



*From the Superintendent...  
Robert S. Monroe*

**Partnerships  
Essential to Future  
UCS Excellence**

The past two years have truly reinforced the power of UCS to come together to make a difference for our students.

This power of partnership is now being harnessed to ensure continued excellence for today's students and the next generations.

We are now in the final phase of the strategic planning process that is aimed at empowering all students to succeed and transform their future.

Once published, it is a plan that will claim the authorship of students, staff and parents.

Early in the process, we asked our stakeholders to provide input into key parts of our plan - teaching and learning, district culture, resources and operations.

The first major step forward occurred recently when the Board of Education adopted our new vision and mission statements, which are shared in this newsletter.

The next step will be creating action plans that will allow us to realize this vision and mission. Parents, students and staff members are active members of these teams helping guide the future of our schools.

The work of Utica Community Schools is grounded in proactive planning and engagement with our staff members and community.

It is through these partnerships that our entire community is embracing the hard work necessary to meet head on the challenges facing our schools and making sure a UCS diploma continues to open doors for all of our graduates.

## Academic Excellence. Strong Property Values. Economic Growth.

### What is the value of a UCS education?

This is a question that Utica Community Schools will be answering throughout the year as we share stories about the impact our schools have on community members.

Our community takes great pride on how a UCS diploma empowers students to succeed and transform their future. Through a high level of community involvement, the district offers families and residents opportunities that set a national standard for excellence.

UCS is a high-quality district that impacts the community in multiple ways:

- With a range of academic and extra-curricular options delivered by a skilled staff, UCS students pursue their passion and find a sense of purpose.
- Career and Technical Education graduates provide a skilled workforce as communities grow and new businesses develop, supporting economic growth.
- Roots run deep in UCS. Our graduates often return to their community so that their children have those same opportunities they received in UCS.
- Realtors repeatedly share how a home located in Utica Community Schools is valued higher than other communities. As families move into our community, the vitality of the region draws entrepreneurs and businesses.

Visit [www.UCSValue.org](http://www.UCSValue.org) to learn more.

## 2018 Bond Issue Projects Wind Down, Open To Rave Reviews

Not many students get excited about parking lots, but West Utica students are enthusiastic about some of the changes at their school.

“My mom really likes it,” said third grader, Eva Khammo, about the safety improvement that separates cars from bus drop off.

The West Utica improvements are among construction projects that took place at 21 sites this summer based on the program's focus areas: enhancing safety, improving technology and addressing the long-range facility needs of Michigan's second-largest school district.



*L-R – Ava Khammo, Lucy Alter, Zacarias Alvarado, third graders at West Utica*

“Throughout this bond issue, we have managed our resources carefully to make sure we are extending the impact of the improvements,” Superintendent Robert Monroe said.

**“Through the leadership of the Board of Education, we have strategically sold the bonds to secure favorable interest rates, obtained improved credit ratings, bid the projects competitively, and effectively scheduled and managed the upgrades to meet our commitment to UCS taxpayers.”**

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## 2 FOCUS



# How Will We Define Continued Excellence In Utica Community Schools?

## VISION

*Definition: A collective expression of an organization's aspirations.*

Utica Community Schools, in partnership with our community, will empower students to positively transform their future and the world.

### Key words of emphasis for vision:

#### Empower

**Definition:** Make (someone) stronger and more confident.

**Synonyms:** inspire, give power, authorize

#### Partnership

**Definition:** One associated with another especially in an action.

**Synonyms:** affiliation, collaboration, alliance, connection, cooperation

#### Transform

**Definition:** Causing a marked change in someone or something.

**Synonyms:** alter, change

## MISSION

*Definition: An overview of the steps to achieve an organization's future vision.*

Utica Community Schools ignites a passion for learning in all students. We strengthen our community by welcoming all learners, honoring culture, and inspiring remarkable growth and achievement.

### We accomplish this by:

- Ensuring students are at the heart of all decisions
- Collaborating with all stakeholders
- Providing a safe and supportive environment
- Encouraging mindsets that are open to innovation
- Reimagining what school can be
- Promoting high expectations throughout Utica Community Schools
- Committing to multiple pathways toward excellence and achievement for all

### Key words of emphasis for mission:

#### Honor

**Definition:** High respect; great esteem; adherence to what is right or to a conventional standard of conduct.

**Synonyms:** respect, admire, pay tribute to, reverence, devotion

#### Ignite

**Definition:** Catch fire or cause to catch fire; rouse or awaken.

**Synonyms:** spark, excite, provoke, stimulate, stir up, fuel

#### Inspire

**Definition:** Fill (someone) with the urge or ability to do or feel something, especially to do something creative.

**Synonyms:** encourage, motivate, stimulate

#### Remarkable

**Definition:** Worthy of attention; striking.

**Synonyms:** extraordinary, amazing, significant, incredible, astonishing

#### Strengthen

**Definition:** Make or become stronger.

**Synonyms:** reinforce, support, build up, boost

#### Welcome

**Definition:** An instance or manner of greeting someone; (of a guest or new arrival) gladly received.

**Synonyms:** comfortable, wanted, hospitality, accept, appreciate, embrace

## Five UCS Students Named Among Nation's Top One Percent of High School Seniors

Five Utica Community Schools students are among only 16,000 U.S. seniors to be named 2023 National Merit semifinalists.

UCS National Merit Semi-finalists are: Nisha Koshy, Tejaswi Krishnan and Andrew Munya, of the Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Studies and Hailey Nightingale and Lukas Zahuranic, of Eisenhower High School.

National Merit Semi-finalists are among the top one percent of the nation's high school seniors.

More than 1.6 million students of the Class of 2023 entered the National Merit Program by taking the 2021 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. The

nationwide pool of semi-finalists includes the highest scoring entrants in each state.

To move from semi-finalist to finalist status, students must submit a detailed scholarship application. The application includes information about their academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership, an essay, record of consistently high academic performance, a recommendation by an official of their high school and SAT scores that confirm their PSAT/NMSQT performance.

Finalists have an opportunity to continue in the competition for 7,500 National Merit Scholarships totaling \$28 million next spring.



*Nisha Koshy*



*Tejaswi Krishnan*



*Andrew Munya*



*Hailey Nightingale*



*Lukas Zahuranic*



## Points of Pride

### Class of 2022 graduate performs with national honor band

Throughout his time at Utica High School, Class of 2022 graduate Andrew Lasceski's trumpeting talents allowed him to be recognized locally, at the state level, as well as nationally. To further add to his high school accomplishments, Lasceski performed with the John Phillip Sousa National High School Honor Band this June.

The band is a biannual honor band program that showcases the best and brightest high school musicians from across the United States.



### "This has to be the coolest shop class in the world!"

Emmy award winner and Extreme Home Makeover star, Ty Pennington, didn't waste any time putting his new paddle board to work after having it hand delivered by Henry Ford II woodworking teacher, Chris Davis.

Pennington – the latest international celebrity to personally order the new eco-friendly paddle board from the Utica Community Schools students – put the woodworking project right in the water outside his Florida home.

"This looks so good – I can't believe your students made this," he told Davis before testing out the board. "That has to be the coolest shop in the country, I would say."



### Eppler 9th grader is a Superhero

Eppler Junior High School 9th grader Maritsa Skowronek is featured in a new movie that seeks to bring awareness to how families thrive with children with Down Syndrome.

Skowronek is part of the new movie "Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower?"

The film premiered in August at the Emagine theater in Novi and has aired on PBS.



### UCS students earn national gaming title

When it comes to finding a solution to our oceans, Logan Lawler and Drew Oleski are true gamers.

Their environmental commitment has earned the Eisenhower/Utica Center for Science and Industry sophomores \$10,000 in scholarships in the Games for Change challenge.

The scholarships are the result of a national championship the pair won for their video game, "Port Pickup" in which players maneuver a boat around the ocean and gain energy by collecting trash and reducing pollution.



### UCS runner is state champion

Utica High School senior, Trent McFarland, earned the state championship in track and field. He is a member of

the Utica High School track team, coached by Megan Berry and also attends the Utica Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology.

McFarland won the state championship in the 800-meter run with a time of one minute, fifty-two point three seconds. Earlier in the season, Trent broke the school record in the 800-meter race – a record that had been in place since 1963.

### Four UCS students honored by College Board



Four UCS students earned national academic honors from the College Board.

Honored are: (pictured L-R)

Merina Diaz, of the Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Students, David Reyes, of Henry Ford II High School, Evan Stocker, of Stevenson High School; and Eileen Santana, of Eisenhower High School. Reyes and Santana also attend the Utica Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology.

The National Program recognizes underrepresented students with academic honors on college and scholarship applications and connects with universities across the country, helping them meaningfully connect to colleges and stand out during the admissions process.



### UCS teacher named to county arts authority

Utica Community Schools art teacher Jennifer Lehrer has been appointed to a countywide arts leadership position.

Lehrer, who teaches at Collins Elementary, was appointed to the Macomb County Art Institute authority by Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel and confirmed by the Board of Commissioners.

The Authority consists of seven members and is responsible for levying the millage approved by voters for the Detroit Institute of Arts. It is also responsible for overseeing the benefits to Macomb County residents, such as providing feedback to student curriculum development, senior programs and community collaboration.

# 4 FOCUS



## UCS PODCADEMY

Get to know Utica Community Schools with UCS Podcastemy!

Watch on the Utica Community Schools YouTube channel or listen on your favorite audio podcast app.

New episode every month!

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[UticaK12.org/podcastemy](https://UticaK12.org/podcastemy)

Bring your curiosity to conversations surrounding Michigan's second largest school district, Utica Community Schools. Whether you're a student, parent, or educator yourself, this podcast is for anyone who's ever wanted to know about the ins and outs of education with stories that go behind the scenes of operating a public school district! Be sure to hit the subscribe button so you won't miss a thing!

## 2018 Bond Issue Projects Wind Down, Open To Rave Reviews

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- **Safety** – The bond issue has allowed UCS to continue providing secure entryways for all of our schools. We are proud to share that this project is now complete and every UCS building is equipped with a secure entryway.
- **Technology** – The bond issue helped make our 1:1 technology initiative possible. This year, we are replacing 2,000 laptops and 650 iPads to further support this initiative.
- **Long Range Facility Improvement Programs** – The bond continues to fund improvements that support a positive learning environment. Some of the

projects this year are very visible – such as replacement of locker rooms at Utica and Stevenson, site work and paving projects, new scoreboards, flooring and casework. Some of the work is more behind the scenes, such as heating and cooling upgrades or reroofing projects.

“Collins Elementary was an incredible sight for families,” principal Jena Lenz said. “From a new and improved parking lot and front office, to a freshly carpeted and painted interior...this building is a sight to see! Thank you, UCS for taking care of our Cubs!”

To see a list of projects, please see this link: [www.uticak12.org/2018bond/updates](http://www.uticak12.org/2018bond/updates).



*Renovated Utica High School tennis courts*

### Notice of Nondiscrimination

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act and the Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act, it is the policy of Utica Community Schools that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, age, disability, height, weight, or marital status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination during any instructional opportunities, programs, services, job placement assistance, employment or in policies governing student conduct and attendance. Any person suspecting a discriminatory practice should contact Utica Community Schools Human Resources at 11303 Greendale, Sterling Heights, MI 48312 or call (586) 797-1000.

[www.UticaK12.org](http://www.UticaK12.org)

Find updates from Utica Community Schools on:

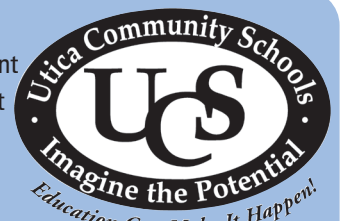


[www.UticaK12.org/Social](http://www.UticaK12.org/Social)

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**(586) 797-1000**

**FOCUS for the Community**

Editors: Tim McAvoy  
Jennifer Swanchara