



UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

FOCUS FOR THE COMMUNITY

SPRING 2024

A PUBLICATION FOR THE RESIDENTS OF UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



From the Superintendent...

Robert S. Monroe

Supporting our tradition of UCS excellence

A legacy of excellence lives within Utica Community Schools.

For generations, learning traditions have inspired curiosity, discovery, and excellence within UCS. Today's students continue these traditions, as they are empowered to learn, grow, and change their future.

We honor these traditions. Included in this newsletter is an opportunity to celebrate individuals who have served as role models for our school district and have had an impact on the success we experience today.

In addition, we have also included in this newsletter information on how we are transforming our future through the introduction of a new design for elementary schools.

This commitment to manage change extends well beyond our facilities. As outlined in our UCS Empowered Strategic Plan, we are focused on empowering our students through academic growth and achievement and creating a safe and respectful community through a culture of caring.

To honor our district's history and the efforts that have shaped our present accomplishments, we must continue to evolve and build for the future.

We must embrace change to ensure the continued growth in educational excellence and student achievement. A history of innovation has led to a tradition of success.

Safety and Success Bond Issue projects begin this summer



Rendering of DeKeyser Elementary School

The future begins this summer!

Over the next few weeks, Utica Community Schools will begin the largest and most transformational bond issue in its history.

Safety remains the priority as each UCS school will receive improvements focused on a secure learning environment.

The projects will also include the reconstruction of DeKeyser Elementary as a first step toward reimagining how our school facilities will inspire remarkable achievement for our students.

This future vision will emphasize safe learning environments that utilize best design practices while giving our staff the space and tools to empower our students.

The DeKeyser design will serve as a future template for new and reconstructed elementary schools.

The design will give our staff access to technology to support learning and multiple work areas for large and small group instruction.

Common "learning communities" will be created as flexible areas that staff can use to further student learning. Students will benefit from the space through collaborative activities, hands-on learning, and large group instruction. Areas will be available where teachers, paraprofessionals and volunteers can work with individuals or small groups.

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Award honors community members who built UCS excellence

Behind the academic excellence of Utica Community Schools are countless individuals who have contributed to the success synonymous with the school district. To honor these important individuals, UCS is proud to introduce the Legacy of Excellence award to recognize the positive impact former students, staff and community members have had locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.



UCS is now accepting nominations for the inaugural Legacy of Excellence class through early May. We encourage the public to nominate honorees whose

accomplishments are exemplary and noteworthy to serve as role models for the community. The contributions of nominees should be wide-reaching while possessing a high standard of professionalism.

To submit a Legacy of Excellence nomination, visit www.uticak12.org/legacyofexcellence. The nomination requires general information regarding the nominee (nominees may be living or deceased), supporting materials as to why the nominee deserves to be recognized and two (2) letters of recommendation from someone other than the nominator.

Legacy of Excellence honorees will be recognized on a bi-annual basis with a permanent Legacy of Excellence "Wall of Fame" set in the main lobby of the Administrative Services Center in Sterling Heights. The UCS community is invited to mark their calendars for Thursday, September 19, 2024 when UCS will celebrate the inaugural group of Legacy of Excellence honorees at the Palazzo Grande in Shelby Township.

If you have questions about the Legacy of Excellence Award or the nomination process, please contact Jennifer Kane: Jennifer.Kane@Uticak12.org or (586) 797-1100.

Inspiring Remarkable Achievement

UCS Advanced Placement Computer Science programs honored with Female Diversity Award

Things just clicked for Mia Jalics when she took her first computer science course.

“It just came to me,” the Utica Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology (UCMST) senior said. “I was good at it and I liked it.”

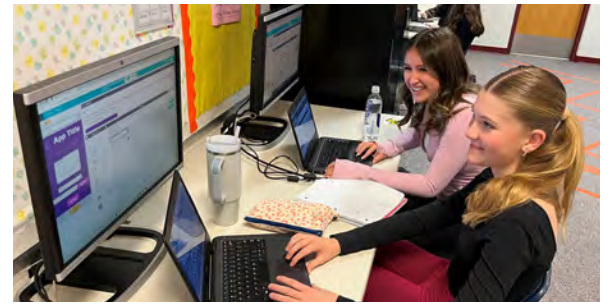
Jalics’ interest in her future career path demonstrates why her program and two others from UCS were honored for increasing the number of females in Advanced Placement computer science.

UCMST, Stevenson High School and the Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Studies are among 40 Michigan schools receiving AP Computer Science Female Diversity awards by the College Board for achieving equal gender representation during 2023.

Schools receiving the AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award have achieved either 50% or higher female exam taker representation in one of or both AP computer science courses, or a percentage of female computer science exam takers that meets or exceeds that of the school’s female population.

UCMST was among five in Michigan honored for growing female student enrollment in its AP Computer Science A course. Stevenson and GLK-UAIS were honored for AP Computer Science Principles.

In the AP Computer Science A course, students focus on computing skills related to Java programming, which cultivates their understanding of coding through analyzing, writing and testing code. AP Computer Science Principles is an introductory college-



Ninth-graders Hannah Upchurch and Ella Laszczak take part in an AP Computer Science Principles Course at the Utica Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology.

level computing course that introduces students to the breadth of the field of computer science. Students learn to design and evaluate solutions and apply computer science to solve real-world problems.

According to College Board research, female students who take AP Computer Science Principles in high school are more than five times as likely to major in computer science in college, compared to similar female students who did not take the course.

UCS experiences are a difference maker for graduates

2022 graduate Ethan Gastmeier knows what a difference his Utica Community Schools background has made to his future.

Thanks to his UCS dual enrollment opportunity at Oakland Community College while in high school, Gastmeier was able to study Japanese language and literature abroad. It is an experience that changed his future path.

His advice now: “I would tell current students to take risks in their academic careers and try something outside of their comfort zone. Be open to all sorts of ideas



Ethan Gastmeier, UCS Class of 2022 in Japan

and ways of living; the world is wide.”

Gastmeier’s life-changing experiences are what UCS seeks for all students. UCS offers multiple opportunities for our students to begin their post-secondary work while still in junior high and high school.

These opportunities and the increased rigor they provide changes our graduates’ futures. Some examples of these post-secondary experiences include:

- **Advanced Placement** – This rigorous, college level course gives students an opportunity to take an exam that could result in college credit. It is not unusual for graduates to report they have started college as a sophomore – and even as a junior – because of their Advanced Placement opportunities. Last year, nearly 2,000 students took advantage of this program and these numbers are continuing to increase.
- **Dual Enrollment** – UCS students have the opportunity to take college courses at no cost while still in high school. We currently have more than 200 students taking advantage of dual enrollment.

- **Career Credentialing & Articulation** – Students can earn industry credentials or credits that reflect the student’s attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary for securing employment or career advancement.
- **International Baccalaureate Diploma** – Students at Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Studies (GLK-UAIS) prepare for this diploma, which is respected across the world. More than 90 percent of our current GLK-UAIS students earn this achievement.

Even beyond these direct benefits, rigorous coursework will better prepare graduates for what lies ahead after high school. The coursework gives students the confidence and experiences that puts them ahead of their peers.

Greater opportunities for our students are a point of pride and reality in Michigan’s second largest school district. By taking advantage of these opportunities, UCS students accelerate their career and college path and open even more doors to their future.

Together We Make an Impact

www.ucsfoundation.org



UCS honored as among nation's best in music education for 10th time



After 10 years the beat is still going strong for music education in Utica Community Schools.

UCS has once again been recognized as one of the Best

Communities for Music Education by the California-based National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM).

The Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. This is the 10th year UCS has been honored with the award.

The NAMM Foundation honored only 975 school districts across the United States this year.

To qualify for the Best Communities designation, Utica Community Schools answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by the Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

UCS honors its Teachers of the Year

Utica Community Schools celebrated its three Teachers of the Year for their service and commitment. The three honored educators are:



Michael Sekich, Stevenson Band – High School and UCS Teacher of the Year. Mr. Sekich was also named the Macomb County High School Teacher of the Year.



Derek Smith, Shelby Junior High – Junior High School Teacher of the Year



Karen Borbolla, Morgan Elementary – Elementary Teacher of the Year

Points of Pride

Utica High School senior Natalie Garwood named Michigan's Journalist of the Year



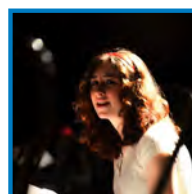
Although she works behind the scenes capturing memories for her school, Utica High School's Natalie Garwood now finds herself in the spotlight. Garwood

has been recognized as the 2024 Michigan Journalist of the Year by the Journalism Education Association, honoring her already illustrious career in scholastic journalism.

The official announcement came through an email from Joe Humphrey, the JEA Journalist of the Year Coordinator, extending his congratulations to Garwood on her selection. He expressed anticipation for celebrating her achievement at the National High School Journalism Convention in Kansas City in April.

Henry Ford II honored as Michigan's top "Class Act" and for overall excellence in theatre

Henry Ford II theatre students have once again been honored statewide for excellence and being an overall class act.



The Falcon Theatre and Troupe 6785 were honored with the Jon Fitzgerald Class Act Award for their staging of *The Diary of Anne Frank* at the Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association (MIFA) One-Act State Finals on February 18 at Wayne State University.

One family holds two UCS high school basketball records

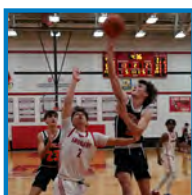


Photo courtesy of Natalie Garwood

Utica High School's boys basketball record for career points scored was previously 984, a record that was broken on the road against Cousino by UHS senior Mason Brodi who scored 22 points that game.

Mason's dad, Andy Brodi, has been a role model for Mason throughout his life and introduced the senior guard to the game.

The bond that basketball has had for the father and son runs so deep that Andy also holds a boys basketball career points record, his record at Henry Ford II High School remains from 1992 with 1,246 points.

Varsity dance teams found their rhythm at national competitions



Varsity dance teams from across Utica Community Schools competed at national tournaments this season. Utica High School and Eisenhower High School dance teams competed at the National Dance Team Championship (NDTC) while the Stevenson Ford United Dance Team competed at the Dance Team Union (DTU) National Championship.

UCS student artists earn nearly 30 top honors in prestigious regional competition



Utica Community Schools students earned nearly 30 top awards in this region's premier student art competition.

UCS students earned gold and silver keys and honorable mentions for video, animation, photography, sculpture,

fashion, and drawing and illustration in the 34th annual Scholastic Arts competition for southeast Michigan and the Thumb area.

The students were honored earlier this year at a ceremony at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

UCS seniors named among Macomb CTE students of the year

Two Utica Community Schools seniors were named Macomb County Career and Technical Education (CTE) students of the year.

Kyle Mecum, of Eisenhower High School, and Khrystyna Zakharkiv, of Stevenson High School, were honored Friday at the Macomb Career Technical Education Administrators Association's 34th Annual Awards Celebration.

Karen Polisei, an Occupational Therapist at the Macomb Intermediate School District, was also honored as a UCS Business Partner.



For more UCS Points of Pride, visit www.uticak12.org/headlines.

www.uticaK12.org/safetyandsuccess

Stay up-to-date as we build
for the future
of UCS!



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Safety and Success Bond Issue projects begin this summer

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Rendering of DeKeyser Elementary School Classroom

DeKeyser Elementary in Sterling Heights was selected for reconstruction based on the facility's significant need related to classroom walls and doors.

DeKeyser and other district "open concept" schools – existing elementary schools that do not have a complete set of interior walls or doors for classroom areas – are being improved this summer. At DeKeyser, addressing this critical need requires a complete reconstruction of the facility.

While the work is being completed, DeKeyser Elementary will be relocated to Rose Kidd Elementary, a former elementary in Sterling Heights that was closed in 2010. Improvements are now being made to refurbish Rose Kidd Elementary to house DeKeyser students and staff until their current building is completed in the Fall of 2025.

Translation Assistance

Persons seeking or needing language assistance, please contact:

- For Albanian: (586) 797-6946
- For Arabic: (586) 797-6906
- For Spanish: (586) 797-6986

Personat që kërkojnë ose kanë nevojë për ndihmë gjuhësore, janë të lutur të kontaktojnë administratorin e qendrës:

- Për gjuhën Shqipe: (586) 797-6946
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الأشخاص الذين يبحثون أو يحتاجون إلى مساعدة لغوية، يرجى الاتصال بـ:

- اللغة الألبانية: (586) 797-6946
- اللغة العربية: (586) 797-6906
- اللغة الإسبانية: (586) 797-6986

Personas buscando o que necesiten ayuda con el idioma, por favor póngase en contacto con:

- Para albanés: (586) 797-6946
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- Para español: (586) 797-6986

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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.



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