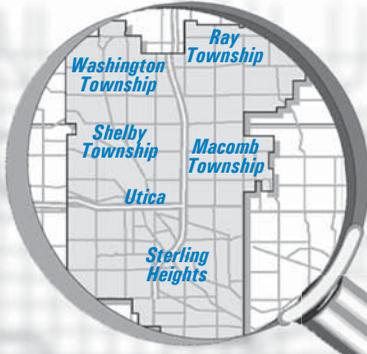


FOCUS for the community



A Publication for the Residents of Utica Community Schools

Back to School is filled with exciting traditions for students and volunteers



From the Superintendent...

Christine M. Johns, Ed.D.

Welcome to another great school year in Utica Community Schools

The 2018-2019 school year is now officially under way with a renewed sense of energy and commitment.

Utica Community Schools remains a destination district focused on success, thanks to an involved community, dedicated staff and a commitment to making sure our students have a competitive advantage for college and career.

We create that advantage through four key strategies: providing academic excellence, promoting student innovation, preparing positive digital citizens and ensuring accountability.

This year, two Career and Technical Education programs are being introduced that are a direct response to fields in demand by industry leaders.

A new cybersecurity course for high school students will give students access to the careers and fields that will help drive this region's economy.

In addition, we have worked closely with area business leaders to create the Stevenson Center for Manufacturing, Automation, Design and Engineering (MADE).

This four-year program will give students rigorous academic content blended with practical experiences in fabrication, automation and design engineering. In addition to specialized courses, advanced manufacturing principles will be integrated into all core academic courses of English, social studies, math and science.

At the junior high school level, a Computer Science Discoveries course is now offered at all seven schools to give students concentrated experiences in coding and programming. The course also promotes computer science as a medium for creativity, communication and problem solving.

For elementary students, a new mathematics series – Math Expressions – addresses the rigor of all Michigan Academic Standards and eight key mathematical practices, such as understanding the meaning of a problem and being persistent in solving it or how to use tools (computers, devices, paper and pencil, etc.) effectively.

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Thanks to the generosity of one local service organization, one of those traditions – picking out a new backpack and getting new school supplies – will be experienced by even more students.

Recently, the Kiwanis Club of Utica-Shelby worked with area volunteers to stuff more than 300 backpacks for students throughout UCS who may need assistance.

“We want to make sure they have the supplies they need to learn,”

Linda-Ann Heldt, president-elect of the Kiwanis Club of Shelby Golden K. “This is a tradition for the Kiwanis. Some of the kids need help so we are willing to help them.”

In total, the Kiwanis clubs throughout UCS will be donating more than 500 backpacks with school supplies to UCS students.

The Kiwanis backpacks include crayons, highlighters, rulers, pencils, markers, colored pencils and scissors.



Photo credit: Linda-Ann Heldt

The supplies are funded through a donation from Meijer Inc. and fundraisers held by the service club.

One of the volunteers stuffing the backpacks was senior citizen Joyce Decker.

“What we are doing is important because these



Connie Landuyt and Joyce Decker

things have to be done,” she said. “Many of the kids can't afford these materials. I want to help. Helping others gives me purpose.”

In addition to backpacks, the Kiwanis clubs also provide college scholarships. Last year, the Kiwanis Club of Utica-Shelby awarded \$8,000 in scholarships to graduates.

Safety and Security Highlight November 6 Bond Proposal

The Utica Community Schools Board of Education has unanimously approved placing a \$155 million bond proposal on the November 6 ballot to address safety and security, technology and infrastructure improvements identified through the district's strategic, long-range facility improvement program.

“The bond proposal will allow us to continue providing an environment that supports the academic excellence for students that our community expects and deserves,” Board of Education president Gene Klida said. “The bond projects address safety and security and infrastructure priorities that directly impact our classrooms. The projects also provide our teachers the tools they need to drive learning and develop the job skills that businesses need to build our economy.”

Voter approval of the bond proposal has been structured to keep the tax rate at or below the current level.

The bond proposal will affect each UCS student and every UCS school and school facility.



The ballot states that the bond proposal will provide for:

1. making safety and security improvements, including cameras and door-locking systems;
2. equipping, furnishing, re-equipping and refurbishing school district buildings, facilities, and structures, and acquiring school buses and technology equipment;

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Points of Pride

More than 260 graduates were honored this year for demonstrating proficiency in multiple languages - a 50 percent increase over 2017

For the third straight year, UCS graduates were eligible to receive a Seal of Global Language recognition for demonstrating a high level of proficiency in one or more World Languages. Global proficiency is defined as the ability to read, write, speak and listen in one or more language.

Students must demonstrate proficiency in both English Language Arts and a World Language. Students who have a home language other than English can earn a seal by demonstrating proficiency in both languages.

Students must earn a college-ready score of three or higher on a World Language advanced placement exam, pass the nationally recognized Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Language or successfully complete an International Baccalaureate exam.



Henry Ford II High School graduates

Two students placed among the top ten internationally in a medical careers competition



Angel Sanders

Angel Sanders and Maria McCollom earned top ten finishes against more than 7,000 students participating at the HOSA – Future Health Professional International Leadership Conference held June 27-29 in Dallas, Texas.

HOSA-Future Health Professionals is a student organization that promotes career opportunities in the health care industry. HOSA has more than 3,200 secondary and post-secondary chapters, 76 of which are in Michigan.

Sanders, a Stevenson High School senior, placed fourth in the Life Support Skills event of the HOSA international competition.

McCollom, a 2018 Utica High School graduate, placed 10th in the Job Seeking Skills event.



Maria McCollom

Class of 2016 graduate with Asperger Syndrome creates art for national toy line

Stevenson High graduate Ryan Bryer, diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome at the age of two, pursued his passion for art and is now realizing a life's dream of having his work featured on a new toy line.



Ryan Bryer

Bryer has designed posters and drawings for a collectible pet series called Skeezix, created by Choose Friendship Company. He also created all the animation for the product's online videos and commercials. Bryer and his family credited his UCS background as a prime reason his name will appear as the product's artist.

"I believe the wonderful and devoted teachers and aides who were involved with Ryan have had a positive impact on the success he is having today," said Rhonda Bryer, his mother. "We will always be proud Utica Community Schools parents."

High School band earns prestigious invitation to state arts conference

The Eisenhower High School Wind Ensemble is one of five Michigan high school bands selected to perform at the 2019 Michigan Music Conference in Grand Rapids.

The 50-member ensemble will perform 45 minutes of music on January 25, 2019 at DeVos Hall, home of the Grand Rapids Symphony. Guest conductors and a professional solo artist performing a concerto will be joining the band. The wind ensemble is under the direction of Eisenhower music teacher Christopher Traskal.

This recognition reflects the district's continued status as one of the best communities for music education as designated by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM).



A long-time High School coach to be inducted in the Michigan High School Coaches Hall of Fame

Matt Joseph, who coaches girls basketball and varsity softball, will join the Class of 2018 at induction ceremonies September 16 at Central Michigan University.

Joseph coached girls basketball since 2004 and varsity softball since 2011 at Henry Ford II, compiling a record of 383-200. Prior to UCS, he coached in Avondale, Notre Dame and East Detroit.



Roberts Elementary sixth graders graduate from D.A.R.E. program

This year, all sixth graders are being "D.A.R.E."d to make SMART Moves

Through its continued partnership with local law enforcement, all UCS sixth graders will take part in a preventative program that is focused on positive decision making.

The Sterling Heights Police Department is introducing Skills Mastery and Resistance Training (SMART Moves), this year through a nine-week program at 13 schools.

Students will continue to receive Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) in Shelby Township and Utica from the Shelby Township Police Department and through the Macomb County Sheriff's Department at Macomb Township elementary schools.

Both programs are focused on the importance of decision making and address issues such as bullying, substance abuse and responsible use of digital devices. SMART Moves content includes such topics as friendships and healthy relationships, refusal skills and media influences.

The prevention programs support the continued collaborative work of UCS and local law enforcement for training and review of the district's Unified Security and Emergency Management Plan.

Recently, the community partnerships resulted in the placement of School Resource Officers at the district's four comprehensive high schools (Eisenhower, Henry Ford II, Stevenson and Utica). As a result, the district's in-house security specialists provide greater support to elementary and junior high schools.

UCS one of 35 school districts honored nationally for providing innovative programs that have a direct impact on student success

The district's Utica Center for Science and Industry has earned a "Districts of Distinction" award from the national District Administration magazine.

The Districts of Distinction honors were awarded by a team of District Administration's editors. Nominees are ranked on the clarity of a district's challenge, how innovative or homegrown the solution was, and how strong the results were in terms of data and newsworthiness.

UCS enters sixth year of partnership with Detroit Regional Dollars for Scholars



Stevenson High School students attend the 2018 Celebration Program

A unique community partnership is creating new futures for Utica Community Schools graduates.

Dollars for Scholars (DFS) and UCS have partnered to give graduating seniors support and resources for taking that next step toward post-secondary education.

Over the past six years, DFS has awarded \$276,000 in scholarships to 73 students at Stevenson and Henry Ford High Schools. This year, DFS will support 57 students from the two high schools and award \$40,000 in scholarships.

More than 450 students honored as Advanced Placement scholars

The College Board, which administers the Advanced Placement (AP) tests, has announced that 457 UCS students received national scholar designations.

AP courses, which are offered at secondary schools, give students the opportunity to earn credit or advanced standing at most of the nation's colleges and universities.

Students must successfully pass a test administered by the College Board to earn the college credit. Students are graded on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest.

Honors earned by UCS students include:

- National Scholar status to 12 students who received an average score of at least 4 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 4 or higher on eight or more of these exams.

Beyond that, the program has provided additional personal support to high school students to help guide them toward post-secondary success.

Working in partnership with UCS, DFS has not only made a difference in the lives of our graduates, but has also made an investment in the future of the community.

- AP Scholar with Distinction status to 127 students who received an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams.

- AP Scholar with Honor status to 80 students who received an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.

- AP Scholar status to 250 students who received scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams.

The number of students taking AP exams and earning scholar status has increased. Last year, 2,160 students took AP exams with 431 earning scholar status.



Girls Who Code Club brings computer science to life in a meaningful way

You can learn a lot from a stuffed bear – especially one that comes to life thanks to the coding work of a group of innovative sixth graders.

The stuffed bears at Ebeling Elementary – named Jackson and Charlotte – share important messages about relaxation and have been brought to life thanks to the computer science work of the school's Girls Who Code Club. The Ebeling Girls Who Code Club used computer science to create a service project that they felt would help the elderly and the young.

"I wasn't very interested in coding at first, but this changed my mind," said Ebeling sixth-grader Tessa Kolakowski.

"I started doing it and realized it was really fun. You create anything."

The Girls Who Code clubs were introduced throughout UCS as part of a partnership with the national Code.org.

The clubs address the national gender gap in computer science by promoting technology and coding for students exploring future careers. Nationally, it is estimated there are nearly 500,000 high paying computer science jobs available and only 42,000 entering the workforce. Of those computer science college graduates, only one of five are females, according to Code.org.

"The club allows the girls to see how coding works and consider that yes, maybe this is a career that is meant for me," said Ebeling media specialist Michelle Rizzo.

The 14-member club met with Rizzo and Ebeling sixth grade teacher Christine Holden to learn more about coding and the history of pioneer female computer scientists. The students used their computer science lessons to create a project – the talking stuffed bears that shared messages about how to relax through music and breathing exercises.

Club members said that it took "a lot of brainstorming" to come up with their coding project.



Rizzo and Holden pictured with the Ebeling Girls Who Code Club

Mya Pieper explained that the students used a digital device called "raspberry pi," which allowed them to show calming pictures and sounds from the bear.

The students programmed their messages through an online program called Scratch. A device called "Makey Makey" was then used to transport the sounds from Scratch to the bear and make it interactive.

Through the project, students said they realized the extent to which computer science impacts their life.

Sixth-grader Margaret Johnson said she had a standard message for those who mention the challenges she could face with a gender gap in computer science careers. "I told them I don't care – I really like coding," she said.

Utica Community Schools and the United Shore Professional Baseball League brought together two great traditions on August 23 - Baseball and Back to School. The celebration included a presentation to UCS for students.



UCS Board President Gene Klida, USPBL CEO Andy Appleby, UCS Superintendent Dr. Christine Johns, Utica High School drum line members Anish Virdi, Stephen VanBelois, Matt Saputo, Corey Campbell and Board Trustee Ken Krolczyk

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Leading the way for comprehensive Career and Technical Education programs Giving our graduates skills for high paying jobs of the future

This year, the district is introducing two new programs – a high school cybersecurity course and Stevenson Center for Manufacturing, Automation, Design and Engineering (MADE) – that prepare students for careers in high demand by international employers.

The cybersecurity course will allow high school students to explore and earn certification in a field where demand for frontline specialists in southeast Michigan has grown by more than 400 percent since 2010.

Through the course, UCS students will study how businesses are addressing the critical issue of cybersecurity. A 2018 IBM study estimated costs businesses an average of \$3.86 million for

each data breach (Cost of Data Breach Study, <https://www.ibm.com/security/data-breach>).

The specific course goals stress:

- What cybersecurity means to individuals, personally and professionally.
- How to be safe online by understanding common threats, attacks and vulnerabilities.
- Strategies businesses are using to protect their operations from cyber-attacks and the growth of the cybersecurity industry.
- Connecting students with the global Cisco Networking Academy, a community of educators and students in 180

countries that supports digital education in areas that are in the greatest demand by employers.

Students completing the course will have the ability to earn CompTIA A+ certification, a globally-recognized industry standard.



Stevenson MADE is a four-year program that blends rigorous academic content with relevant, real world applications by making use of strong business relationships and post-secondary partners in the field of Advanced Manufacturing.

Students participating in the program can earn college credit. They will graduate with practical workforce experiences in fabrication, automation and design engineering, as well as industry recognized certifications.

Safety and Security: November 6 Bond Proposal

Continued from front page

3. constructing additions to and/or remodeling school district buildings; and

4. improving and developing sites, including playgrounds, athletic fields, facilities, and structures in the school district.

“Safe and secure schools are a top priority for our community and our district,” Superintendent Dr. Christine Johns said. “The improvements in this bond proposal are a key piece of our collaborative efforts with local law enforcement to continue to keep our schools safe places for students and staff.”

Technology improvements provide students and teachers the resources to support learning, including key areas of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and the integration of skills that ensure success in college and career.

The infrastructure projects also support the district’s long-range improvement programs in key areas of roofing, paving and the replacement of buses.

Board of Education Treasurer Dr. Robert Ross emphasized that voter approval of the bond proposal has been structured to not increase the current tax rate.

“Through solid fiscal planning, this bond issue has been designed to ensure we can address our facility priorities at or below our current millage level,” Dr. Ross said.

Dr. Ross added that the improvements will allow the district to extend the life of current school buildings and protect the investment the community has made in its facilities.

“Area realtors are clear that the strength of Utica Community Schools protects property values and draws new families and businesses to the communities we serve,” he said.

Dr. Ross noted that by law the bond revenue will be used only for capital improvements and may be not used for operating expenses, such as salaries or utilities.

“It is important that our taxpayers know that all revenue must be used for the purposes that are specified in the bond proposal and the expenditures are independently audited,” he said.

More information and an overview of projects are available on the district’s website at <http://www.uticak12.org/2018bond>.



www.uticak12.org

Find updates from Utica Community Schools on:



Welcome to another great school year

Continued from front page

This new series blends the traditional instructional approach to mathematics instruction with newer, research-based best practices.

School safety and security remains a top priority for our entire community. This year we are continuing to partner with local law enforcement by providing all UCS sixth graders prevention programs that promote positive decision making.

The Sterling Heights Police Department will introduce a SMART Moves program, which will serve as a complement to the D.A.R.E. program offered in Shelby Township, Utica and Macomb Township. These important programs give our students strategies to address critical issues such as bullying, digital citizenship and substance abuse. D.A.R.E. and SMART Moves also provide students the opportunity to have a positive interaction with local law enforcement officers.

These are among the many ways we work to ensure UCS remains an educational leader in our region, state and nation.

We recognize the strong foundation of success that is a hallmark over many generations in UCS. We honor this legacy by ensuring a UCS diploma will always be a recognized symbol of high achievement that continues to open doors for our graduates.

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FOCUS for the Community

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