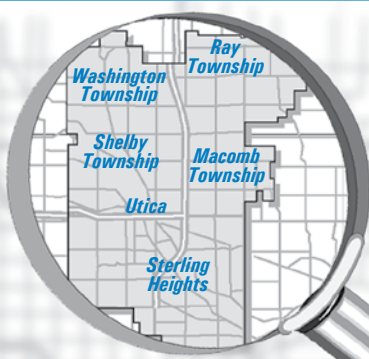


# F O C U S for the community



A Publication for the Residents of Utica Community Schools

## From the Superintendent...



by Christine M. Johns, Ed.D.

### Positive energy in UCS brings positive results

*A new school year represents a time when anything is possible. We began classes in September with a renewed sense of energy and a chance to focus our attention on the critical role education plays in the lives of our children.*

*For Utica Community Schools, this focus means continuing to move forward with a plan first embraced by our community in 2007 – the Reaching Higher Indicators of Excellence. Since then, our school district has progressed in its commitment that every student will reach higher levels of academic achievement.*

*We said back then that UCS is a great district, but we can do better. We said that it was not enough that some students graduate ready to pursue post-secondary options. We agreed that the expectation in UCS must be – will be – that all*

*continued on page 3*

## Countywide special education enhancement millage vote on NOV. 8

The Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD), acting on the request of all Macomb County school districts, has placed a 1.2 mill special education enhancement millage proposal on the November 8 countywide general election ballot.



If approved, the proposal would benefit all UCS students. Resources from the special education enhancement would stay in the county's 21 districts – including Utica Community Schools – to address the needs of our most vulnerable students while helping continue high-quality programming for all children.

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Follow the "Our Kids, Our Future" link on the UCS Website [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org) for election information.



## Don't miss Band-A-Rama on October 9!



*Band directors from all four UCS high schools along with their student drum majors and field commanders joined forces to drum up support to promote Band-A-Rama, a Utica Community Schools fall tradition. Standing l-r are Stevenson band director Michael Sekich and students Jackie Kaiser, Chris Sanger and Michelle Kattula; Eisenhower's Savannah Somerville, Ryan Grady and Morgan McGivern with band director Chris Traskal. Kneeling are Henry Ford II band director Matt Schoenherr and students Grace Peltier, Rebecca Smith, Nicole Beller and Jamie Cowan; Utica High's Rachel Amey and Victoria Jones with band director Mike Sauer.*

*Band-A-Rama showcases the district's talented high school musicians in truly remarkable field performances. The event will begin at 7 p.m. on Sunday, October 9 at Swinehart Stadium, Shelby Road, north of 21 Mile Road across from Utica High School. Admission is \$5 at the gate for adults and high school students; free for junior high and younger.*

*Ticket proceeds benefit the Louis Gonda Memorial Scholarship to fund opportunities for UCS band students to further their music education. To date, the Gonda fund has enabled hundreds of students to attend music camps, take private lessons or otherwise enrich their music study.*

*This year's Band-A-Rama themes include "Road Trip USA," performed by the Stevenson Titans Marching Band; "Celebrating the 70's," by the Eisenhower Eagles Marching Band; "Made in Michigan," by the Ford II Falcons Marching Band and "Do You Believe in Magic?," by the Utica Chieftains Marching Band.*

*Band-A-Rama is a unique experience for both the students on the field and spectators in the stands because it is the only time the talents of all four bands are displayed at the same time.*

## UCS continues to make the grade on state report card, AYP

Despite statewide trends that showed an overall drop in schools meeting federal standards, Utica Community Schools posted significant improvement on the recently released 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report and the annual EducationYES! Michigan School Report Cards.

"We are extremely pleased with all of our traditional K-12 schools achieving Adequate Yearly Progress and earning strong grades this year," said Superintendent Dr. Christine Johns. "It is a reflection of our highly skilled staff members and their commitment to working with parents to drive student achievement."

The EducationYES! School Report Cards are released annually by the Michigan Department of Education as part of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation.

To make AYP, a school must attain state achievement goals in English language arts and mathematics for 95 percent

of its students in total and in each subgroup of 30 or more as defined by the federal law: students with disabilities, race/ethnicity English language learners or economically disadvantaged.

In addition, schools must meet or exceed other

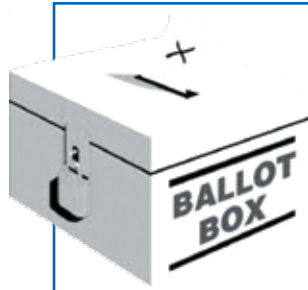
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## November 8 County Millage QUICK FACTS

- ➔ **More students than ever require special education services.**  
One in seven students in Macomb County's public, parochial and private schools – nearly 20,000 children – now receive special education services. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of children with autism and other cognitive impairments or health-related issues who require these services.
- ➔ **The MISD millage would benefit ALL Utica Community Schools students.**  
The funding would benefit all students by maintaining special education services while reducing pressure on the district budget to support mandated instructional programs.
- ➔ **It's funding that would stay in our local schools.**  
Unlike the school aid fund which is administered by the state legislature, the funds would stay in Utica Community Schools to help restore special education funding losses due to Michigan's decline in revenue and taxable property values.
- ➔ **Utica Community Schools would receive \$6 million annually.**  
The ballot proposal is a 1.2 mill special education property tax request being asked of all property owners in Macomb County. The funding is projected to provide approximately \$27.5 million each year that would be shared among all Macomb County school districts based on enrollment, with the largest share coming to Utica Community Schools – estimated at \$6 million the first year.



## What's on the NOVEMBER 8 ballot? BALLOT LANGUAGE EXPLANATION:

### REGIONAL ENHANCEMENT SPECIAL EDUCATION OPERATING MILLAGE PROPOSAL

Unlike the school aid fund, the millage would be collected locally and stay in our community.

A shared tax on all homestead, non-homestead and commercial use properties in Macomb County.

The funds would stay in Utica Community Schools to help restore special education funding losses due to Michigan's decline in revenue.

Pursuant to state law, the revenue raised by the proposed enhancement millage will be collected by the Macomb Intermediate School District and allocated in accordance with Section 705 of the Revised School Code to local public school districts within the boundaries of the Macomb Intermediate School District for special education purposes with such revenue allocation being applied first to pay unfunded balance of the costs which would otherwise be payable by each local school district to the Macomb Intermediate School District for certain special education center programs.

Shall the limitation on the amount of ad valorem taxes which may be imposed on taxable property in the Macomb Intermediate School District, Michigan, be increased by 1.2 mill (\$1.20 per thousand dollars of taxable value) for a period of twenty (20) years, 2011 to 2030, inclusive, as new additional millage to provide operating funds to enhance other state and local funding for local school district special education operating purposes? It is estimated that 1.2 mill would raise approximately \$27.5 million when first levied in 2011.

The revenue from this millage will be disbursed to or for the benefit of the following school districts:

Anchor Bay School District  
Armada Area Schools  
Center Line Public Schools  
Chippewa Valley Schools  
Clintondale Community Schools  
East Detroit Public Schools  
Fitzgerald Public Schools  
Fraser Public Schools  
Lake Shore Public Schools  
Lakeview Public Schools  
L'Anse Creuse Public Schools

Mount Clemens Community Schools  
New Haven Community Schools  
Richmond Community Schools  
Romeo Community Schools  
Roseville Community Schools  
South Lake Schools  
Utica Community Schools  
Van Dyke Public Schools  
Warren Consolidated Schools  
Warren Woods Public Schools

Funding would go first to Utica Community Schools and other county districts to pay unfunded special education costs that must otherwise be paid from the district's budget.

Ad valorem – commonly known as property tax.

The cost to the owner of a \$120,000 home (\$60,000 taxable value) would be roughly \$72 a year.

However, the actual cost could be less after applicable tax credits are taken.

Funds would be shared among all Macomb County school districts based on enrollment, with the largest share coming to Utica Community Schools – estimated to be \$6 million the first year.

- ➔ **It would cost an average Macomb County homeowner approximately 20 cents a day.**  
The cost to the owner of a \$120,000 home (\$60,000

taxable value) would be roughly \$72 a year. However, the actual cost could be less after applicable tax credits. To calculate your cost, go to: [www.mytaxcalc.com/MacombISD](http://www.mytaxcalc.com/MacombISD).

**Our kids  
Our Future**  
All UCS kids  
are special!



## November 8 MISD special education election

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A county-wide ballot such as this is the only option voters have to impact their local schools.

It is estimated the levy would generate \$6 million annually for Utica Community Schools for use in all UCS classrooms. Approval would restore a little more than one-fourth of the funding lost due to declining property values and state cutbacks since 2008. These important resources would benefit all students by relieving the pressure on the district's general operating budget to support existing special education programs.

The need for this proposal is real. Voters in Kalamazoo, Midland and Monroe counties have already approved enhancement millage proposals for special education in their schools and a similar request for 1.4 mills will be on the ballot in Saginaw.

More information about the MISD special education enhancement millage proposal, including voter registration, applying for absentee ballots and polling places can be found on [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org) and clicking on this icon:



## UCS making the grade continued from page 1

academic indicators set by the state including graduation or attendance rates.

The EducationYES! School Report Cards are a compilation of student scores on the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) and Michigan Merit Exam (MME) tests; the MI-Access alternate assessments for

students with disabilities; AYP designation; and self-reported school performance indicators - such as family involvement in the school, curriculum, student attendance and teacher professional development.

As the chart below indicates, UCS is once again on the state and nation's honor roll.

### MICHIGAN SCHOOL REPORT CARD for Utica Community Schools Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) | Education Yes! Grades

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
<b>Elementary Schools</b>	<b>AYP / Grade</b>	<b>AYP / Grade</b>	<b>AYP / Grade</b>
<i>Beacon Tree</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Beck Centennial</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Browning</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Burr</i>	Yes / B	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Collins</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Crissman</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>DeKeyser</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Dresden</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Duncan</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Ebeling</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Flickinger</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Graebner</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Harvey</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Havel</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Messmore</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Monfort</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Morgan</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Oakbrook</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Plumbrook</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Roberts</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Schuchard</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Schwarzhoff</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Switzer</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>West Utica</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Wiley</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<b>Junior High Schools</b>	<b>AYP / Grade</b>	<b>AYP / Grade</b>	<b>AYP / Grade</b>
<i>Bemis</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Davis</i>	Yes / A	Yes / B	Yes / A
<i>Eppler</i>	Yes / B	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Heritage</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Jeannette</i>	Yes / B	Yes / B	Yes / B
<i>Malow</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Shelby</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<b>Senior High Schools</b>	<b>AYP / Grade</b>	<b>AYP / Grade</b>	<b>AYP / Grade</b>
<i>Eisenhower</i>	Yes / A	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Henry Ford II</i>	Yes / B	Yes / A	Yes / A
<i>Stevenson</i>	Yes / B	Yes / B	Yes / B
<i>Utica</i>	Yes / B	Yes / B	Yes / B
<b>Utica Community Schools AYP</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes

School districts do not receive letter grades.

## From the Superintendent... continued from page 1

students throughout their K-12 experience in UCS will prepare to continue their education after high school, be it college or some other type of career or post-secondary training.

Since then, we have made the right changes within our available resources. We have put the right supports in place to position students where they need to be if they are to succeed in the global economy they will soon enter.

This summer, Georgetown University released a report entitled "The Undereducated American." This study served to reinforce how the world-class academic programming and college culture we provide in Utica Community Schools are absolutely vital to our nation's status as a world leader.

Georgetown looked at projected areas of job growth over the next 10 to 15 years. It also examined the income projections of workers with post-secondary degrees versus those with only a high school diploma. And it gave unsettling predictions about a growing income gap and America's position in preparing an educated work force relative to other world challengers in our global economy.

The study found that America has long been under-producing college-educated workers and identified the need for 20 million more by the year 2025.

According to the report, it was the college-educated American who found wage growth and stability in recent decades. It pointed out that this recent recession was the most difficult for those without degrees.

The unemployment rate among those without a high school diploma is nearly three times higher than that of college graduates - 15 percent versus a little over four percent.

To the UCS community, this information shows we are on the right path when it comes to creating a college culture. We are making a difference. Our kids are reaching higher:

- We have the highest number of students in Michigan taking Advanced Placement classes and we now offer AP in every UCS junior high school. In fact, since 2007 our AP enrollment has increased almost 60 percent.
- This year, 296 UCS students earned top national honors from the College Board, for their performance on multiple Advanced Placement exams.
- Across our elementary schools, the number of students taking advanced mathematics at the junior high schools has quadrupled.
- UCS students posted Macomb County's highest Michigan Merit Exam scores in mathematics, writing and social studies - and the second highest in reading and science. Eisenhower, Ford II, Stevenson and Utica High schools are four of the top five performers in Macomb County on the ACT this year.
- In just one short year of existence, our UCS AdvancePath Academy has already quadrupled the number of alternative education students who earned their high school diplomas. Even more impressive is the fact that every AdvancePath graduate in the class of 2011 left us with plans to pursue higher education.

- This year, Stevenson High School and Jeannette Junior High are introducing the AVID program (Advanced Via Individual Determination), which targets students who are motivated to attend college but need additional support to reach their potential. Some of these students will likely be the

continued on page 4

## District Calendar 2011-2012

### October 11

MEAP testing window begins

### October 12

PSAT exam – grade 10

### October 31

Elementary half day – records

### November 4

First marking period ends

### November 8

No school –

Staff professional development

### November 9 – 22

P/T conference window

### November 17

Half day for all students –

Parent/teacher conferences

### November 23 – 25

No school – Thanksgiving break

### December 23 – January 3

No school – Holiday break

### January 4, 2012

Classes resume

### January 16

No school –

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

### January 18

Secondary half day – records

### January 19

Half day for all – records

### January 20

Second marking period ends

Half day for all – records

### January 31 – February 10

Elementary conference window

### February 20 – 24

No school – Mid-winter break

### February 28 – March 9

Secondary conference window

### March 6 – 8

ACT/MME testing – grade 11

### March 30

Third marking period ends

### April 2 – 9

No school – Spring break

### April 10

Classes resume

### May 25

No school

### May 28

No school – Memorial Day

### June 12

Secondary half day – records

### June 13

Secondary half day – records

### June 14

Last day for students

Half day for all

## UCSI a finalist for Automation Alley Educational Program of the Year



UCSI Mechatronics II seniors Amanda Ogryzek and Adam Drotar master skills in electrical control logic. This technology is commonly used to control motors and other electrical components. After attending morning classes at UCSI, they and their classmates return to their home schools: Amanda to Utica High School and Adam to Stevenson High School where they complete the instructional day.

Automation Alley, Michigan's largest technology business association, has chosen to honor the Utica Center for Science and Industry (UCSI) as one of three education finalists at its annual awards gala on Friday, October 14 at MGM Grand Detroit.

Automation Alley executive director Ken Rogers said, "Some of our nation's most renowned leaders and innovators have called this region their home. They were pioneers in their fields, and they left a legacy of knowledge and technological advancements that are now part of our everyday lives. This year's award finalists are continuing that legacy in their work. We'd like to honor them for their accomplishments and thank them for forging the path toward a brighter technology future."

UCSI is a specialized academic program for students in grades 9-12 conducted at the district's Joan C. Sergent Instructional Resource Center. UCSI encompasses three courses of study: engineering

technology, mechatronics (the study of engineering disciplines to produce complex robotic devices) and multimedia technology.

Students split their school day between their home school and UCSI where they pursue an integrated, thematic curriculum that teaches rigorous high school content expectations in mathematics, English language arts and the core technical program.

UCSI seniors will finish with a portfolio and extensive real-world experience working with industry professionals. They will have completed courses designed in partnership with postsecondary institutions including Macomb Community College and Michigan Technological University. This collaboration allows UCSI students to earn articulated college credit while still in high school.

Initially established through a federal grant, UCSI has begun its fourth year and will graduate its first group of seniors in 2012.

## From the Superintendent... continued from page 3

first in their family to earn a college degree.

- We implemented the Utica Center for Science and Industry. Our UCSI works hand in hand with colleges and businesses to validate instruction and make sure our students have real-world learning experiences in mechatronics, engineering technology and multi-media production so they can leave our schools with the skills, knowledge – and perhaps most importantly, purpose – to succeed in post-secondary learning and land tomorrow's good paying jobs.
- We put in place the Utica Academy for International Studies (International Baccalaureate), which is set to graduate its first senior class in June. Indeed, our IB World School provides students a global view with opportunities to match that are just what is called for in the Georgetown study.

Since 2007, we've made the right changes to our teaching and learning process that made it possible for the 2,158 Utica Community Schools graduates of 2011 to meet all the rigorous requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum, including Algebra II and chemistry or physics. They were the first class required to do so and they made all of us proud.

We again did the right thing in creating opportunities that enabled our 2011 graduates to earn more than \$12 million dollars in college scholarships and gain acceptance to more than 125 colleges and universities.

We, as a school-community, made the difference in these children's lives and we did it together. Now together we must use the positive energy that started this school year to continue making that difference and opening doors of opportunity for the more than 29,000 children in our schools today and all those yet to come.

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



586.797.1000

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Daily updates about Utica Community Schools are available on:



Access all sites via [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org)

