



From the Superintendent...
Robert S. Monroe
Community partnerships build student success

We are beginning a season of celebration in Utica Community Schools.

As we move closer to the end of the year, we will recognize students throughout our K-12 programs for their success and academic achievement. The celebrations will culminate on the weekend of June 7-8 when more than 2,000 graduates earn their nationally recognized UCS diplomas.

Our student success over the past nine months stems from schools where students were supported, challenged and motivated through a series of partnerships and relationships.

The importance of these partnerships is clear as we begin to share the stories of our successes.

At Stevenson High School, our long-standing partnership with AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) was credited by seven students – nearly a third of the class – who are receiving full ride college scholarships to support their career dreams.

The Detroit Regional Dollars for Scholars program celebrated our partnership at a recent luncheon, and UCS students were front and center acknowledging how the organization has created a clear path to their post-secondary dreams.

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A Legacy of Learning: UCS grad rate among region’s best



Utica Community Schools seniors continue to graduate at rates that outpace state and national levels

This past school year, 2,071 members of the Class of 2024 received a UCS diploma for a graduation rate of 93.88 percent. This is an increase from the previous year and more than 10 percentage points higher than their state peers.

Last year’s graduation rate reflects a K-12 commitment to engage students in their learning and build the relationships that remain a hallmark of UCS. From the start of their UCS journey, our elementary programs allow students to find success based on their own unique learning styles and pace.

Advanced Placement (AP), Career and Technical Education (CTE), fine arts, specialty programs and extracurricular activities are additional opportunities that provide students the opportunity to explore their future goals.

In addition, credit review and recovery, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Xello and the Utica Alternative Learning Center support our students and keep them on track for their diploma.

Remarkable achievement in academics, the arts and athletics is a legacy of learning within Utica Community Schools. This legacy is honored by providing students with a clear K-12 pathway where they feel a sense of belonging and ownership of their success.

Utica Community Schools is proud to celebrate three exemplary educators as the 2024-25 Teachers of the Year

Congratulations to our 2024-25 Teachers of the Year:

- Roseanne Varga** - Schuchard Elementary School, Kindergarten
- Lindsay Zurinsky** - Jeannette Junior High School, Student Services
- Eric Wells** - Eisenhower High School, Theatre

More information on each Teacher of the Year can be found on page 4.

Fields of Dreams: Athletic improvements continue transformational set of bond projects



Stevenson High School senior Carson Sweet knows what improvements to fields will mean to student athletes.

"This facility is coming because our community believes in us," Sweet said at a recent groundbreaking ceremony. "Because of the community's generosity, UCS students will be given more opportunities to excel in sports which opens doors for college scholarships. By saying yes to the bond, you said yes to making a difference in our lives because athletics isn't just about sports. It's about the teaching of valuable life lessons like leadership and perseverance. It's about creating a sense of family. By saying yes to the bond, you said yes to all of us."

The district recently held groundbreaking ceremonies for athletic upgrades at 16 Mile and Dodge Park and Swinehart Field. Later this spring, baseball and softball field improvements will begin at Eisenhower High School and Henry Ford II High School.

The field improvements are scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2026 with Swinehart Field improvements being ready fall, 2026.

The improvements on district-owned vacant property at Dodge Park and 16 Mile will include new baseball and softball turf fields, tennis courts, grandstands,



Artist rendering of Stevenson athletic complex.

concession areas and restrooms for Stevenson High School.

The renovation at Swinehart Field will feature a concourse with new bleachers, concession, press box and restroom areas, and the replacement of paving.

Once completed, similar work will begin at Runkel Field.

The fields represent the first major investment in UCS athletic facilities in decades.

Since the 2023 Bond Issue approval, UCS has been meeting its commitments to voters with a transformational set of projects that are focused on safety.

Significant projects include the reconstruction of DeKeyser Elementary, providing walls and doors to previously "open concept" elementary schools, replacing playground equipment and parking lots at sites across the district. In addition, safety improvements continue, including replacing doors and door hardware and reinforcing windows with shatter-resistant glass.

For more information, please visit www.uticak12.org/safetyandsuccess.



Artist rendering of Swinehart Field.



UCS Foundation seeks mentors for 31st annual Career Focus Luncheon

A hallmark tradition for UCS sixth graders is the annual Career Focus Luncheon. Sponsored by the UCS Foundation and Connect Macomb in partnership with Utica Community Schools, the luncheon will be held on May 6 and 7 at The Palazzo Grande in Shelby Township.

This event promotes student career exploration by bringing students together with business and community leaders for conversations about careers and the

importance of education in future workplaces. Sixth grade students will benefit from their career-related questions being answered by a focus panel and at their table by a business or community mentor.

The event is a milestone occasion that students carry with them long after they graduate from our district, and it could not be possible without community support.

For more information on how to become involved, please see the 'Events' tab at www.ucsfoundation.org.

The foundation is an all-volunteer group of community members who support scholarships and grants that inspire classroom innovation.

Emancipated/homeless UCS senior earns full ride to the University of Notre Dame



Utica Community Schools senior Nicholas Slaughter has an amazing story to tell.

It is a story of persistence, hard work, faith and the support of his school friends and staff that guided

the emancipated minor and current Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Studies (GLK-UAIS) senior to a full-ride scholarship to the University of Notre Dame.

"I think the important message in my story is that hard work pays off and that you can't do it alone," Slaughter said. "I would not be here without the support of the UCS staff and all of my teachers and counselors."

In August 2024, Slaughter made a significant life change by emancipating himself, saying he was in "an environment where I needed to make a change to move forward." He said without the support of his best friend's family, he would have been essentially homeless.

He also had the support of his GLK-UAIS family, which kept him centered on his academic success.

"We are so fortunate that UCS provides this program to us free of charge," he said. "Without this opportunity or if I had to pay for it, I would never be here."

At GLK-UAIS, Slaughter is graduating as a valedictorian and has participated in Key Club and the National French Honor Society. He is an Advanced Placement Scholar and was a gold finalist in the National French Contest/Grand Concours. Slaughter also founded the French Club at Collins Elementary.

While at the University of Notre Dame, Slaughter plans to pursue a career in Civil Engineering.

Points of Pride

Two UCS seniors named among state's best student journalists



Ava Nightingale, of Eisenhower High School, and Natalie Rubel, of Henry Ford II High School, have been named among a select number of students to the Student Journalist Staff by the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association (MIPA).



The seniors were selected as student journalists who excel at their student media outlets based on

their portfolios. Rubel was honored for yearbook writing and Nightingale for news design.

the competition to claim the title of state champion.

UCS CTE students of the year



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



Anastazija Grubac, of Stevenson High School, and Alexander Madhloom, of Eisenhower High School, were honored at the Macomb Career Technical Education Administrators

Association's 35th Annual Awards Celebration.

Stone Dermatology was also honored as a UCS business partner.

UCS school stores earn national recognition



Utica, Eisenhower, Stevenson and Henry Ford II high schools received School-Based Enterprise Certification this school year. Among 750

school-based enterprises achieving a gold level of certification, each school will be recognized during DECA's International Career Development Conference in Orlando, Florida.

2025 Women of Excellence honors Henry Ford II principal



Henry Ford II principal Lori Singleton has been named a 2025 Women of Excellence honoree.

The honor from the Michigan Chronicle

celebrates 50 trailblazing black women.

Singleton was honored at a Women of Excellence Awards and Induction Celebration in March.

Eisenhower/Malow music director named state's best

Nominated by former students turned music teachers, director of vocal music for Eisenhower High School and Malow Junior High School, Julia Holt, expressed she is humbled and honored



to have been selected as the 2025 Teacher of the Year by the Michigan School Vocal Music Association (MSVMA).

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

Utica Eisenhower Varsity Team earns state bowling championship

This year, the newly combined Utica and Eisenhower United Bowling Team made history by coming together as one strong, unstoppable force.

Their dedication, teamwork and countless hours of practice paid off in an incredible way as they rose above



Community partnerships build student success

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We also have a great partnership with the UCS Foundation for Educational Excellence which is offering our graduating seniors \$30,000 in scholarships. I would like to recognize the UCS Foundation's president, Juli Sala, for his volunteer organization's impactful work.

These partnerships are not unique to high school seniors. Our work with local law enforcement ensures a safe and positive learning environment for our students and staff. At all schools, businesses and organizations work side by side with us in a positive way to support student success.

Parents are our most important partners. High profile district initiatives such as attendance area updates and our long-range strategic plan include parent voice. Parents give our students those extra opportunities by serving as coaches for robotics, tennis and Science Olympiad, just to name a few.

At a classroom level, our programs are stronger through parent volunteers and the support families provide teachers through the connection between home and school.

The partnerships we create not only provide resources and opportunities for our students, but they reinforce the relationships that make UCS such a unique and effective school district.

Utica Community Schools is proud to celebrate three exemplary educators as the 2024-25 Teachers of the Year

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The teachers listed below represent the care, commitment and excellence of UCS staff throughout our district.



Roseanne Varga - Schuchard Elementary, Kindergarten

Mrs. Varga is the foundation of Schuchard Elementary – both symbolically and literally as a kindergarten teacher and the first introduction for students and families to the school. The qualities she exhibits reflect the tone of the school – empathy, community-minded, high expectations for all students and an environment where students feel safe and know she cares about them.

"My family has known Mrs. Varga for close to 15 years since my oldest sister was in kindergarten," said Schuchard 6th grader, Norah Tamou. "She has taught all three of my older sisters and because of her teaching structure and style, my parents would always tell her she cannot retire until she has taught all of us."

Lindsay Zurinsky - Jeannette Junior High, Student Services

Mrs. Zurinsky is a school leader. She chairs the special education department where

she works to make sure every student has a voice. She also sponsors both student council and the school store, where she enjoys helping students become leaders.



"She has taught me lessons about leadership, perseverance, and kindness that I will carry with me forever," said current Stevenson 10th grader, Angie Kajy. "I am beyond grateful for her guidance, patience, and support, and I know that everything she has taught me will continue to shape my future in the best way possible."

Eric Wells - Eisenhower High School, Theatre

Mr. Wells has helped produce more than 75 events held on the stage of the Eisenhower Performing Arts Center. Eisenhower performances are regular sell outs, and his students continue to receive scholarships and top state awards for excellence.



"Mr. Wells absolutely deserves all the praise he can get," said Eisenhower 12th grader, Caden Taubitz. "He cares so much about his shows, games, and his students that he puts in countless hours to make everything perfect."

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