

Board Briefs

Highlighting Board of Education Action

Utica Community Schools

Regular Meeting - Monday, August 22, 2011

Dr. Johns reported on back-to-school preparations, relocation of AdvancePath and Community Education and the district's positive AYP and Education YES! status.

In her report to the Board of Education, Superintendent Dr. Christine M. Johns indicated that while preparations for the new school year actually began long before the final bell of school year 2010-2011, as we head into the latter part of August the pace of back-to-school activities accelerated across the district.

She said empty halls would soon be bustling with students when UCS secondary schools begin hosting registration days later in the week. The back-to-school traditions of band performances and athletic contests are also moving into high gear as teams begin their fall campaigns.

Dr. Johns stated that the administrative team meets on a weekly basis to review school readiness preparations to ensure a positive start to the school year. She added that she and Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services Mark Davey visited several schools to check on summer cleaning progress and the overall condition of our facilities. She congratulated district staff for their work in getting the schools ready for September 6.

She specifically cited work done by staff to relocate AdvancePath Academy to the Training and Development Center (from a rented facility) and Community Education to its new location at Walsh (known as the Community Education Center at Walsh). She expressed confidence the new sites will allow both programs to grow and provide enhanced services to students and residents.

Dr. Johns continued by saying she was pleased to announce that Utica Community Schools is moving into the new school year with positive academic momentum. The week before, the State of Michigan released its report on Adequate Yearly Progress and EducationYES! grades. She said that while headlines across the state indicate fewer schools met the federal guidelines, the headline in UCS is that our schools achieved both AYP and high grades. She indicated that a full report would be given later in the meeting.

Dr. Johns said that in addition to the positive AYP and EducationYES! news, the district also received official confirmation of its 100 percent passing rate on the state police bus inspection. Typically, the UCS transportation department receives a nearly perfect score every year, with any issues quickly addressed. This year however, our mechanics attained a perfect score the first time through. She added that this is quite an achievement given there are more than 300 items

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checked by state inspectors on each vehicle. She added that UCS has the largest publicly-administered school fleet in Michigan.

Dr. Johns concluded her report stating that we as a district are truly heading into this new school year with a renewed sense of energy. The next time we speak, she said, more than 29,000 students will be back in school and she looks forward to reporting on a positive opening and the continued success of UCS students and staff throughout the 2011-2012 school year.

**Michigan
Department of
Education
AYP and
Education
YES! report**

Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Robert Monroe reported on the district's 2010-2011 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Education YES! grades issued this summer by the Michigan Department of Education.

No Child Left Behind requires schools to reach target achievement goals in English language arts and mathematics on state MEAP or MME assessments in order to make AYP. The 2010-2011 targets were:

Elementary:	Math - 74%	English language arts - 77%
Junior High:	Math - 66%	English language arts - 74%
High School:	Math - 67%	English language arts - 79%

The targets must be met by all students, as well as subgroups of 30 or more in the categories of students with disabilities, English language learners, ethnicity and economically disadvantaged. In addition, schools must meet graduation or attendance rates and 95 percent of students enrolled must be tested.

All UCS schools attained AYP status, with the exception of two alternative programs. UCS also met AYP as a district, although one subgroup at the high school level, students with disabilities, did not reach the target in mathematics and reading.

Education YES! grades are calculated on the past three years' MEAP or MME scores in reading, mathematics, science and social studies. A school's self-assessment on state performance indicators are included in the grade. UCS schools achieved 33 A grades, three B grades (Stevenson, Utica and Jeannette) and one C grade (AdvancePath Academy).

**Administrative
assignments**

Dr. Johns presented the Board of Education with the administrative assignment roster for the 2011-2012 school year, identifying the members as highly-skilled and well-qualified leaders dedicated to attaining higher achievement for all students.

Contract awarded

The Board approved attendance of its members at appropriate education-related business meetings, conferences, seminars, classes and workshops in order to gain understanding and the ability to advocate for Utica Community Schools regarding legislative, funding and other pertinent matters.