



UNION COUNTY VOCATIONAL - TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

1776 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076-2997
(908)889-8288, Ext. 120 Fax: (908)889-4336 Email: gryan@ucvts.org

Mrs. Gwendolyn S. Ryan
Superintendent of Schools

August 18, 2026

Dear UCVTS Community:

It's been an eventful summer, filled with planning and hard work as we ready UCVTS for the new school year. We look forward to our students' return on Thursday, September 3, 2026, and I am excited for the start of 2026-2027. Welcome back to school, UCVTS!

Internet-Enabled Device Ban

New Jersey has enacted a mandatory bell-to-bell ban on internet-enabled devices, including cell phones, during the school day, citing growing research on the impact these devices can have on student learning, well-being, and school climate. In mid-July, the New Jersey Department of Education issued [guidance](#) to districts specifying that, "at a minimum, schools must prohibit the use of personal internet-enabled devices during the entirety of the school day for students in kindergarten through grade 12." Students will be permitted to use district-issued Chromebooks for educational purposes in alignment with District curriculum. Please expect another communication and FAQ from my office next week with additional, UCVTS-specific procedures for the bell-to-bell ban.

Transportation & Traffic

Transportation continues to be provided by sending districts for all high school students who attend UCVTS. Especially in the first weeks of school, please expect traffic delays at drop-off and pick-up times on campus. Unless there is a pressing need, **families are encouraged to utilize bussing provided through their sending districts**. Families driving students to campus should plan for delays and review the [26-27 UCVTS Driving Map](#) for traffic flow patterns and pick-up/drop-off locations — procedures that have been reviewed by police and fire officials to keep our community safe. Please note that drop-off is no longer permitted in the parking lots adjacent to AAHS, APA, MHS, and the Administration Building, or in the surrounding Scotch Plains residential areas (*Manitou Way, Green Hickory Hill, Ditzel Farm Court and Black Birch Road*), where violators may be ticketed. The designated pick-up/drop-off area for parents driving students to school is located behind Bistocchi Hall (AIT), at the back of campus. **We ask for your assistance in helping to keep our community safe by following district traffic procedures**. More information will follow in a separate communication next week.

District Backpack & Handbook

A variety of helpful information can be found in the UCVTS District Backpack, linked from our district and school webpages, including the UCVTS Calendar, UCVTS Academic Calendar, and the UCVTS Student Handbook 2026-2027. We encourage students and families to become familiar with these documents and to reach out to their school administrators and staff with any questions.

Our students and schools continue to be a source of pride for the Union County community. Students receive an exceptional Career and Technical Education, preparing them for whatever opportunities they choose to pursue after leaving our classrooms. Preserving that excellence while staying current with industry trends and effective practices is what we do best, and I look forward to supporting our community this year as we grow our programs through several initiatives. Here are a few:

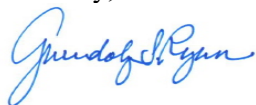
- **AGL** – This fall, we welcome our third class of students and families to the Academy for Global Logistics (AGL), our newest full-time program. AGL moved into its new facility last year and is housed on the ground floor of the University Center building at Union College of Union County, located on the UCVTS campus. AGL is an exceptional addition to the beautiful, well-equipped learning spaces our students have access to at UCVTS.
- **Facilities Upgrades** – The district is in the process of making several substantial facilities upgrades on campus.

- Our work implementing a district-wide Energy Savings Improvement Plan (ESIP) is nearing completion. The two largest chillers on campus — which cool much of West Hall (UCCTI/UCTECH), Mancuso Hall (MHS), Bistocchi Hall (AIT), and the cafeteria — have been replaced, installed, and are fully operational. Over the summer, it was especially rewarding to see cooler temperatures return to spaces that have historically been difficult to cool, including the oldest parts of West Hall (UCCTI) and Mancuso Hall (Magnet). While some upgrades will continue into the fall, students and staff should expect comfortable temperatures in all learning spaces.
- The County of Union has completed renovations to the athletic field adjacent to UCVTS, including upgrades to drainage and lighting and the installation of turf, and it is now ready for our use during the school day. These upgrades will greatly enhance the UCVTS physical education programs.
- We've made great progress on West Hall updates. Specifically, renovations to the UCTECH main office are complete, allowing the UCTECH and UCCTI main offices to operate separately. The UCTECH main office has relocated near the bulk of where UCTECH classes operate and now includes adjoined office space for administrative, counseling, and clerical staff. The project also includes upgrades to UCTECH's School of Design. Additionally, UCCTI's Welding shop is being fully renovated and will include updated technology and equipment aligned to industry standards; completion is anticipated this fall.
- Senate President Nicholas Scutari and the Union County Board of County Commissioners announced at the July 2023 Board of Education meeting an additional \$33,000,000 in financial investment to expand our facilities and programs. We are continuing plans to add facilities that will expand access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in Union County, particularly in healthcare-related pathways which train students for careers in Mental Health and Biotechnology — high-wage, high-skill, high-demand fields. The first phase of this project is nearly complete, and construction on the next phase is anticipated to begin in September; the campus roadway exit has been moved slightly to accommodate the new building.
- Curriculum and Instruction – In alignment with New Jersey Department of Education initiatives, UCVTS will continue streamlining and expanding our data collection, warehousing, and analysis systems for more focused identification of student needs, curricular development, and instructional practices.
- Artificial Intelligence – UCVTS will continue advancing how students and staff use Artificial Intelligence (AI) responsibly in both learning and career settings. We're grateful to our Industry Advisory Boards for helping guide career training opportunities, and specific AI platforms and their use across industries will be a focus of this year's advisory board meetings.
- Celebration of UCVTS Achievement – There are so many incredible achievements among our students and staff. Join me in celebrating them on social media using #proudtobeucvts.

Each school year, we welcome new students, families, and staff members to the UCVTS family. On behalf of our entire community, we offer a warm welcome to those who are new to UCVTS, and we look forward to getting to know you through a variety of start-of-school-year activities, both during and outside the school day. Stay tuned for information about clubs, extra-curricular events, and ways to connect with our community. Back to School Night is scheduled for Wednesday, September 16 (AIT, MHS, UCCTI) and Thursday, September 17 (AAHS, AGL, APA, UCT), 2026, from 6:10 to 8:10 p.m. I hope to see you there!

I look forward to seeing our students on September 3rd for the start of a new school year — may it be filled with pride in the unique gifts we each bring to this community, along with care for one another, new experiences, accomplishments, laughter, and belonging. Have a great 26-27 school year!

Sincerely,



Gwendolyn S. Ryan
Superintendent of Schools