UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

FOCUS FOR THE COMMUNITY

2026 GRADUATION EDITION

A PUBLICATION FOR THE RESIDENTS OF UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



From the Superintendent...

Robert S. Monroe

Moving our legacy forward

We had an amazing school year in UCS.

The energy in our schools this year was realized with ceremonies for nearly 2,000 graduates and the successful conclusion of the school year. Yet, it is important to note that the student achievement we recognize in UCS is more than seasonal celebrations; they are the validation of our student-centered vision and mission.

So, while we celebrate these accomplishments, we are simultaneously reinforcing the engine driving our future: the UCS Empowered Strategic Plan.

The evolution that began with updated vision and mission statements has created a historic shift in how we empower our students.

In just four years, we have moved from vision to reality. What we call the Cultures of Empowerment, Transformation, and Caring are not just headings in our plan; they are an ongoing initiative backed by systemic improvements across the school district.

For example, we have prioritized both safety and success through a voter-approved bond proposal that is centered on student security and achievement. We have begun accommodating demographic shifts by adjusting grade configurations and resolving long-standing inconsistencies in attendance boundaries. And while continuing to focus on traditional educational pillars such as reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and science, we are consciously integrating mental health and wellness into the fabric of our schools.

please see page 8

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UCS graduates are committed to their future success



Stevenson High School graduates Faith Woods, Fairouz Mohammad Ali, Ava Wingfield and Keira McCleary were among the Class of 2026 members who gathered to celebrate "Signing Day" and their commitment to continuing their education.

Utica Community Schools hosted commencement ceremonies at Oakland University's O'rena for the four comprehensive high schools, Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Studies, Adult Education and the Utica Alternative Learning Center the weekend of June 6 and 7.

Nearly 2,000 graduates were celebrated for the lasting impact they have had on our community.

The UCS Board of Education distinguished 329 graduates as UCS Advanced Placement Scholars for enrolling in at least four AP courses and earning a cumulative GPA of 3.67 or higher in all AP courses taken. Nearly 700 UCS Academic Scholars were also recognized by the Board of Education for having attained a seven-semester GPA of 3.67 or above while taking part in extra-curricular or community service activities.

This graduating class includes nearly 300 valedictorians (4.0 GPA and above) and 8 salutatorians (awarded to student(s) with the next highest GPA below 4.0), all of whom are recognized within this graduation newsletter.

Congratulations to the Utica Community Schools Class of 2026!

Eisenhower High School
Valedictorians


Jazleen Abro


Noor Albaghdadi


Julia Aniel


Nashita Aziz


Alec Barry


Thomas Benner


Keerthana Biddala


Zachary Bishop


Laura Bojaj


Maya Bowman


Bianca Bumanlag


Maya Campean


Ryan Chung


Griffin Curran


Ian D'Souza


Leslie Dang


Andrew Dean


Samantha Decker

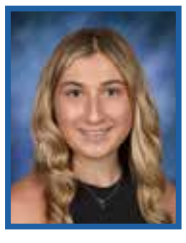

Savannah Diegel


Kaitlyn Dorle


Benjamin Dotter


Liliana Dushaj


Sarah Finitzer


Alexis Gabriel


Kayley Gauthier


Liliana Gegovic


Gabriella Gojcaj


Andrew Grabner


Serdar Gutdanov


Travis Jacob


Sarim Khatri


Caitlin Landino


Caitlyn LeBel


Alaina Leferman


Grace Lopiccolo


Jack Luckino


Andres Magallanes


Merian Maroki


Carson Matteo


Marshall May

Jacob Mitchell

John Murphy

Lily Neumann

Kayla Nightingale

Olivia Opalewski

Eduard Paculea

Gianna Paladino

Alexander Perry

Sonja Peterson

Drew Pietraszkiewicz

Justin Pionk

William Polisei

Hali Ponce

Emma Ramales

Aleksander Rosol

Rylie Sheridan

William Sherman

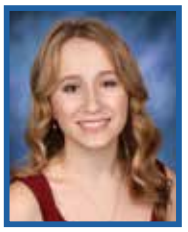
Kayla Siladke

Ryan Smith

Katryna Smith


Tyler Spraggins


Anastasia Spyridakis

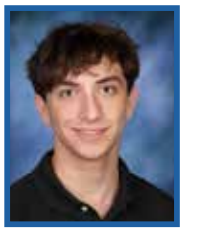

Kaitlyn Stafford


Sabrina Stojanovski


Troy Thomas


Collin Tidwell


Elisabeth Tierney


Antonios Vlassopoulos


Zoey Wehrwein


Delaney Wolsker

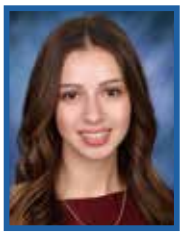

Madelynn Wood


Jacalyn Yakel


Kristal Youhana

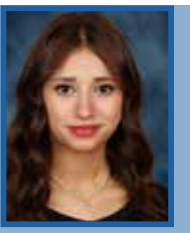

Joseph Zelenak

Eisenhower Salutatorian


Cassandra Ostroth

Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Studies *(GLK-UAIS) Valedictorians*


Alexis Abate


Yara Abu Zraineh


Lillian Akroush


Noor Al-Hasan


Mariam Alaoui


Luna Alaowad


Kyrollos Azer


Mikayla Booton


Chase Britton


Daniel Buzdugan


Izana Chowdhury


Dima Dauo


Zeina Faour


Eriny Gabriel


Denny Gao


Sofia Gardner


Maria George


Lindsay Girard


Anthony Gontaruk


Nolan Gorlewski


Aliyah Gorski


Maya Hassan


Katelyn Hermiz


Tasnim Hussain


Angeline Itchon

Adam Khalil

Milena Kielar

Anthony Le

Jiyeon Lee

Shila Lepuri

Dominic Ligocki

Olivia Lobb

Sabrina Malik

Megan Mangalathet

Chloe Metti

Madeline Miller

Ava Mortimore

Noor Muwafaq

Surya Nair

Yen Nhi Nguyen

Fiona Nikolla

Dawn Nobles


Chioma Nwoke

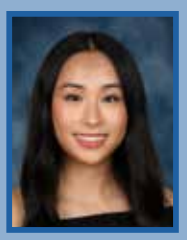

Michael Oommen


Rahmah Osmani


Neil Panchasara


Taylor Patterson


Breanna Petrusel


Evalynn Pham


Thy Phan


Alexandria Philip


Abigail Pinkerton


Sarah Plociniak


Iva Popovic


Mira Isabelle Rapanut


Roman Rujan


Joseph Saba


Thomas Schoenherr


Arianne Seno


Daniella Stefan


Christian Talia


Christopher Tappo


Cayla Thomas


Brynley Tickle


Ardon Ujkashi


Joel Zoto

GLK-UAIS
Salutatorian


Noor Mardo

Henry Ford II High School
Valedictorians


Isabella Allen


Emily Araszkiewicz


Sofia Argentiero

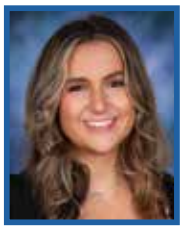

Layla Bajric


Yaqo Banyameen


Steven Biernacki


Nick Cacaj


Charlotte Caruss


Andra Cornea


Gianna D'Angelo


Anna Fungelsang


Dean Galucci


Alban Gjelaj


Anne Mary Hana


Connor Huss

Isabelle Ibri

Frida Klosi

Jonathan Kuruvilla

Nico Mangino

Kyle Massimilla

Emma Miller

Luke Mulka

Emma Ostrowski

Gabriella Ott


Vito Pantalena


Mya Sebastian


Kellen Struck


Taylor Thomas


Natalia Trela


Benjamin Wright


Gabriella Zmich

Henry Ford II Salutatorian


Zachary Abate

Stevenson High School *Valedictorians*


Mohammad Abd


Noor Abro


John Almurani


Mirna Bahri


Sushith Balakrishnan


Annabella Bally


Skyla Barbu


Crystal Betto


Shrey Bhatt


Leianna Capponi


Kimberly Chan


Hannah Cherian


Dron Datta


Madison Edens


Morgan Edens


Morgan Eisinger


Anjali Ganeshkumar


Nikolina Jaksic


Aidan Jarbou


Samantha Kleehammer


Aubrey Kolcz


David Mann


Timothy Meister


Aneeka Mondal


Henry Nguyen


Huan Nguyen


Antonio Nissan


Sophie Perry


Raban Razoky


Dhara Ruwala


Leona Santos


Noah Skrabut

Nhi Tran

Jackson Trice

Arabella Vachon

Jacob Vachon

Legacy Watts

Gabrielle Wild

Ava Wingfield

George Yacoub

Gabriel Younan

Stevenson Salutatorians

Mackenzie Garay

Michael Twal

Utica High School
Valedictorians


Alessandro Abdal


Raymond Abi Younes


William Ashbreck


Angelica Barkho


Isabella Blanchett


Kara Boice

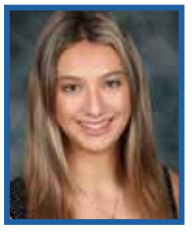

Sophie Bowers


Ava Brunning


Jade Burnham


Riley Burton


Oscar Catarino


Alayna Collins


Antonio Coronado


Charles Curtis


Ayla Dedivanaj


Ayden Dickow


Natalia Diem


Rachel Durecki


Ethan Filthaut


Keegan Finn

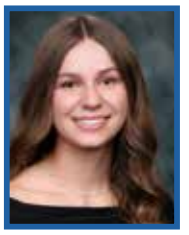

Anthony Frezza


Marwan Hassan


Raegan Hill


Gabriel Hohner


Ahmed Hussein


Olivia Itoney


Abram Jenzen


Samuel John


Emma Juncaj


Aida Kacabeli


Emmalyn Kasperek


James Lasceski


Brayden Lemley


Landon Loose


Mary Lubien


Joseph Mansy


Gustavo Martinez


Rayne McQueary

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

The beat is strong for the Utica Community Schools music program.

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). This is the 12th time the district has received this national recognition.

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.

The NAMM Foundation honored approximately 20 Michigan school districts and nearly 1,000 communities nationally. The award recognizes school districts for their exemplary dedication to music education and their ongoing efforts to ensure equitable access to music learning as part of a well-rounded education.



UCS 25-26 Drum Majors representing each high school: (front, L-R) Emily Dennis, Keith Chong, Samantha Sayegh, Chlouie Canup, Madlynne Gabridge, Sophie Bowers, Jade Burnham, Nathan Siegert, (back row) Mary Wawrzyniak, Mikayla Dempsey, Leah Boettner, Adam Harrington, Lauren Conley, Isabella Mammou and Madison Mazzola


Kylie Newcomb


LalRin Ngheti

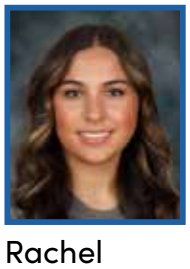

Emilio Oddo


Yug Patel


Preston Petkoff

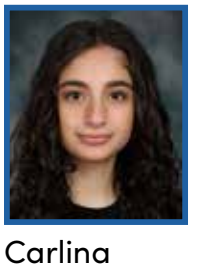

Inriki Polus

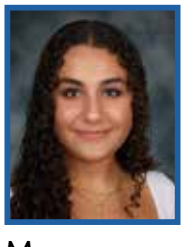

Jacob Price

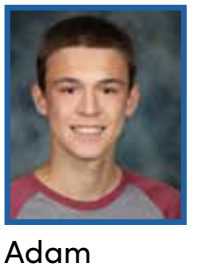

Rachel Rettell


Nathaniel Rineer


Ashly Ritter

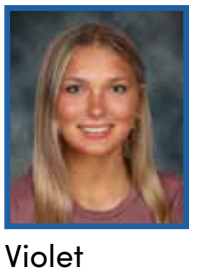

Carlina Shadda

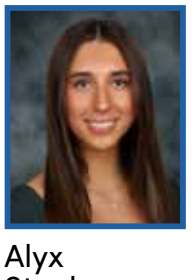

Merry Shakouri

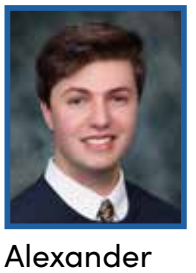

Adam Shimmell


Brendan Silver


Sarah Sleiman


Violet Smith


Alyx Stuehmer


Alexander Thielen


Tate Tomatti


Dylan Urban


Kaylee Wallace


Cooper Willis


Andrew Wiseman


Sofia Wolyniec de Freitas


Milana Zdravkovic

Utica High Salutatorians


Anna Brown


Landon Cooke


Celine Celestina Flattery

UCS sets standard for Macomb County's top graduates

Utica Community Schools graduates represented approximately 50 percent of this year's Macomb County All-Academic Team.

Students were selected as among the county's "best and brightest" in the county.

UCS had 29 of 58 students selected for the Class A All-Academic Team. In addition, the program honored 25 students as the top graduates in the county. UCS had 7 of 20 students selected for the Macomb County All-Academic Dream Team.

Two UCS students received $1,000 scholarships for their leadership.

All-Academic Team

Mohammad Abd
Yara Abu Zraineh
Layla Bajric
Skyla Barbu
Daniel Buzdugan*
Zachary Bishop
Oscar Catarino*
Dron Datta*
Andrew Dean
Alexis Gabriel
Anjali Ganeshkumar
Nolan Gorlewski
Marwan Hassan*
Ahmed Hussein
Samuel John
Jack Luckino
Megan Mangalathat
John Murphy
Surya Nair*
Kayla Nightingale
Michael Oommen
Vito Pantalena*
Alexandria Philip
Nathaniel Rineer
Arianne Seno
Alex Thielen
Troy Thomas
Kristal Youhana
Joel Zoto*

*Member of All-Academic Dream Team

Take A Look At Our Future



Rendering of Swinehart Field

LEARN MORE
uticak12.org/SwinehartOpening



Rendering of Graebner Elementary School

LEARN MORE
uticak12.org/GraebnerOpenHouse

Save the Dates

Join Utica Community Schools as we celebrate the opening of Swinehart Field and Graebner Elementary in August! Through the district's Culture of Transformation, each of these projects will provide our students, staff and community with facilities that promote safety and success, both on the field and in the classroom.

Swinehart Field
Sunday, August 23 at 6:00 p.m.
47255 Shelby Rd., Utica, MI

Graebner Elementary
Sunday, August 30 at 2:00 p.m.
41875 Saal Rd., Sterling Heights, MI

Persistent tranparency and engagement will continue to guide our future success

From Page One

Seeing our vision through to fruition will require persistent transparency. As we continue to move forward, we are launching an approach to our communications that will further explain our educational strategy and our students' learning experiences. This information will be housed and publicly viewable at uticak12.org/UCSEmpowered.

We are standing at a pivotal moment in our school district's history. Guided by our vision and partnering with our staff and community, we are not just moving forward—we are reaffirming the value of the educational legacy of Utica Community Schools.

We value your continuing support of our strategic direction and communication initiatives. We believe they will continue to expand community understanding and engagement with the Utica Community Schools.

Translations Available

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:
Për gjuhën Shqipe:
(586) 797-6946
translations@uticak12.org

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اللغة العربية:
(586) 797-6986
translations@uticak12.org

Las personas que buscan o necesitan asistencia con el idioma inglés para asuntos relacionados a las escuelas de nuestro distrito escolar, por favor comuníquese con:
Para español:
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translations@uticak12.org

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 Utica Community Schools Human Resources at 11303 Greendale, Sterling Heights, MI 48312 or call (586) 797-1000.

UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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Michael Austerman, Trustee
Robert S. Monroe,
Superintendent of Schools

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FOCUS for the Community

Editor: Tim McAvoy