



Our new year's resolution – growing student achievement

From the Superintendent..
Robert S. Monroe

It is common for people to make resolutions when they are approaching a new year.

Utica Community Schools is not any different with a new school year just around the corner.

This year, our UCS team is committed to making substantial changes in the way we do business to improve student achievement.

These improvements are driven by our UCS Empowered Strategic Plan. Since its inception more than two years ago, the plan has led to data-driven initiatives across the district that improve safety, teaching and learning, and student and staff mental health services.

We are taking these initiatives to the next level this school year with a study designed around raising the academic bar for all students, particularly those with disabilities.

The purpose of this study is to provide district leaders with a more complete understanding of the many demands and needs of UCS staff and how the district might better support schools to effectively deliver services to students with varying needs.

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Take A Look At Our Future



Exterior photo of DeKeyser Elementary

DeKeyser Elementary School Community Ribbon Cutting & Open House

Sunday, August 24 from 2:00–4:00 p.m.

The future begins this fall for Utica Community Schools, and our entire community is invited to celebrate.

More than 500 DeKeyser Elementary students will start their year in a newly reconstructed school, introducing a design template to influence future work throughout the district.

Opened more than 50 years ago, DeKeyser is the first of three UCS elementary schools that are currently scheduled for reconstruction. Over the next two years, both Graebner Elementary and Havel Elementary will be completely reconstructed to reflect the new building design.



DeKeyser Elementary Classroom

The modern and flexible design will reflect community pride and enhance neighborhood property values.

It also represents the vision of how UCS will build on its legacy of excellence to transform its elementary schools with a focus on safety, innovative learning communities and classrooms that give teachers more flexibility to inspire remarkable achievement.

The August 24 Open House is open to the entire community as an opportunity to see the investment they are making through the 2023 bond issue. For more information, please visit:
www.uticak12.org/safetyandsuccess.



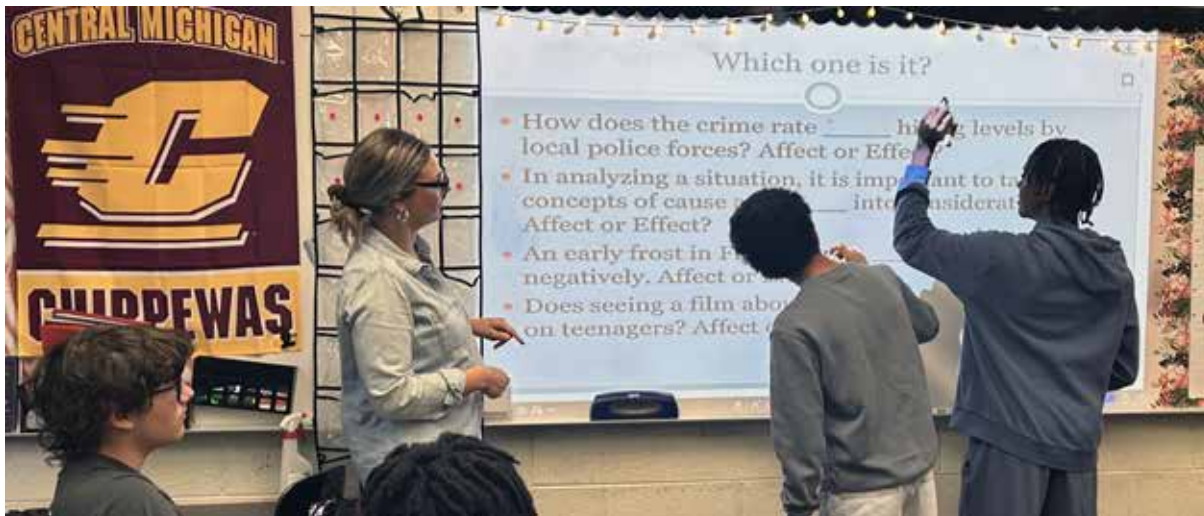
DeKeyser Elementary Playground

Onsite parking for this event will be extremely limited.

Please take advantage of complimentary shuttles running from 1:30–4:30 p.m. at the following school locations:
Browning, Eisenhower, Havel, Rose Kidd, Shelby, Stevenson

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"Game changer" classroom AV system among new technology going online for UCS students



Davis Junior High School teacher Kelly Battle has integrated the projection system into her teaching.

A new audiovisual (AV) system is among a series of technology projects already making a difference in Utica Community Schools classrooms.

The system – comprised of new projection, camera and voice amplification equipment – was installed at all secondary schools last year, courtesy of the 2023 Safety and Success Bond Issue. Installation of the system at all elementary schools began this summer.

At Davis Junior High School, teacher Kelly Battle has been using the system to

communicate daily assignments, display classroom work, review material, share videos and provide a calm screen when students need down time.

"The technology is a game changer in the classroom," Battle said.

"The projector is an essential tool for my teaching. It allows me to make my classroom much more interactive and engaging for my students. I am able to easily model for students using the projector tools and activate student learning using various media sources."

UCS Foundation supports teacher innovation

The UCS Foundation supported more than \$10,000 in innovative classroom grants to teachers across UCS last school year.

Through its Chelsie Bemis Teacher Grants program, the Foundation this spring awarded grants to 12 classroom programs.

The grants support forward-thinking educational initiatives across the district, including:

- Technology education and digital literacy programs
- Social-emotional learning and student well-being resources
- Critical STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) experiences through partnerships
- Literacy enhancements to build strong communication skills

"The sensory room is a safe place to come, take a break, rejuvenate and be ready to learn in the classroom," said Crissman social worker Stephanie Roy. "The Foundation grant allowed



Crissman students take advantage of a sensory room to rejuvenate and to be more successful in their classrooms.

me to create this dream and bring it to life."

The UCS Instructional Technology Coaches (ITC) received a grant to showcase how children's literature can teach students how to be responsible digital citizens.

"Digital citizenship has always been my passion. As a district instructional technology coach and a parent, I believe teaching students to be socially responsible is a shared responsibility," said ITC teacher Courtney Conley. "By weaving digital wellness and citizenship into the fabric of our classrooms through meaningful children's literature and intentional instruction, we empower students to navigate the digital world with empathy, integrity and confidence while continuing to

Superintendent Robert S. Monroe said the improvements are an example of how the \$550 million bond issue is transforming UCS classrooms.

"The AV system is another tool our teachers can use to spur innovation in their classrooms and drive student achievement," he said. "In addition to supporting our learners, the system has critical safety features that can be the difference in an emergency situation."

The classroom system has three components: a projection system, a document camera and a lanyard microphone staff can use to amplify their voice or create an alert in the main office in an emergency situation.

It is one of several technology projects taking place this summer, courtesy of the bond issue and grant funding.

Other technology upgrades this summer include:

- The purchase of more than 10,000 new laptops and 2,000 new iPads
- More than 100 new Computer Aided Design workstations to support Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs
- Installation of technology in the reconstructed DeKeyser Elementary, including data network, wireless access points, new telephone system, security cameras, door card readers and classroom AV system



The UCS Instructional Technology Coaches received a grant to provide training to teachers on how to use children's literature to teach students how to use technology responsibly.

build strong foundational academic skills."

The UCS Foundation is a non-profit group that bridges the gap between Utica Community Schools resources and enhanced educational experiences for all students through unique learning opportunities, scholarships and connections with community and industry.

For more information on how to support the foundation, please visit www.ucsfoundation.org.

Points of Pride



UCS named once again as one of nation's best for music education

With instruments in hand and passion in the hearts of students, music education marches on in Utica Community Schools.

For the 11th time, UCS has 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.

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 team takes national title in robotics competition



Two Utica Community Schools 2025 graduates were named national champions in a robotics and automation problem-solving competition that featured top students from across 24 states.

Niken Patel and Logan Lawler, a team from the Utica Center for Science and Industry (CSI), earned first place in the SkillsUSA competition in late June. This is the second year a CSI team has earned a national title in the competition.

Legacy of Excellence Awards recognized nationally with top award



The Legacy of Excellence Awards hosted by Utica Community Schools in September of 2024 was recognized by the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) with the organization's top award. NSPRA's Golden Achievement Award recognizes outstanding, strategic work in all aspects of school public relations, communication, marketing and engagement.

According to NSPRA, this year's award-winning entries exemplify the impactful, innovative work shaping the future

of school communication. To view the award-winning work of Robert S. Monroe, Superintendent of Schools, Michael Bender, Ph.D., Chief of Staff, Tim McAvoy, Director of School and Community Relations, Jennifer Kane, Coordinator of Public Relations, and Kevin Coppa, Video Technician, visit www.uticak12.org/nspralegacy.

UCS counselor appointed to state leadership board



Utica Community Schools counselor Melissa Waters has been selected to join a leadership board that works to strengthen services to students across Michigan.

Waters, a counselor at Jeannette Junior High School, has been named to the Michigan School Counselor Association (MSCA) Governing Board.

UCS Food and Nutrition Services earns national accolades for innovation



The department has earned the Innovation in Nutrition Award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service.

UCS provides students more than three million meals annually.

The award is provided to school districts that implement nutritional activities that create connections between the cafeteria, the classroom, community and home.

Henry Ford II swimmer earns state championship



This year, an amazing swimmer at Henry Ford II High School achieved unbelievable success at the MHSAA D2 State Championships at Oakland University. As a senior, Maximus Dexter

won the 50-yard freestyle event and placed second in the 100-yard freestyle event at the championships. Dexter has been the first state champion at Henry Ford II since the 1980's.

Dexter led as an example for his Falcon teammates as to how much they can achieve as a member of the swim and dive program.

UCS honored nationally for transparency in financial reporting

For the 13th 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.

The award honors UCS for meeting the program's high standards for financial reporting.

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After the conclusion of this effort in early winter, action items resulting from the study will be shared with the community.

Our collective goal is to improve outcomes for students who struggle, while making the work of teachers and paraprofessionals more sustainable.

This thoughtful evolution is how we honor the long legacy of learning in UCS by moving us even closer to the ambitious vision we set out for ourselves in 2023 – to ensure all of our students are empowered to change their future and the world.



FAMILY WELLNESS FAIR

HENRY FORD II HIGH SCHOOL

Join us for the Utica Community Schools Family Wellness Fair, a fun-filled event for the whole family!

This event is FREE and open to the public to receive valuable information on social-emotional learning (SEL), physical health, and food and nutrition resources at interactive booths.

It's the perfect way to invest in your family's well-being!

- ✓ Over 30 Vendors
- ✓ Kid's Zone with Hands-On Activities
- ✓ Healthy Treats and Giveaways

 www.Uticak12.org/UCS_wellness

 **UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

**SATURDAY.
SEPTEMBER 13
10AM-1PM**



Translation Assistance

Persons seeking or needing district-related language assistance, please contact translations@uticak12.org, or:

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

Personat që kanë nevojë ose kërkojnë ndihmë gjuhësore (përkthim ose interpretim të çështjeve në lidhje me Qarkun shkollor), mund të kontaktojnë:

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**FOCUS for the
Community**

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