



# Family & Community Engagement Committee Report

Spring 2019

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Phil Novello (Oakhill Elementary)– Co-Chairperson  
Matt Hovey (Hanover Countryside Elementary) – Co-Chairperson  
Vanessa Castelan (Oakhill Elementary) - Co-Chairperson  
Jeff Book (Streamwood High School)  
Emily Surridge (Lincoln Elementary School)

## DISTRICT LIAISONS

Mary Fergus – Director of School and Community Relations  
Karla Jimenez – Coordinator of Family and Community Engagement

*Approved by CAC Executive Committee – 4/25/2019*

*Approved by CAC General Council – 5/9/2019*

*Presented to the Board of Education – 5/20/2019*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC) Family & Community Engagement Committee would like to thank Mary Fergus, Director of School and Community Relations and Karla Jimenez, Coordinator of Family and Community Engagement for their ongoing support and encouragement of the committee's work. We would also like to thank Laura Vega for her administrative support with the committee's initiative.

## COMMITTEE MISSION & INITIATIVES FOR 2018-19

The mission of the CAC Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Committee is to take on challenging initiatives throughout the school year that help improve parent and community involvement at the school and district levels.

Our 2018-2019 Initiatives:

- Continue developing a network of support to our parent group organizations (PTO/PTA, Boosters, etc.) across the District. Identify contacts, assess needs, and determine potential support opportunities to strengthen and encourage family engagement and partnerships.
- Plan, organize and host a U-46 breakfast for professionals in the real estate industry as part of our efforts to promote the District in the best possible light and encourage new residential growth for the District.

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- Scores are too low
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## OVERVIEW

For its eleventh year of work, the committee determined to explore two initiatives to address various avenues of family and community engagement in U-46. We reviewed information provided from our Board of Education (BOE), our most highly engaged and successful school leaders and our invaluable parent volunteers throughout the District for direction. Our goal is to align our work with the goals and objectives of the BOE, staff and the District's Strategic Plan in order to produce useful, effective results. Ultimately, our focus is driven by factors that impact family and community engagement within our District.

The FACE committee aligned its initiatives this year to Priorities 5 and 6 of the [Strategic Plan](#):

*Thematic Category: Community Engagement*

*Aspiration: We will engage in meaningful and effective relationships with all families and the greater community.*

*Priority 5 - We will partner with families and the greater community to foster shared ownership and aligned support for our priorities.*

*Priority 6 - We will support and empower schools to be welcoming centers of family and community engagement.*

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## PTO/PTA Network

*Priority 5.4 Increase family and community member participation and volunteerism in school and district sponsored activities and events.*

*Priority 6.2 Increase parents' satisfaction rates on how welcome and respected they feel within the district.*

*Priority 6.4 Increase number and types of community events and services hosted at schools.*

The 2018-2019 school year marked the fifth year of the Parent Group Network initiative that was developed and coordinated by the CAC FACE Committee. This initiative was started in an effort to help School District U-46 better assist and support all school parent groups (PTO/PTA, Booster Clubs, etc.). At these network events, parent groups obtain useful information in an open and candid discussion amongst one another. The goal is to better equip all schools in the District to improve the quality of education for our students and to increase opportunities for parent groups to meet their individual school goals. These goals include fundraising, volunteer recruitment and general support of the school.

The first meeting in November 2018 gave our parent group attendees the opportunity to learn about the U-46 Educational Foundation and provided feedback on where its funds could be allocated. The meeting was held at Elgin High School and included an orientation to the network with existing and new parent group leaders in attendance and an idea sharing session discussing what topics should be presented and expanded upon in future network meetings. There were 19 attendees representing 11 schools at this first networking meeting.

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The second networking event held in February 2019 at the U-46 Educational Services Center invited Assistant Superintendent Ann Chan to explain the paraeducator positions available in our District and who is eligible to apply. The meeting continued with community resources including Jim Pirovano from the Chinese Mutual Aid Association to talk about their ESL services and information about Basket Brigade was shared as well as ideas to increase participation of volunteers and fundraising. The meeting had 25 attendees representing 16 schools.

Both events were promoted through various District communication platforms, CAC FACE Committee emails, social media, and flyers which were shared at the CAC General meeting.

We plan to continue supporting our parent groups by having one meeting at the beginning of the school year as an orientation to new parent group members and a refresher to existing members on basic rules and regulations that a parent group should know and follow. We will also have a second meeting towards the end of the year to focus on any questions our parent groups may have during the year. We would like to extend an open communication channel to our groups so they may ask questions during the school year and we can try to help them get the answers they need through our parent group email.

#### Recommendation

Continue to support the goals and progress of the Parent Group Network by providing complete transparency on U-46 guidelines and policies as they apply to the parent groups. Encourage support from the members of the Board of Education with their attendance at the Parent Group Network meetings during the course of the school year.

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## U-46 Real Estate Professionals Breakfast

*Priority 5.3 Increase awareness through social media and district communication resources and tools.*

*Priority 5.5 Increase targeted collaboration and tools for community organizations to work with U-46.*

*Priority 6.2 Increase parents' satisfaction rates on how welcome and respected they feel within the district.*

The FACE Committee successfully co-hosted its fifth U-46 Real Estate Professionals Breakfast event on March 18 at the District's Food and Nutrition Wellness Center. The FACE committee recognizes that the success of this event would not have been possible without the incredible efforts of District staff. This event attracted 39 real estate professionals interested in learning more about the positive aspects of our district. Everyone received folders containing brochures and handouts with information on the various U-46 programs, a copy of the presentation and other community resources. CAC FACE Co-Chair Vanessa Castelan welcomed the guests and gave a brief overview of what they would gain in knowledge. The presentation included information from CEO Tony Sanders which is available in the District's annual report. Realtors also heard from a Larkin High student who shared about her educational journey in the school district. At the conclusion of the presentation Food and Nutrition Director Elena Hildreth took a group of guests on a tour of the facility. Comment cards were distributed to all attendees and the results are included in the attachment.

### Recommendation

This committee recommends that we continue the Real Estate Professionals Breakfast on an annual basis and have it held in early March to capture the busy spring homebuying season. The location of this event should be held in different areas of the District annually to expose real estate professionals to the size of the District and its variety of offerings.

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## Additional Areas of Interest

### 5Essentials

As a committee we continue to follow and promote the benefits of parent/guardian participation in the annual survey administered by the State of Illinois. We believe this aligns well with our stated goals and asks to review the results of the 5Essentials Parent Survey to better support our schools.

### Community Engagement

We are committed to provide a welcoming atmosphere in our committee and our work. As part of the work, we always look for ways to promote the positive benefits of the District and the programs and offerings that help make U-46 great and unique. We encourage the growth of an involved community that recognizes the value they add to student success.

#### Recommendation

This committee recommends that we continue to support all efforts that will increase family and community engagement.

## Family and Community Engagement Board Policy

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The committee is dedicated to strengthening family and community participation efforts districtwide. In order to best guide these efforts, Board Policy 8.010 should be reviewed to reflect the current climate of engagement throughout the District.

Recommendation

This committee recommends that we review and provide feedback on Board Policy 8.010 Family and Community Engagement with members of the BOE Community Relations Committee.

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**U-46 Real Estate Professionals Breakfast**  
**Exit Survey**  
**March 18, 2019**

**From the presentation, what was the one takeaway that will help you sell within U-46 boundaries?**

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- Pathways - Dual Language Offering Special Programs
- I appreciated the overview regarding the Pathways Program.
- Student Growth - 20th in county. #boom
- Educational Pathways
- Pathways Update
- Technologically getting up to speed
- Information on ratings, programs & fiscal responsibility
- U-46 educational pathways
- dual language program
- ILP program
- Balances budget - in good shape and at top of list if state stops paying U-46. Also pathways program!
- The growth within U-46 and the program being offered to the students.
- Great programs, affordability
- I am a parent of 2 U-46 students
- I will continue to provide positive feedback to all buyers looking to purchase a home in our district.
- 90 sq. miles/2nd largest school district in the state; 40 Elementary/8 Middle schools/5 High schools/2 early childhood; 54/Latino 26.7/white and very diverse; Dual language program - K-12 Dual Language; ILP - Program
- 45 Commendable; 8 under performing
- District's commitment to individual attention to student growth
- Ranked 20th in the country. Seems to be showing more involvement with parents, students, and community.
- All the programs offered
- Individualized attention to help students study efficiently
- diversity of programs offered, financial stability of the district
- Tax abatement
- Diversity of educational opportunities

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## **What are other community resources that we can invite which will support your work as a Realtor?**

*(i.e. after-school programs, park districts, libraries, healthcare, social services, etc.)*

- After school programs, park districts, social services
- Park districts, libraries
- All the above
- Park districts, social services
- I like that this breakfast is at different venue annually - increased U-46 knowledge (facilities)
- libraries, school counselors, community colleges
- Any all of these - things/programs people may not know about that would interest or help them.
- Online workshops we as realtors can market and promote via social media sites. FB, IG, Twitter etc.
- more positive info communicated to realtors - possibly by email or text. Daily or weekly?
- College readiness program outside of school, camps, parent program to help their kids be prepared for college, and more involvement for parents within the district.
- ACE - Alignment collaborative for Education

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- Post a YouTube that explains "pathways"
- After school programs
- after school programs
- Weekend public library promotions that teach parents what U-46 has to offer
- School events agents can sponsor and invite prospective buyers to see first hand

**As a Realtor learning about U-46, how would you describe your experience at this morning's session? (Please note, we may use your quote in our marketing material.)**

- Great to have the resources with me and to learn about the Special Programs.
- It's nice that U-46 takes the time to do this. We all need to spread the word about the great things happening!
- I have a whole new perspective on the district, not just as an agent... but more so as a mom with children currently attending U-46 schools.
- Positive & helpful. Tony - great to meet in person. student perspective
- Brought to light a lot of positives pertaining to U-46 that I was not aware of before attending.
- Positive. I will be able to know, through your education, tell clients about U-46 + that their misconception may be wrong.
- A positive outlook on the school district.
- Great Information!
- This meeting was very informative and I think it opened our eyes as realtor to learn about the actual core of u-46 school district.
- Great Schools all my kids went there Elementary, Middle and High School in this district and have excelled.

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- Large district has lots of money, as a result, good program & help for students (I talked to quite a few), no additional costs to parents for tutoring, and from the meeting: property tax bill stay flat, career pathways is a big deal, collaborating with other school districts and ECC is huge!
- I have lived in Elgin since 2005. I love our district & its teachers! I always share my positive experience with clients.
- Invigorating! love hearing about the "pathways" program
- It was very informative and how u-46 to become better with a plan.
- Very Informative
- This was an excellent investment of my time!
- Positive and enlightening
- Hopeful
- Very informational and positive

#### **What are the misconceptions about U-46 you come across from potential buyers?**

- Just "Rumors" of more in the Elgin/Carpentersville Areas and sell the school district as well as houses!
- I agree that overall there is a misconception that U-46 isn't quality; however, I am a U-46 parent and my experiences have been wonderful. Perception doesn't reflect the reality.
- Scores are too low
- Bad Reputation: Lack of information/attention to students, bad treatment to students, too many kids in a classroom.
- Safety @ schools
- Bad schools - Not funded properly and behind on technology
- That it's a lesser district - schools substandard - the "myth" that worries buyers regarding resale even if they don't have children
- The limited program available and the general rating system online comparing to District 300, 301, & 303
- Some buyers have been told that the test scores are really low in the district: 1 low performing schools -2 over populated classrooms; 3 litigious district
- They don't know, they just know that there's bad reputation. I asked parents in 301. They run away from the majority of Hispanic students, for no reason. I know some students in U-46, including Hispanic students, who have GPA 4+
- "bad kids" bad school grades
- Demographics will negatively affect the potential buyer's child/student
- School ratings
- Strike by the teachers
- People don't know what U-46 offers
- low performing schools
- "Bad district"
- Only low income move here