basal Market With Latest Purchase

Tribune Education's focus on wider K- 12 market reach— particularly in the basal textbook sector— got another boost with the recent purchase of South-Western Educational Publishing's high school and middle school social studies, mathematics and science lines.

Tribune (Chicago) on Dec. 14 announced that it had bought the lines from South-Western, a subsidiary of Thomson Learning (Stamford, CT) that will now focus on its core line of business education materials. Terms were not disclosed. The acquisition marks Tribune's second big purchase in as many months. On Nov. 16 it bought Meeks Heit Publishing Co., a publisher of secondary level health education and wellness texts, for an undisclosed sum (EM, Dec. 6).

According to company statements, the social studies and math lines purchased from South-Western will be folded into Tribune's NTC/Contemporary educational division. The science lines will be integrated into Tribune's Everyday Learning unit.

While Tribune Education has primarily made its mark in the supplementals market— it was the nation's largest publisher of K- 12 supplementary materials in 1998 with sales of \$203 million, according to EM estimates— recent purchases will mainly benefit its basal product line, which still lags well behind industry leaders Pearson Education, McGraw-Hill, Houghton Mifflin and Harcourt.

Tribune spokesman John Lyday told EM the shift toward more basal products does not mean a shift away from supplementary materials. “NTC/Contemporary already had a number of text materials as part of its secondary school language arts product line. (The purchase) is very much in keeping with some of the products we already offered.”

Yet there's no question that Tribune Education has undergone a significant transformation during the past couple of years. With the South-Western purchase NTC's textbook line includes Street Law, a popular high school law course, as well as market-leading world history materials that have been adopted in Texas and other states. Everyday Learning's adoption potential is also widened because science materials will now be added to its primary roster of elementary text and supplemental math products.

Thomson Learning will retain the rights to the South-Western brand name and continue to publish its line of business/office technology and computer education products under that imprint.

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July 26, 1999

Tribune Education Reported 9% Revenue Growth In Second Quarter

Tribune Education recorded the highest percentage growth of all of Tribune's subsidiaries during the second quarter, ended June 30, with revenues jumping 9% to \$93.2 million and operating income growing 10% to \$14.6 million. Overall, Tribune recorded a 7% increase in revenue to \$836.9 million and a 6% increase in operating income to \$214.8 million (see table on page 7). The operating income was affected by a 6% increase in corporate expenses.

Although Tribune does not generally try to compete in the adoption market - it mainly concentrates on the supplementals market - the company's K-6 Everyday Math product from its Everyday Learning unit have recorded solid sales in some recent adoptions. Tribune's Creative Publications unit also scored good sales of its Mathland and Mathscape K-8 products, according to spokesperson John Lyday, who refused to discuss in which specific states the company was strong.

The first quarter earnings were very similar to the second quarter earnings Lyday said, adding that revenues for the first quarter were \$720 million, while operating income was \$156 million. Lyday also told EM that because the education market as a whole is not prone to rapid change, "the landscape of the product line does not change that quickly."

Tribune reported that their increase in revenues and operating profit for the quarter ended June 30 was due to growth in educational product sales, especially in the disciplines of math and language arts.

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April 28, 1999

Tribune Education Sees 1Q Losses Despite Revenue Growth

Despite a revenue growth of 7% to \$64 million for the quarter ended March 28, 1999, Tribune's Education Group (Chicago, IL) continued to spill red ink in the first quarter as the group's operating loss widened to \$1.1 million, compared to a loss of \$700,000 in 1998.

The group, which consists of five core business units like the Wright Group and Ideal/Instructional Fair, attributes the revenue growth to an increase in school and consumer channel sales, but the operating loss growth was the result of large expenses budgeted in the quarter, spokesperson John Lyday said.

"Planned increases, mainly in sales, marketing and product development, will allow our growing businesses to prepare for the second and third quarters which will be our strongest revenue quarters," Lyday told EER.

While EBITDA stayed in the black, it dipped 2% to \$5.6 million for the year. Tribune Education reported that first and fourth quarter sales are typically slow due to the buying trends at schools.

Tribune has not been absent from the acquisition frenzy in the past three years. Most recently Tribune Education's Ideal/Instructional Fair Publishing Group (Grand Rapids, MI) acquired educational software developer Great Wave Software (Scotts Valley, CA) for an estimated \$4 million to \$6 million. The acquisition allows Ideal to leverage its content into curriculum-based software products and to develop teacher support software for the retail and school channels (EER, Feb. 3).

While company executives would not comment on additional acquisition speculations, Tribune Education would clearly benefit from the purchase of Jostens, which may be on the block, or Primedia's Supplemental Education Division, which is for sale. The purchases would beef up Tribune's K-12 software and supplemental offerings.

At the parent company, Tribune's total operating income grew 8% to \$156 million, compared to \$144 million in 1998. The company posted a revenue growth of 7% to \$720 million and EBITDA rose 9% to \$208 million for the quarter.

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Daily Herald

Daily Herald, July 7, 1996

Dist. 46 seeks new publicity director

BY DAN CULLOTON
AND TERESA MASK
Daily Herald Staff Writers

A search is under way for a director of school/community relations for Elgin Area Unit District 46.

John Lyday, who now holds the position, will leave the state's second largest school district after nearly 13 years on the job.

His last day is July 15. Superintendent Marvin Edwards said he wants to fill the post by the start of school in August.

Lyday, 42, has accepted a job as manager of communications for the Tribune Co.'s education division. In recent years, the Tribune Co. has acquired several textbook and educational materials publishing firms.

Lyday first came to District 46 in 1983, after working as director of community relations for Northwest Suburban High School District 214 for five years. Before that he was a radio reporter with WWMM, 92.7 FM, which is now WCBR.

He has served through several bruising referendums, at least two brutal teachers strikes and recently played a large role in the coordination of the district's strategic plan.

"John is a hard worker, dedicated and gives 100 percent," Edwards said. "He is very talented."

To fill Lyday's shoes, Edwards said he is looking for someone with experience with a school district. Applicants should have people and organizational skills and "make sure there is clean and consistent communication inside and outside the school district."

Edwards said the director of school/community relations is in charge of all publications and brochures, oversees the school business partners, grants and annual report and will get involved in strategic planning.

District 46 is planning to expand its communication department by hiring an assistant director as well.

Lyday said the Tribune job was too good a professional opportunity to pass up.

"Definitely this has been quite an amazing 13 years in the district," he said.

"I really had to think long and hard about whether I wanted to make the transition because I'm really pleased with the way things are developing in the U-46."

The most memorable events in Lyday's tenure probably will be the 1994 referendum in which voters narrowly approved a \$172.8 million bond issue for a complete renovation and expansion of the district's schools. At the same time, voters appeared to reject a tax increase to pay for deficit reduction and the operating costs created by the expansion plan. But subsequent recounts and court decisions showed the referendum passed by a slim margin.

Lyday also will remember working on the district strategic plan, establishing better contacts between the district and real estate agencies, and setting up "Ask Marvin Edwards," a cable television show in which residents call in to ask the superintendent about the school system and school board.



July 3, 1996

District U-46 PR chief steps down

By Phil Borchmann

Handling public relations for the state's second largest school district for more than 13 years will provide John Lyday with a lot of memories for his professional scrapbook after he steps down from his post this week.

Some recent controversial issues in Elgin District U-46 that Lyday had to deal with were a budget deficit that reached \$27 million in 1993; the 1994 tax-hike referendum that initially was voted down only to be won in court; and the Bartlett High School attendance boundary flap last spring

But as Lyday prepares to assume a corporate relations position at the educational publishing division of Tribune Co., which also publishes the Chicago Tribune, he said he also will remember many other projects he helped spearhead to improve communications with the community.

For example, Lyday organized the Strategic Planning Process, which included the public in the devising of strategies for the district; he expanded a program with realty companies to better acquaint them with the schools and suggest how the schools could be included in marketing efforts; and he helped increase the number of advisory councils that work with the district staff.

"The most significant development in recent years has been Dr. (Marvin) Edwards' emphasis on communication. That was his top priority when he came," said Lyday, an Elgin resident, of the district's superintendent. "It's been a busy 13 years, but I've been busier since Dr. Edwards arrived."

Prior to starting at District U-46, Lyday worked for five years at Township High School District 214 and four years before that as a news director for an Arlington Heights radio station

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Daily Herald

Aug. 31, 1995

Dist. 46 squeezes students into schools for first day

BY TERESA MASK
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Social studies classes were held in the Larsen Middle School gymnasium, math classes were taught in the library and special-education classes were scheduled for another room in the overcrowded school.

The arrangement is a temporary one and was needed to fit all 843 children into the Elgin school for the first day of classes Wednesday.

Three portable classrooms are expected to be delivered to the school in September. Until then,

teachers will make do with limited space.

Mobile trailers make apparent the increasing student population in the district. At least 35 trailers will be used at 13 schools this year.

Thousands of students returned to their schools as summer vacation ended Wednesday for Elgin Area Unit District 46 students.

Students crowded the district's 44 schools, many wearing bright-colored clothes and backpacks.

The first day of school was especially thrilling for seventh-graders at Eastview Middle School in

Bartlett, which was re-opened after three years.

For a good portion of the nearly 430 seventh graders attending Eastview this year, the opening was a homecoming. Many students attended Eastview when it was an elementary school.

It was business as usual at other schools throughout the district.

"We started at 8:30 a.m., and by 8:45 a.m. we had everyone in their classroom and it was like we have been going to school for weeks,"

See DISTRICT 46 on Page 7

DISTRICT 46: Teachers, principals debut

Continued from Page 1

said Ronald Duy, principal of Lords Park Elementary School.

There were no school closings due to heat, every student made it home safely and there were no unplanned fire drills.

That's the kind of news district officials like to hear.

"A lot of preparation goes into the first day of school so that it can run as smoothly as possible," John Lyday, director of school

community relations, said.

Not only was it a successful first day for students, but it also was the debut for 200 new teachers and six new principals in the district.

The increase in new teachers is a result of replacing retired educators and hiring others for new classes that developed from \$8.5 million in expansions and restorations at buildings throughout the district, including at Eastview, Lyday said.

The new principals in Elgin include David Smiley, who took over the helm of Ellis Middle School, Oceana Wright at Garfield Elementary School and Tina Rodomsky at Sheridan Elementary.

In Bartlett, Karen Carlson will head Bartlett Elementary School, Ed Melchi will oversee Parkwood Elementary School, and at Sunnydale Elementary School in Streamwood, Jaime Garcia will serve as principal.

Daily Herald

January 10, 1995

District 46 seeking residents' input

By DAN CULLOTON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Elgin Area Unit District 46 will conduct three simultaneous town meetings at its high schools today as part of its strategic planning process.

The meetings at Streamwood, Elgin and Larkin high schools will all start at 7 p.m. They are open to all district residents.

"It's an opportunity for anyone who wants to participate that evening to get an overview of what the strategic planning process is all about," said school

board President Janet Korman.

The meetings will feature a slide show detailing the progress of the strategic planning process and a summary of some the results of 42 focus group interviews conducted by volunteers.

Residents also will be able to provide input in small groups, school officials said.

The strategic planning committee opted for small groups because they thought they would make people more comfortable and willing to talk, said District 46 spokesman John Lyday.

School officials hope residents

turn out to offer their perceptions of the district's strengths, capabilities, weaknesses and challenges.

"Obviously, we'd like to see as many people as possible participate in those meetings," Lyday said.

The information garnered at the town meetings will be used to forge a long-range plan for the district.

School board members, administrators and many residents consider the year-long strategic planning process crucial to the school system's survival.

Enrollment, already more than

30,000 students, is expected to grow by 800 pupils per year through the end of the decade.

And though the district has embarked on a \$172.8 million building and expansion plan and imposed a property tax increase to help retire a \$25 million budget deficit, a group of residents is trying to overturn the higher tax rate in court.

"The board of education hopes that the strategic plan will be a guideline for this board and future boards for five to seven years from now," Korman said.

Daily Herald

June 11, 1994

A year later, charges in gang fight dismissed

By DAN ROZEK
Daily Herald Legal Affairs Writer

A gang fight at Elgin High School last year exploded into a wild, knifewielding brawl that injured three students, led to six others being arrested and prompted officials to beef up school security.

More than a dozen students, according to authorities, were involved in the gang clash, described as the worst in the school's history.

But a year later, Cook County prosecutors quietly have dismissed the charges against the student facing the most serious offenses stemming from the Feb. 26, 1993, fight.

Despite the number of students involved in the fight, prosecutors have determined they cannot try 18-

year-old Juan Castelan of Elgin on attempted murder charges because they lack witnesses.

"There was no hope to go on with the trial," said Suzanne Rollier, a spokeswoman for Cook County State's Attorney Jack O'Malley.

The decision to dismiss the charges surprised Elgin police and several Elgin Area Unit District 46 school board members, who weren't aware of the little-publicized decision.

Police declined to comment, but one school board official said she was disappointed that prosecutors could not pursue the case because of a lack of witnesses.

"It's more disappointing than surprising," said board Vice President Karen Carney. "Some parents wouldn't want to testify in some-

thing like that. It's a sign of society — and it goes down as far as the kids."

All told, 19 students were suspended by school officials following the fight and 13 faced possible expulsion, including Castelan, who was the only student charged as an adult.

Five other unidentified students, charged as juveniles, were arrested on lesser offenses.

The attempted murder and aggravated battery charges against Castelan were dropped May 26 during a brief Cook County Circuit Court hearing.

Prosecutors would say little about the case, but sources say a key witness who reportedly saw the fight

See **BRAWL** on Page 4



A year after a gang-related brawl injured three Elgin High students and resulted in beefed-up security, prosecutors dismissed attempted murder charges against a former student. Daily Herald Photo

BRAWL: Prosecutors saying little about decision

Continued from Page 1

later refused to testify.

In addition, the teen-ager who suffered the most serious injuries during the brawl told authorities he could not identify his attacker, officials said.

"With what the witnesses were saying, we couldn't meet our burden of proof," Rollier, O'Malley's spokeswoman, said, refusing to discuss specifics of the case.

But Castelan's attorney said the dismissal was the correct decision because there was no solid evidence that the Elgin teen-ager, who was charged with two stabbings, had wielded a knife.

"The credible witnesses did not put Juan Castelan with a weapon," defense attorney Timothy Mahoney said, faulting the initial police investigation of the fighting. "There were several witnesses who said Juan

was not the person who stabbed them."

The fight began just before classes as an argument in the school parking lot. It apparently escalated into a brawl that ended with three students being stabbed — the last reportedly injured as he fled into the school, authorities said.

Two Elgin boys, ages 15 and 16, were hospitalized with knife wounds after the attack. A third boy was treated for minor cuts and released.

Castelan, then a 17-year-old junior, and five younger students were arrested.

Prosecutors would not comment on the outcome of the cases involving the juveniles, but a source familiar with the case said several were convicted or pleaded guilty to fight-related charges.

Police didn't recover any weapons and were unsure how many knives may have been used during the

brief fighting.

Mahoney acknowledged Castelan had been involved in the initial fistfight, but he said witnesses would have testified that Castelan was unarmed and not an aggressor.

School officials refused to comment on the outcome of the expulsion hearings or to comment on Castelan's school status.

The stabbings prompted school officials to institute extra security measures, including the use of hand-held metal detectors to screen students and extra police officers at the school.

"Security measures definitely were enhanced after the original incident and some of that continues," said John Lyday, a District 46 spokesman.

"We think it's working — and we haven't had any more incidents out there."

December 1, 1993

Schools chief segues smoothly into TV show

By Jack Houston
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

It's 15 minutes before showtime, and **Marvin Edwards**, the program's main attraction, has yet to make an appearance in the studio.

Not to worry, says **John Lyday**, director of community relations for Elgin-based Unit District 46, the superintendent will arrive in plenty of time.

And sure enough, as Lyday speaks, in walks the new superintendent, poised, meticulously dressed, with only the slightest hint of stress a moment later when makeup spills on his suit.

The superintendent brushes it off and sits down on the set. Soon, his left foot is tapping to the show's theme music, composed by district art teacher **Darrell St. John**.

Lyday, who has been rocking calmly in his chair for 15 minutes, straightens and faces Camera 2. The music fades and Lyday, a former radio broadcaster, eases into the program introductions without the aid of a TelePrompTer.

Live, from Streamwood, it's "Ask Marvin Edwards."

Well, sort of.

The half-hour call-in show is cabled live at 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays once a month to TCI cable subscribers in Streamwood, Hanover Park and Bartlett. A tape of the program is rerun at 8 p.m. the same evening over Jones Interchange to subscribers in Elgin. The district hopes to have made arrangements by the fourth show in January so that Jones

Northwest watch Schools

subscribers also can see the show live.

During this particular program, the district's second on Nov. 10, the superintendent answers 13 questions, including mail-ins. The first show in October had four call-ins.

Callers' voices are not aired, however. Lyday says Edwards believes the show will draw better questions if viewers aren't concerned about how they sound over the air.

Lyday repeats the program's phone number several times during the program: 289-2108.

Edwards' answers seem long. But he handles three questions in the first five minutes, explaining why a district that is in dire financial straits has plans to promote a \$172 million bond issue for new buildings.

ReVay Erickson, a U-46 middle school teacher who volunteers on the show, periodically slips from her place in the control booth into the studio with a caller's question in hand.

At a signal from volunteer floor director **Stephanie Bollinger**, Erickson tiptoes half-bent behind teacher **Robert Louder** on Camera 2, crouching ever lower as she slips below the line of vision of Camera 1, operated by teacher **Garrick Balk**. Automatically, as Edwards drones on, Lyday drops his right hand behind his chair and awaits the hand-off.

"We have a call-in question ... about gang problems," Lyday says, as he introduces a new subject.

Edwards tells viewers the district has zero-tolerance for gangs and that the schools are doing all they can to assure student safety.

When the program ends, a cheer rises from the control room. Everyone is pleased with the program, especially teacher **Angela Skowron**, who serves as the show's director. She rushes into the studio to congratulate the participants.

Edwards, still seated in his chair as the studio hands dismantle the set around him, wonders aloud whether the next time he should address the camera, rather than Lyday, who asks all the questions on the show.

Lyday is jokingly praised for giving the right phone number this time around. In the first show, in September, he initially gave out the wrong number, but corrected the mistake during the show.

This time, the correct number is taped to the front of Camera 1. But with the TV lights, Lyday can't see it anyway. He just remembers.

"I think we felt better with the [second] show," he says. "The lighting was better, and we're getting more experience. I know I felt more comfortable."

While all this is new for most of the show's participants, Edwards is a pro at all this, according to Lyday. "When he was in Dallas, he participated in three shows each month," he says.

Daily Herald

May 13, 1993

Students chip in to save funds for education

By KRISTY PHARISS
Of Our Springfield Bureau

SPRINGFIELD — A high school senior pointed to his three-dimensional computer design of a hydraulic pump part and explained that he wants to become an engineer.

"The things we know the least about are the most amazing to me," said Jayson Campbell, a student at Elgin High School. "I want to help people explore the ocean by designing things that can handle the pressure."

Because he had the opportunity to take a high school class in mechanical drafting and to learn a computer program used by many engineering firms, Campbell was able to find work with Micro-Cut Engineering, a Streamwood firm. That experience has made Campbell more certain of his career choice.

Campbell was one of hundreds of Illinois public school students who traveled to the State Capitol with their teachers as part of "Tech 2000," an exhibit designed

to show lawmakers how important it is for students to learn the latest technology through computers.

"Children are turned on to learning in ways most of us didn't think possible when we went to school," said Lt. Gov. Bob Kustra.

While lawmakers had an opportunity to see students in action, school officials hoped legislators would see a need to allocate more money to build on the high-tech programs they currently offer.

"Everyone keeps talking about education as a priority," said John Lyday, director of Community Relations for Elgin Area Unit District 46. "I would like to see us not only talk about education funding, but do something about it."

Thomas Lock, a graphic arts teacher at Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, has a student who already has put some of what he has learned in class to use. The teen has a lawn mowing business and has designed T-shirts and fliers using desktop publishing.

Jacqueline Settiani, an art teacher at Schaumburg High School, agrees that computer

training is crucial for students who hope to enter the job market.

Computers also are an invaluable teaching aid for elementary schools, said Kristin Mellish, a fifth-grade teacher at Whittier Grade School in Downers Grove. "It's impressive the way these children have taken over and improved their skills," Mellish said.

December 31, 1992

Principal-ref is no racist, friends say

By V. Dion Haynes

During pro football season, students at Elgin High School have a Friday routine: They bombard principal Larry Nemmers with questions about his weekend job.

They ask him what game he will be working as a National Football League referee and what station will broadcast it. On Sundays, they gather around their TV sets and proudly watch Nemmers share the field with the professional players.

But on Wednesday, that pride turned to disbelief, as students, parents and school officials reacted to allegations that Nemmers, who is white, hurled a racial slur at a black New York Jets player during a game Saturday.

The National Football League is investigating charges that Nemmers made the comment to cornerback Erik McMillan while trying to break up a scuffle between McMillan's teammates and New Orleans Saints players.

Nemmers, 49, a Bartlett resident who has worked in Elgin Area Unit District 46 for 28 years, denied the allegations Wednesday and offered to take a lie detector test to back his assertion.

"I categorically deny the report," he said. "The alleged statement was never made."

While Nemmers awaits the outcome of the NFL probe, those who know him in the school have reached their own conclusion: Nemmers is innocent.

"First of all," said Jeff Gregory, 16, an Elgin High junior, "he's principal of Elgin High School, where a large part of the population is Hispanic, Laotian and black. I don't think he's a racist, and I don't think he would make a remark like that. He tries to help us all get along."

Gary Lichthardt, president of the Unit District 46 Parents Action Committee, agreed.

"I know Larry takes a lot of pride in his job as principal and as an NFL referee. I could not see him risking either of his careers on that type of comment," said Lichthardt.

District 46 school board members declined to comment pending the outcome of the NFL investigation. But district spokesman John Lyday said he believes the charges contradicted Nemmers' character.

NFL spokesman Joseph Browne would not comment on the NFL penalty for using profanity and slurs, and he would not repeat the alleged remark.

Workout facilities defended

U46 invites public to judge

By Paul Harth
STAFF WRITER

Elgin School District U46 does not appear ready to turn any of its employees into an Arnold Schwarzenegger look-a-like, despite rumors of a state-of-the-art workout facility at the district's Chicago Street headquarters.

A tour of the facility Wednesday revealed it contains two pieces of equipment—a weight machine and a stationary bike—currently housed inside a 14-by-14 room in the basement of the building, the century-old former Elgin High School.

The bike was obtained in 1987 and the Build-A-Body Exerciser weight machine in 1989 at a total cost of about \$2,500, said district spokesman John Lyday.

Reports that U46 built and equipped an expensive exercise room for administrators have persisted as debate over school finances rages during the ongoing teachers strike.

They have been lumped together with criticism over new running tracks, the bus barn and other capital expenses the district has been incurring, while telling the teachers it cannot afford their requested salary increase.

U46 officials say those expenses come out of the building operations and other fund accounts, while teachers are paid from the education fund. Individual funds are supported by separate tax rates. State law gener-

ally prohibits transferring money from one fund to another, officials say.

Critics counter that the projects are still evidence of overspending by U46.

The district insists the exercise room has little relevance to that argument.

Officials say in light of U46's \$119 million overall operating budget, including more than \$7.6 million for building operations and maintenance, the facility probably is more akin to the proverbial 97-pound weakling than the Mr. Universe some have portrayed it to be.

Lyday said the exercise equipment will be moved down the hall to a somewhat larger room in the former locker room area of the building. That room is being renovated, including a drop ceiling and new floor covering, but is part of a previously approved project to make more space for the district's paper duplicating supplies, he said.

The equipment "is utilized by various employees working in the complex," Lyday said. They use it before and after work and during lunch breaks, he said, adding it is available to anyone employed at the headquarters building.

Lyday also invited U46 residents who want to see the facility for themselves to call the district at 888-5040 to set up a tour.

U46 enrollment hike puts squeeze on space

By Mike Nichols

An Elgin School District U46 board decision Monday night to negotiate for additional classroom space follows classroom shortage remedies outlined in a recent report by the Citizens Advisory Committee.

The board approved negotiations to obtain an Izaak Walton League-owned building near Huff Elementary School in Elgin.

Future classroom possibilities mentioned in the "Report on Enrollment and Facilities" issued in May include vacant stores, shopping centers, and a Boy Scout building. Provisional structures used during the 1986-1987 school year included mobile classrooms and churches.

The 68-page CAC report projects U46 enrollment will increase by 1,700 students in the next five years. By 1991, it is projected that over 28,000 students will be attending classes in what may soon be the second largest school district in the state.

"It's just a matter of time before U46 enrollment exceeds that of Rockford, currently the second largest school district in Illinois after Chicago," said John Lyday, director of community relations. "Rockford's enrollment is steadily decreasing and may be surpassed as early as this fall.

THE RESULT will prove costly, Lyday said. The CAC report recommends building additions for

Garfield, Highland, Huff, McKinley, Washington and Willard elementary schools as well as Larkin High School in Elgin.

Also recommended is the construction of three new elementary schools in Bartlett, the reopening of Streamwood Elementary as an elementary school (it is presently a special education facility), the possible construction of a fourth district high school in the southeast portion of U46, and boundary changes for a large percentage of elementary schools.

The CAC report recommends a referendum be held in the spring of 1988 to request voter approval of the sale of building bonds to finance construction.

"The board really hasn't discussed it," U46 Superintendent Richard Wiggall said this morning of the recommended referendum. He said the public might not be very receptive, however, in light of the 1984 referendum.

"People probably won't understand," Wiggall said. "Referendum is an umbrella phrase. The 1984 referendum was for an operations fund tax increase. What we are talking about here is the selling of bonds."

If approval is given by voters to sell bonds, he said, tax rates would not be affected.

Wiggall said budget cuts announced by Gov. James Thompson Monday will not specifically put more pressure on the board to schedule a referendum.

Probe targets school asbestos

Rules aim to protect students

By Philip Shabecoff
N.Y. Times News Service

WASHINGTON — The Environmental Protection Agency proposed rules Wednesday that would require the inspection of 107,000 school buildings throughout the country for cancer-causing asbestos and compel action to protect schoolchildren and employees.

The rules, proposed in response to legislation passed by Congress in October, are expected to cost the schools \$3.2 billion over the next 30 years for cleanup and maintenance. The federal government is expected to help the schools in paying the costs.

Evidence of friable asbestos was found about two years ago in three Elgin (Ill.) School District U46 buildings, according to John Lyday, school-community relations officer for the district. The asbestos was found and removed from Highland, Gifford and Ontarioville elementary schools.

"We have had thorough inspections of our buildings for friable asbestos and removed asbestos from those three buildings," Lyday said. "We continue to monitor for any further evidence of asbestos."

MEMBERS of Congress involved in the asbestos issue generally welcomed Wednesday's proposal, although many expressed reservations.

The environmental agency estimated that 33,000 of the school buildings to be inspected, involv-

ing 15 million children and 1.3 million administrators, teachers and other staff members, have crumbling asbestos that threatens the health of the occupants.

Unlike the agency's previous rule governing asbestos in schools, which required only that school districts see whether their school buildings contained asbestos and then report their findings to parent-teacher associations, this proposal contains strict penalties. Failure to comply with the requirements could result in civil penalties of \$5,000 a day or, if there is deliberate deception or a refusal to allow federal inspections, criminal penalties of \$25,000 a day.

Asbestos has been found to be a cause of cancer, including lung cancer, and asbestosis, a chronic disease of the lungs. The environmental agency has proposed that all uses of asbestos be gradually eliminated.

The cleanup rules would apply only to asbestos that is dry and can break up into fibers and escape into the air, what the industry calls friable asbestos.

The rules would require school systems that find dangerous asbestos to use certified contractors to remove the hazard. Each of the school systems must decide on the appropriate remedy, which can range from removal of the asbestos to sealing off contaminated areas.