

SCHOOL DISTRICT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FACT SHEET

The Village of Bartlett lies entirely within School District U-46, the second largest school district in the state of Illinois. Its student population numbers 39,491, drawn from 11 communities and three counties. The district's continued growth has created an unwieldy and inefficient bureaucracy that is failing the families it was instituted to serve. As the student population boomed and annual tax bills increased, test scores faltered, fiscal inefficiencies multiplied and the voices of the individual schools in each community became more and more muffled.

The children of School District U-46 deserve better and we are prepared to work for the necessary changes that will ensure a brighter future for them. We are prepared to disconnect from School District U-46 in order to gain an administration that provides accountability, efficient resource management and a higher quality education.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Twenty-three of the 49 schools in School District U-46 are on the state watch list. School District U-46 trails the State in **ALL** ACT areas tested and in overall performance on all state tests.

If we look at U-46's report card we find that in 2004 the 11th grade test scores were below state standards for reading, writing and math. In all these areas, Black and Hispanic students fared the worst, falling far below the state standards. Black students scored 71% below the state standards in reading, 67% below the state standards in writing and 77% below the state standards in math. Hispanic students scored 69% below the state standards in reading, 73% below the state standards in writing and 68% below the state standards in math.

It is not surprising that the Hispanic community in Elgin is suing the School District, demanding neighborhood schools; in the 2003-04 school year, over 60.6% of students with Limited English Proficiency dropped-out or otherwise failed to graduate.

Despite this record of below average academic performance, the district is doing little to raise the bar. A committee studying graduation requirements determined that U-46 has some of the lowest graduation requirements in the area.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

School District U-46 has many grave financial concerns. During the 2002-03 fiscal year, the district's State Board of Education Financial Profile rating was just 2.10 on a 4.0 scale. It remained on the state's Financial Watch list for two years and until just recently, operated without a chief financial officer or the sound internal controls that would have forewarned of the serious overspending taking place.

A change of administration prior to the 2002-03 school year brought to light a serious financial problem; a projected balance of \$8 million was actually a \$14 million deficit, which grew to \$56 million by June 2003. Drastic measures were taken. The district postponed the opening of three newly built elementary schools, a new middle school and new high school because operating funds would not be available. In addition sweeping

expenditure cuts, totaling \$40 million, were made in 2003-04, impacting the curriculum and ratcheting up class sizes.

Although the non-referendum bond sale last year net the district \$34 million, the CFO has projected deficit increases in all funds in the next several years far exceeding \$40 million.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Not only is School District U-46 one of the largest and least effective districts in the state, but the board of education and the administration consistently fail to answer the concerns of the families in the district.

A smaller, more community-based district would provide greater opportunity for accountability.

- * School board members would come from within the community and be more accessible
- * The Board of Education would have an easier time monitoring and understanding issues in a smaller, more manageable district with fewer layers of administration
- * Greater opportunity for constituents to attend board meetings and get involved with district/school issues
- * Greater opportunity for quicker, more accurate communication to constituents
- * More timely feedback on new programs and curriculum
- * Greater opportunity for sound financial planning and fiscal responsibility
- * Increased trust and respect between the community and the school board

FACTS

U-46 Geographic Size

90-square-mile boundaries extend into Cook, Dupage and Kane Counties.

Current U-46 Student Population (source: U-46 website)

39,491 (includes special and adult education students)

Current Bartlett High School Population: 3,077

Proposed District Student Population

9,653

Number of students in proposed Bartlett School District High School in 2009-2010: 3,392 (numbers projected by NIU updated study)

New District vs. Current District

- * The new district is 24.44% of the student population of the existing district.
- * The new district is 35% of the existing district's landmass.
- * The new district is 30.6% of the EAV the existing district

Projected Capital Needs of New School District:

Administration Building (renovated elementary school)

Maintenance Garage (on existing property)

Stadium