



From the Superintendent...

Robert S. Monroe

The Value of a UCS Education

“My experiences at UCS provided me with a foundation to follow my higher education goals. I still use many of the concepts and skills that I learned from my UCS teachers within my research.”

-Danielle Maxwell, who was recently awarded \$140,000 in research grants as a PhD student at the University of Michigan

“I know that I would not be nearly the human or student that I am without my schooling through Utica.”

-Class of 2022 graduate Sophia Meguid

“My UCS background really allowed me to grow as a scholar in ways that aren’t possible everywhere.”

-Class of 2021 Graduate Will Jenkins, studying computer programming at Oakland University.

There is a common theme that runs through the stories told by current Utica Community Schools students and graduates. A UCS diploma combined with UCS school experiences lays the foundation for life success.

When a student graduates from a UCS school, they meet standards of excellence and have opportunities that few districts offer. Michigan’s second largest school district provides a rich variety of programs and services allowing students to personalize their education. By testing new skills or engaging with academic programs at deeper levels, students identify subjects of interest and areas where they can excel.

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A Nationally Recognized Symbol of Excellence

Resilience. Dedication. Leadership. Excellence.

Over the past two years, these words have come to define

Utica Community Schools. Under the most extraordinary circumstances, Utica Community Schools continued its focus on providing students opportunities to succeed.

And succeed they did.

Throughout the country, Utica Community Schools continued its long track record of success as the nation’s best at all levels.

Here are just a few examples:

Financial Accountability – Utica Community Schools has received two honors that cite fiscal responsibility and transparency. Recently, a national credit rating made a rare move to increase Utica Community Schools rating two full levels. S&P Global Ratings improved the district’s “underlying rating” from an “A-” to an “A+” based on its confidence in the district’s ability to manage

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National Scholastic Gold Key Winner - Thy Hoang

UCS Wellness Program Expands its Offerings

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought forth so much change over the past few years, and while some change has been returned back to pre-pandemic ways, others have been beneficial and worthy of continuing. It has forced our community to share information in new ways and has also brought to focus the importance of mental health.

Initiated from the need to assist our community while in remote learning environments due to the initial COVID-19 pandemic requirements, UCS Wellness was launched to serve as a health hub for students and their families, as well as the UCS community as a whole.

Serving as a wellness toolbox that can be accessed 24/7, UCS Wellness is a free and

publicly available resource benefiting all UCS stakeholders.

UCS Wellness is consistently evolving, as is our society through the pandemic, and into the future. The UCS Wellness program helps our community’s physical, mental and social health by providing a virtual calming

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UCS expands program that is changing the future for students



Stevenson High School AVID students, from left to right: Magdalena Yousif, Jaylon Yonan, Alexis Kiminaia and Tyler White.

The national program, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), has expanded to over 2 million K-12 students in more than 7,000 schools since it began in 1980. The goal of AVID is to help close the achievement gap by preparing students for college and success in a global society.

Combining rigor with support for students both academically and social-emotionally, AVID was introduced within UCS over 10 years ago at Jeannette Junior High School and Stevenson High School.

This school year, nearly 600 UCS students at the junior high and high school level are involved with AVID. These students gain the foundation and support to be successful in rigorous coursework and post-secondary opportunities, but they also gain much more than that, as Director of Student Services, Dr. Heather Blum, shared.

“It is heard time and time again that the AVID students and staff form a family to support everyone’s individual goals and dreams,” Dr. Blum said.

Further demonstrating the achievements of the program, AVID students complete four-year entrance requirements at a rate at least two times higher than the national average.

“Post-secondary students discuss how they would recommend AVID to students because it taught them so much,” said Dr. Blum. “Even beyond being a student, like time management, working with others, and tenacity.”

Through the program’s success, AVID will be offered at nine secondary schools for the 2022-2023 school year, including: Bemis Junior High, Davis Junior High, Eppler Junior High, Henry Ford II High School, Heritage Junior High, Jeannette Junior High, Shelby Junior High, Stevenson High School and Utica High School.

Congratulations 2022 AVID grads

Henry Ford II

Cassidy Allen
Jacob Barrett
Kemora Bridgewater
Tyron Bucad
Ritwin Cheriyan
Jada Clark
Haxhi Dedej
Dylan Droelle
Connor Ellis
Sarah Ellis
Eva Freigruber
Dylan Fuentecilla
Luke Gifford
Madyson Howard
Jaieah Jones
Sarah Lozano

Franco Munoz-Lopez
Lea Peraino
Elizabeth Piwonski
Nathan Pluger
Noah Provenzola
Brittney Roberson
Jasmine Steverson
Christian Thomas

Stevenson

Miri Abro
Tiffany Allos
Joseph Bahri
Jasmine Blue
Arianna Crawley
Anthony Cruz-Gomez
Lydia Cudini
Sabrina Donha
Ellie Folz
Denise Ford
Amira Hakim
Manuela Hanna
Malika Hassan
Marcelino Hawil

Victoria Hills
Yiorgo Jarbo
Matthew Kada
Adom LeDuc
Nayrin Lopez
Devin Lu
Brenda Markos
Luke Mearim
Martin Nasir
Raied Poles
Jordan Ramsey
Mirna Romaya
Autrina Saeidi
Katelyn Saffo
Aldin Spago
Julianne Victorino
Chloe Wright

Utica

Evan Aeck
Nour Ahmad
Ryan Barel
Lara Butrus
Isabel Carceller
Kayla Christian
Linda Gjonaj
Benjamin Hartley
Halayna Hills
Desirae Jarbou
Lexie Johnson
Samantha Johnson
Emma McNicholl
Ethan Mills
Joseph Perry
Bassam Qadri
Stephen Smith
Katherine Sunday
Leah Talerico
Katelyn Verellen-Curtis

UCS Wellness Expansion

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room, weekly Monday Moments released to inspire kindness, wellness guides tailored to various community sectors, and links to other useful community resources.

Further equipping the online toolbox is the UCS Wellness Podcast. In the new monthly podcast series, UCS counselors speak with professionals from across the area on topics pertaining to the health of our community.

With new episodes being released on the third Wednesday of each month throughout the school year, each episode tackles a different topic, such as grief and the grieving process for children, and family communication, among others.

“Our goal is to provide our community with wellness resources in ways that can be easily utilized,” said Executive Director of Secondary Curriculum & Programs, Kim Charland. “As one UCS Wellness Podcast guest shared in our Family Communication episode, the way we share information as a society and communicate with one another has changed over time, but there are actually more ways to communicate now than ever before.”

“This podcast provides stakeholders with a new way to learn from industry professionals about important topics that impact our community.”

2022 Superintendent's Scholarship Recipients

Of more than 2,000 graduating Utica Community Schools seniors, 39 have been recognized by community partners and the district with a \$1,000 scholarship, or more, to use towards their post-secondary education.

Students receiving the scholarships span all programs and schools throughout the district and showcase the value of a UCS education.

Partnering with UCS for over 15 years, the UCS Foundation for Educational Excellence has provided more than \$700,000 to support UCS graduates. The Foundation, comprised completely of volunteers, is dedicated to supporting the entire school community because they believe in Utica Community Schools and the futures of its 26,000 students.

Also partnering with UCS are four families who have sponsored individual scholarships, including: The Brett Klenow Scholarship, The Stefan's Hope Scholarship, The Larry M. Smith Memorial Scholarship and the Richard LaBaere Educational Scholarship.

"It is through community partnerships such as these that UCS is able to provide unique and beneficial opportunities for our students," said Superintendent Robert Monroe.



National Honors

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its financial resources and grow appropriate levels of emergency reserves. In addition, for the tenth straight year, Utica Community Schools has earned recognition for meeting a high standard of transparency in reporting financial information. The school district is among approximately 500 nationally to earn a Certificate of Excellence (COE) in Financial Reporting award for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) from the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International.

Best Community for Music Education – Utica Community Schools has been honored nationally for the eighth time as one of the Best Communities for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM). California-based NAMM recognizes districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students.

Best U.S. High Schools – All UCS high schools have once again been named among the best in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. Schools were ranked on six factors based on their performance on state assessments and how well they prepare students for college.

Presidential Scholars Candidates – Two Utica Community Schools seniors were named among the top 1,800 graduates through the United States Presidential Scholars Program. Sophia Meguid, of Utica High School, and Hailey Nichols, of Eisenhower High School, are among 5,000 top high school graduates selected as candidates for the prestigious national program.

All America – Henry Ford II senior, Evan Boutorwick was selected to play in the All-America Football Game at the Camping World Stadium in Orlando.

National "Shredder" – Eisenhower High School and Utica Center for Science and Industry (USCI) senior Benjamin Dawson is one of five students nationwide to be named 'Shredder of the Year' by the Gone Boarding program. Through this recognition, Dawson will receive an all-expenses paid trip to Huntington Beach, CA for the US Open of Surfing where he will complete a mini-internship with Vans during the event.

Scholastic Arts – Two student artists have been honored in the National Scholastic Art and Writing Competition. Stevenson High School senior Thy Hoang received a gold for her piece "Move On," and a silver for digital arts. In addition, Shelby Junior High School eighth grader Isaac Hellebuyck earned a silver

medal in Film and Animation for his stop motion animation "Santa's Workshop."

Dance Teams – The National Dance Team Championships are held annually and invite dance teams from high schools around the country to compete against one another. Held at the Walt Disney World Resort, dancers from all four UCS high schools made the journey to Florida to compete against the country's best varsity dance team programs.

School Stores are Golden – The Eagles Nest, of Eisenhower High School, and The Chief Connection, of Utica High School, have GOLD Level Certification for the 2021-2022 school year and were recognized during DECA's International Career Development Conference in Atlanta, GA. The stores were honored as school-based enterprises (SBE) - an entrepreneurial operation in a school setting that provides goods and services to meet the needs of the market.

More National Music Honors – Dillon Warner, a Stevenson High School junior, was selected this year to perform with the American School Band Directors Association (ASBDA) 2022 National Honors Band.

**YOUR FRIENDS ARE HERE!
YOU SHOULD BE TOO!**

**Now enrolling new students for the
2022-2023 School Year**

Utica Community Schools
UCS
Imagine the Potential
Education Can Make It Happen!

The value of a UCS education *Continued from page 1*

The success of UCS graduates, both locally and globally, represents an important measure of the excellence that occurs within the district. Schools of excellence impact the community in multiple ways. Career and Technical graduates provide a skilled workforce as communities grow and new organizations develop. University graduates return to their community so that their children have those same opportunities.

Realtors repeatedly talk about 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. The local economy is strengthened by new jobs and the dynamic innovation that is supported by a skilled workforce.

As the community and country evolves and changes, so also must the district. This is why our AccelerateUCS! strategic planning process is so critical. Our planning process focuses on:

Teaching and learning initiatives that support student achievement.

Systematic long-range facility improvement plans that provide safe and effective learning environments.

Fiscal accountability that promotes transparency while focusing and managing resources to support student success.

Providing resources and staff development opportunities that encourage and empower the professional growth of every district employee.

Through effective planning, the district embraces innovation while continuing to produce graduates who are resilient leaders and who make a difference locally and globally. With the leadership of our Board of Education and your partnership, UCS will create a dynamic strategic plan that sets the stage for a positive educational future.

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 the Assistant Superintendent for Human

www.UticaK12.org

Find updates from Utica Community Schools on:



www.UticaK12.org/Social

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