

Board Briefs

Regular Meeting - Monday, August 8, 2011

Dr. Johns reported on MME-ACT results, College Board AP scholars, Camp Literacy, construction at Utica High and the bus fleet inspection

Superintendent Dr. Christine M. Johns reported that our schools, offices and grounds are humming with activity in preparation for another year of student learning, achievement and success. From one end of Utica Community Schools to the other, she said, district employees are getting our buses ready to roll, our buildings ready to open and our outstanding academic programs ready for the more than 29,100 children entrusted to us in new school year.

Dr. Johns expressed confidence that our students will continue reaching higher academic goals in the coming year, just as they did in 2010-11. In fact, she said that over the summer UCS received the great news that our students are once again at the head of the countywide class on the latest Michigan Merit Exam-ACT assessment taken by all high school juniors.

She said UCS students posted Macomb County's highest MME scores in mathematics, writing and social studies – and the second highest in reading and science. She added that on the ACT portion of the test, Eisenhower, Ford II and Stevenson scored first, second and third among the county's 27 high schools, with Utica High rounding out the top five spots.

Equally impressive, she reported, is the district's MME trend data over five years, which indicates UCS has increased its student scores by nine points in math, nine points in writing, seven points in reading and five points in science.

Dr. Johns went on to say that the district's academic good news continues: this summer we also learned that 296 UCS students earned top national honors from the College Board, which administers the Advanced Placement course exams. Scores of 3, 4 or 5 on the tests can qualify students for college credit. Those honored include:

- 130 students who were named AP Scholars for attaining scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams.
- 65 students who achieved AP Scholar with Honor status for an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on four or more exams.

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- 91 students who attained AP Scholar with Distinction status for average scores of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on five or more exams.
- And 10 UCS students reached the highest level – National Scholar – with average scores of at least 4 on all AP exams taken and scores of 4 or higher on eight or more exams.

Dr. Johns commented that 125 elementary students attending Camp Literacy – the district’s award-winning summer learning program – were completing their final week. The program provided the students with 60 hours of reading and writing instruction in a fun, relaxed learning environment.

She added that in the closing weeks of summer, large numbers of UCS secondary-level students are taking part in band camps and athletic team practices to sharpen their skills for the coming year.

Dr. Johns reported that this summer Utica High School is undergoing the first of a multi-year bond issue construction project that will bring parity to the school, as was promised to voters in 2009 when the bonds were passed.

When work is completed in August 2013, she added, Utica High will have a new media center, new science classrooms, improved mechanical systems, hallway upgrades and a more secure building entrance. She added that the district was able to secure federal grant assistance that will save district taxpayers more than 10 million dollars in interest costs on the project.

Dr. Johns concluded her report by saying that the UCS transportation department and mechanics scored 99.6 percent on this summer’s bus inspection by the Michigan State Police. With only one more bus to be inspected at the time of the her report, a perfect score was anticipated. She added that the veteran officer who conducted the inspections commented that our fleet is one of the best maintained he has ever seen.

**Board grants
easement for county
hike/bike trail**

The Board of Education approved a request from the City of Utica for an easement at the western edge of the Eppler Junior High School property. The easement will allow for construction of a segment of the countywide hike/bike trail designed to span 70 miles through 16 Macomb County communities.

**UFT tentative
agreement ratified**

The Board ratified a one-year tentative contract agreement in effect from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 between the school district the Utica Federation of Teachers. The UFT represents Adult Education, Utica Learning Academy and English as a Second Language teachers.

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Administrative appointments

The following administrative appointments were approved by the Board, effective August 9, 2011:

- Michele VanDeKerkhove – Executive Administrator of Schools.
- Jami L. Wood – Elementary School Principal
- John W. Hurley III – Elementary School Principal
- Lori Pevoteaux – High School Associate Principal

Dr. Johns also informed the Board of Education that principal Karen Zimmerman was transferred from West Utica Elementary to become the principal at Monfort Elementary and principal Bradley Suggs was transferred from Collins Elementary to become the principal at West Utica Elementary. As transfers, neither change required Board action.

Contracts awarded

The Board awarded the following contracts:

- Community Assessment Referral Education (C.A.R.E.) Student Assistance Center annual contract renewal through June 30, 2012
- Contracts with Career Staff Unlimited, Educational-Based Services, Ultimate Care Transportation and Mainstream Rehabilitation for professional special education services
- Netech Corporation for infrastructure relocation and installation
- Apple Inc. and InacompTSG for computers and instructional technology purchases