



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 21-1876, Version: 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION HONORING DISTRICT U-46's BROTHERS RISE UP and LEAD PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, School District U-46 serves families in 11 communities across 90 square miles within Chicago's northwest suburbs, including Bartlett, Elgin, Hanover Park, South Elgin, Streamwood and Wayne and portions of Carol Stream, Hoffman Estates, St. Charles, Schaumburg, and West Chicago; and

WHEREAS, The Living Elegantly, Ambitiously, and Dauntlessly (LEAD) Enrichment Program is centered around supporting and mentoring 5th through 8th grade girls of African American heritage. The LEAD program aims to help girls develop their self-esteem, cultural awareness, leadership, and conflict resolution skills; and

WHEREAS, The Brothers Rise Up (BRU) program provides mentoring and support to third through 8th grade African American male students across School District U-46. This is a multi-year program that focuses on monitoring and improving the students' academic performance, attendance, and behavior and offers a curriculum with character development, social skills, leadership, academic excellence and career development; and

WHEREAS, in 2019-20, the LEAD program served 150 girls across eight schools; three elementary and five middle schools; and

WHEREAS, the LEAD program is led by Jocelyn Ashford Yarbrough and a group of LEAD volunteers/staff members currently facilitate the program; and

WHEREAS, Jim Cook, a Dean's Assistant at Kenyon Woods Middle School, founded Brothers Rise Up in 2019 as a program of the non-profit Midwest Sports Academy. Mr. Cook worked with administrators across the District to identify students who might need and be open to additional support; and

WHEREAS, in 2020-21, the BRU program is serving 130 boys from 3rd-8th grade in 17 schools on a weekly basis while also continuing to provide mentoring and support to students who have moved on to high school; and

WHEREAS, these programs participate in a variety of programming including college visits, visits to local businesses, community service work, and hearing from corporate leaders; and

WHEREAS, U-46 leaders plan to expand both programs to empower Black students, particularly those struggling in school, in light of a national awakening about racial injustice and Black Lives Matter protests stemming from police brutality; and

WHEREAS, District officials also are creating a new African American student leadership group for U-46's five high schools and Dream Academy. Its purpose is giving Black students a voice, valuing their experiences and perspectives, and advocating for Black history, culture and civil rights struggles being taught more widely; and

WHEREAS, the expansion of these programs is in part in response to a community forum hosted by Black student leaders last fall reflecting on equity and race; and

WHEREAS, these programs are vital for providing space and resources for Black students in our community and

schools; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby honor School District U-46, the Brothers Rise Up Program, the LEAD Program, Jim Cook, and Jocelyn Ashford Yarbrough; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that suitable copies of this resolution are presented to School District U-46, the BRU Program, the LEAD Program, Jim Cook, and Jocelyn Ashford Yarbrough.