



Strategic Plan

2023-2028

UticaK12.org

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A MESSAGE FROM
the Superintendent



Welcome to UCS Empowered!

The document you now hold is Utica Community Schools plan for how we will create a better future for today’s students and future generations. It was developed through the leadership of our Board of Education and in partnership with community members who served on planning teams or provided feedback through surveys or school meetings. This plan was formally adopted by the Board of Education on April 17, 2023 as the road map that will guide our future success.

This document contains the work and aspirations of an entire community. It is now time to act upon these dreams to make them a reality.

Utica Community Schools is a district with a proud tradition of excellence. We will honor and respect this storied legacy as we reimagine what school can be for our students.

If at any time you have questions or comments, I encourage you to speak to your school’s principal, call my office at (586) 797-1100 or email us at ucs@uticak12.org.

I look forward to taking this journey with you.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Monroe
Superintendent of Schools

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Strategic Planning Process

The development of Utica Community Schools strategic plan reflects the many voices of members across our community – from faculty and program leaders to parents and students. To ensure every stakeholder had the opportunity to be heard, Utica Community Schools partnered with Hanover Research (a research firm that helps clients in K-12 education and other sectors make informed decisions, identify and seize opportunities, and heighten their effectiveness) to gather and analyze data from all sectors of the community.

The strategic plan was built in four phases:

PREPARATION

Gathering Information

- Community survey (Board of Education members, staff, parents, and secondary students).
- Discussions with staff at all 40 school and program sites.
- Meetings with the UCS Parent Network, leaders from all 10 employee groups, and athletic program leaders.

RESEARCH

Analysis of Data

- Analysis of stakeholder perceptions from surveys, site visits, and group meetings.
- Analysis of student enrollment, demographics, performance results, attendance, and human and financial resources.
- Facility and infrastructure review.

ACTION PLAN

Plan Development

- Workgroups consisting of a representative group of administrators, teachers, other staff, parents, and students contributed to developing the plan.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PROGRESS

Plan Deployment

- Once the plan was approved by the Board of Education, the strategic actions began to be implemented. At regular intervals, progress toward reaching the desired outcomes will be monitored.



District Demographics and Data

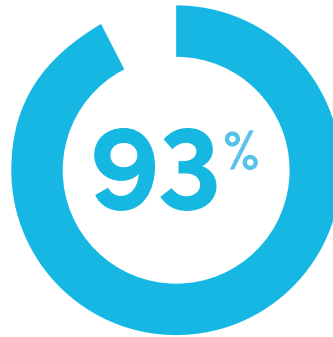
As Michigan's second largest school district, Utica Community Schools is comprised of students from different ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. With more than 25,000 students, we aim to provide educational opportunities that are as unique as the students who walk through our doors.

STUDENTS

25,875

Total Student Enrollment

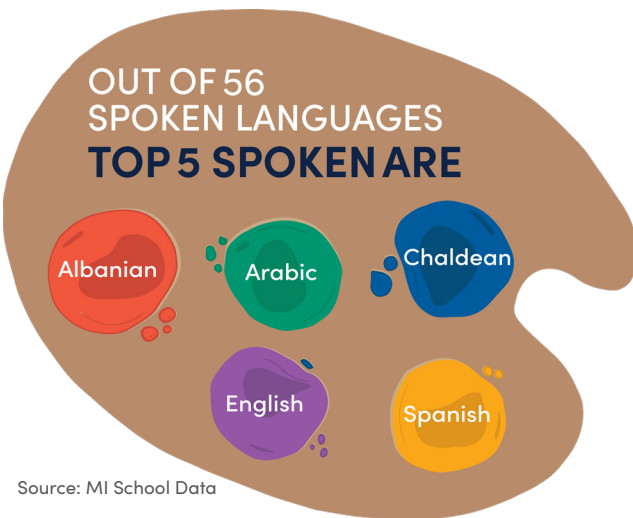
Source: MI School Data, 2021-2022 School year



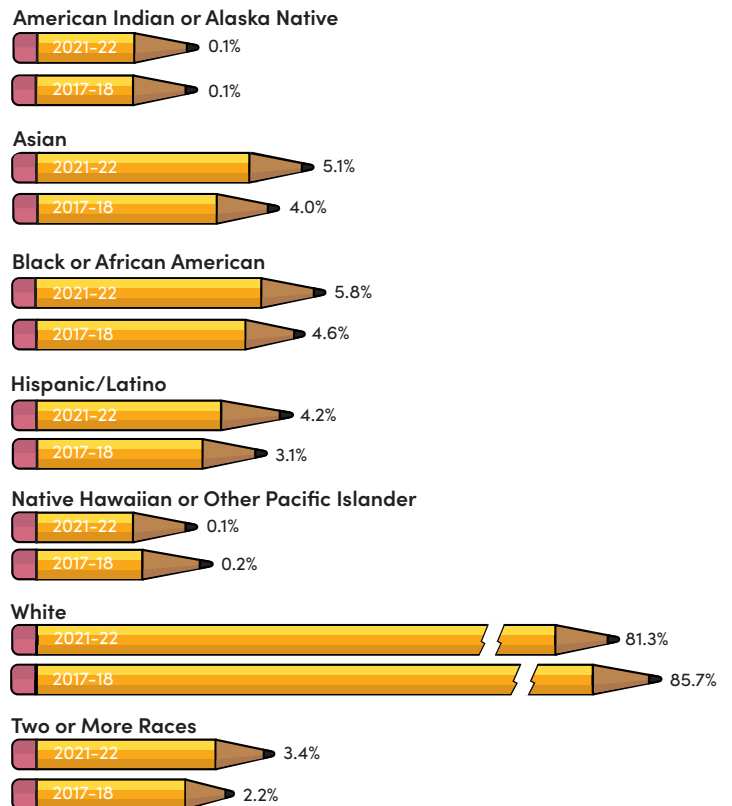
4-Year graduation rate
Source: MI School Data, Class of 2022



Average daily attendance
Source: MI School Data, 2021-2022 School year



TOTAL ENROLLMENT - RACE/ETHNICITY 2021-2022 compared to 2017-2018

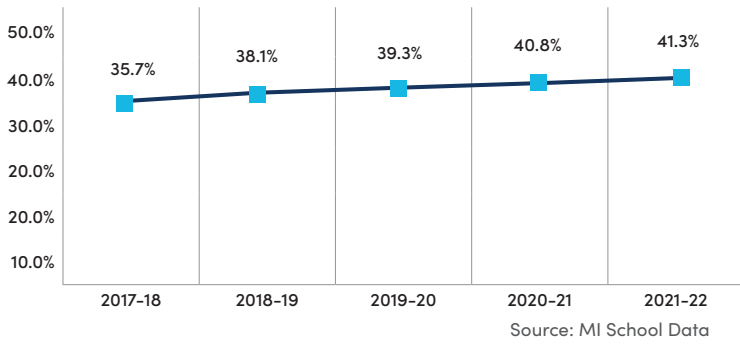


Source: MI School Data

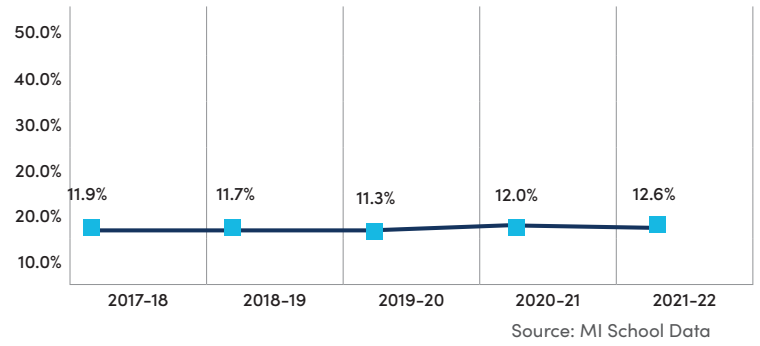


TOTAL ENROLLMENT – OTHER GROUPS

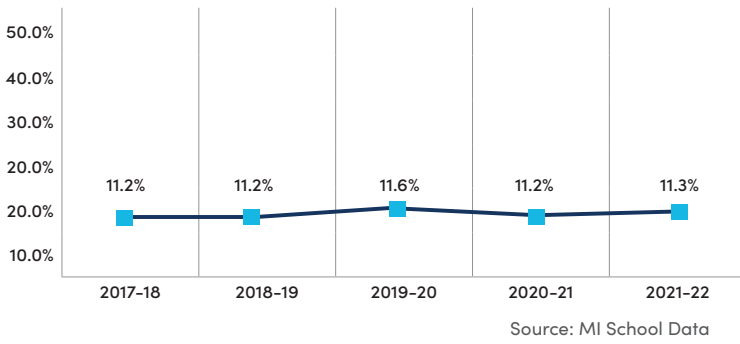
Economically Disadvantaged



English Learners



Students With Disabilities



REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES



2021-2022
Total revenue
\$327,183,658

- **Federal - 9%**
\$29,360,949
- **Local - 11%**
\$35,921,362
- **State - 74%**
\$243,611,371
- **Interdistrict - 6%**
from Macomb Intermediate School District
\$18,289,976



2021-2022
Expenditures on
classroom instruction




FACILITIES – YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION GROUPED BY SIMILAR DESIGNS

High Schools		Elementary Schools		Elementary Schools	
Eisenhower	1971	Messmore	1966	Harvey	1962
Henry Ford II	1971	Morgan	1966	Plumbrook	1962
		Rose Kidd	1966	Switzer	1963
Utica	1954	Schwarzkoﬀ	1966	Flickinger	1964
Stevenson	1968	Collins	1968		
Junior High Schools		Monfort	1968	West Utica	1958
Davis	1968	Administrative Services Center at Gibbing	1968	Browning	1959
Malow	1969	Community Education Center at Walsh	1969		
		Crissman	1969	Burr	1951
Eppler	1929			Wiley	1951
Bemis	1959	DeKeyser	1971	Dresden	1957
Shelby	1963	Oakbrook	1971	Beacon Tree	2004
		Graebner	1972	Ebeling	1978
Heritage	1977	Roberts	1971	Schuchard	1978
Jeannette	1981	Havel	1972		
Educational Sites				Beck	1997
Training and Development Center/Alternative Learning Center	1984	Instructional Resource Center	2001	Duncan	2001


School Buildings with similar design

Uniquely Designed Facilities

School Building Repurposed for District Use



SCHOOLS
25 Elementary Schools
7 Junior High Schools
4 Comprehensive High Schools
1 Alternative High School



PROGRAMS
Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Studies
Stevenson MADE (Manufacturing, Automation and Design Engineering)
Utica Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology
Utica Center for Science and Industry
UCS Virtual Academy
Utica High School Academy for Health and Human Services



Community Survey Results

The Community Survey was distributed to the district community to identify the priorities at the forefront of the district's strategic plan. District stakeholders, including Board of Education members, district staff, administrators, school staff, families and students were all surveyed to gather their perceptions of district performance. The findings from this study helped Utica Community Schools identify priorities and areas of need in the strategic planning process. Here are some of our findings:

PRIORITY AREAS THE DISTRICT SHOULD FOCUS ON:



Retaining high quality staff



Assessing program impact on student achievement



Addressing students' mental health and well-being



Developing and placing effective school leaders



Recruiting high quality staff

AREAS WHERE THE DISTRICT CURRENTLY EXCELS:



Delivering a challenging curriculum



Setting high expectations for all students



Communicating with families



Fostering continuous development of 21st century skills



Delivering a relevant and engaging curriculum

AREAS WHERE THE DISTRICT SHOULD IMPROVE:



Exploring alternative disciplinary practices



Ensuring funding for programs supporting disadvantaged students



Addressing students' mental health and well-being



Recruiting staff who are as diverse as the student body



Maintaining optimal staffing levels



Vision, Mission and Core Values

As part of the strategic plan, Utica Community Schools Executive Leadership Team worked with the Board of Education to re-evaluate and reinvigorate our vision, mission and values to better reflect the future of the district. The following vision and mission statements were adopted by the UCS Board of Education on August 15, 2022.



VISION

Definition: A collective expression of an organization's aspirations.

Utica Community Schools, in partnership with our community, will empower students to positively transform their future and the world.



MISSION

Definition: An overview of the steps to achieve an organization's future vision.

Utica Community Schools ignites a passion for learning in all students. We strengthen our community by welcoming all learners, honoring culture, and inspiring remarkable growth and achievement.

WE ACCOMPLISH THIS BY:

- Ensuring students are at the heart of all decisions
- Collaborating with all stakeholders
- Providing a safe and supportive environment
- Encouraging mindsets that are open to innovation
- Reimagining what school can be
- Promoting high expectations throughout Utica Community Schools
- Committing to multiple pathways toward excellence and achievement for all

CORE VALUES

STUDENT-CENTERED We will ensure the individual and collective needs of students are at the forefront when decisions are made	EXCELLENCE We commit to making every interaction, experience, and work product, of the highest quality	EQUITY We will provide students, families, and staff members with the experiences and resources they need to thrive	WELL-BEING We will promote overall wellness (mental, social, and physical health) for all students and staff members	TEAMWORK We will collaboratively engage with students, families, staff members, and the greater community to reach our goals
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Profile of a Graduate

We are committed to ensuring every student has the academic knowledge and skills as well as a range of other competencies that are needed to be successful in education, career, family, and community.



CHARACTER

- Proactive stance toward life and learning to learn
- Grit, tenacity, perseverance and resilience
- Empathy, compassion and integrity in action

CONTRIBUTOR

- Having a global perspective
- Commitment to humanity and well-being through empathy and compassion for diverse values and views
- Solving ambiguous and complex problems in the real world to benefit others

COLLABORATOR

- Working interdependently as a team
- Interpersonal and team-related skills
- Social, emotional, and intercultural skills
- Managing team dynamics and challenges

COMMUNICATOR

- Communication designed for audience
- Message advocates a purpose and makes an impact
- Reflection to further develop and improve communication
- Use voice to advance humanity

CREATOR

- Economic and social entrepreneurialism
- Asking questions leading to discovery
- Pursuing and expressing novel ideas and solutions
- Leadership to turn ideas into action

CRITICAL THINKER

- Evaluating information and arguments
- Making connections and identifying patterns
- Meaningful knowledge construction
- Experimenting, reflecting and taking action on ideas in the real world



Strategic Priorities

Our strategic plan will focus on three main priorities.

<p>CULTURE OF EMPOWERMENT</p> <p>Ensuring all students are engaged in experiences leading to the academic growth and achievement enabling them to prepare for the careers of their choosing.</p>	<p>CULTURE OF CARING</p> <p>Ensuring a sense of belonging and inclusion to foster engagement in a safe and respectful community.</p>	<p>CULTURE OF TRANSFORMATION</p> <p>Ensuring programming, resources and facilities support reimagining UCS.</p>
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The subsequent pages outline the following for each priority:

- THEORY OF ACTION**

→ A statement that outlines an organization’s belief and assumptions about what will lead to long-term success and change. The statement articulates how an organization will move from its current state to its desired future state.
- PRIORITY FOCUS**

→ Priorities are the areas of policy or practice that UCS will focus on for change.
- STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

→ The means through which UCS translates its vision and mission into practice.
- DESIRED OUTCOMES**

→ The ideal state as a result of the implementation of the strategic actions.
- STRATEGIC ACTIONS**

→ Activities aligned with each priority focus and strategic initiative that describe specific actions UCS will take to reach the desired outcomes.
- KEY PROGRESS INDICATORS**

→ Measures used to monitor the progress in meeting the desired outcomes.



Culture of Empowerment

THEORY OF ACTION

IF WE...

Provide all students access to a relevant, engaging, and challenging curriculum; high-quality instruction; along with early, timely, and appropriate interventions.

Provide all students access to the materials, technology, equipment, and resources necessary for their learning.

Ensure all educators, leaders, and other staff are trained, supported, and accountable for student success.

THEN...

All students will have the experiences they need to prepare for the college and career of their choosing and for life.

SO THAT...

Every student will graduate empowered for post-secondary success.



Culture of Empowerment

OUR PRIORITY FOCUS

Excellence, equity and access

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Dynamic, responsive learning environments

DESIRED OUTCOMES

For Students

- Clear, articulated multi-tiered system of teaching and learning including curriculum, instruction, intervention, and assessment.
- Increased academic opportunity, options and achievement for UCS pre-K to post-secondary students including unique learners.
- Opportunities for deep learning exist for students utilizing relevant experiences and community/business partnerships.

For Staff

- Professional environments that promote and embrace innovation to ensure student learning.
- World-class professional learning experiences for all staff.

For Utica Community Schools

- Use assessment for learning versus assessment of learning.
- Use data collection and analysis to develop insight into the state of the district, and to allow for data-driven decision-making and planning across the system.
- Thorough program evaluation structures in place that measure the effectiveness of academic programming.

We will ensure all students are engaged in experiences leading to their academic growth and achievement enabling them to prepare for the careers of their choosing.



Culture of Empowerment

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

KEY PROGRESS INDICATORS

- Ensure professional development is student centered, culturally responsive for staff and students, and sustainable to ensure long-term positive impact on teaching and learning.
 - Prioritize collaborative professional learning models to create coherence with curriculum, instruction and assessment.
 - Focus professional learning on instructional improvement in the core areas of literacy, mathematics, science and social studies.
 - Develop and implement regular efficacy reports for all academic programs in the district.
 - Increase mentorship opportunities for students and staff using existing and exploring new programs.
 - Explore and implement additional community partnerships throughout UCS with focus on Career and Technical Education.
 - Implement a balanced assessment system across the district articulating purpose, timeline and action for all formative, normative and summative assessments.
 - Ensure equity of learning opportunities across the district by amending enrollment criteria for programs, recruiting underrepresented students, and monitoring supports for student success.
 - Implement course selection process to encourage challenging course taking for students as appropriate.
- Continue county leadership in M-STEP, PSAT, SAT, AP performance.
 - Achieve state and national top decile in PSAT, SAT, AP performance.
 - Increase percentage of students demonstrating grade level proficiency via state assessments each year.
 - Grow enrollments in specialty programs annually.
 - Grow underrepresented student participation in specialty and AP programs annually.
 - Increase participation and passing rate on AP/IB exams annually.
 - Increase participation in Career and Technical Education programs annually.
 - Grow student credentialing opportunities annually.
 - Grow participation in extra and cocurricular offerings annually.
 - Grow frequency and volume of professional learning opportunities for staff annually considering needs and feedback.
 - Publish UCS multi-tiered system of supports resource guide.
 - Publish UCS deep learning opportunity resource guide.
 - Publication and utilization of assesment playbook integrated into MTSS model.



Culture of Caring

THEORY OF ACTION

IF WE...	THEN...	SO THAT...
<p>Establish and maintain a comprehensive and integrated system of support addressing the safety, mental health, and social and emotional needs of students and staff.</p> <p>Create and maintain a safe and supportive learning and working environment, with systems designed to develop and build leadership capacity.</p> <p>Ensure families feel welcomed, valued, and empowered as partners in their children's success.</p>	<p>We will create an environment that fosters connectedness, inclusivity, creativity, and well-being.</p>	<p>Students will be prepared to achieve success in the present and in the future.</p>



Culture of Caring

OUR PRIORITY FOCUS

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Healthy Community

Wellness
Engagement
Safety and Security

We will ensure a sense of belonging and inclusion to foster engagement in a safe and respectful community.

For Students

- Students will acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making as they engage in their learning.
- Each student is welcomed, celebrated, connected, and supported in a safe learning environment that meets the needs of the whole person.

For Staff

- Staff will exhibit high levels of both self and team efficacy.
- All staff are welcomed, celebrated, and connected.
- Each staff member has the support necessary to meet the needs of the whole child.

For Utica Community Schools

- Engagement between families and their child's school.
- Students, families, and staff regularly provide feedback and share input on key district and school decisions.
- All areas of the organization contribute to creating a safe and secure environment throughout UCS.



Culture of Caring

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

KEY PROGRESS INDICATORS

- Utilize the Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process to emphasize wellness priorities throughout the district (Wellness Goal). Actions may include but are not limited to the following; continuation of Character Strong Partnership, addition of social and emotional learning curriculum, professional learning opportunities in the areas of trauma informed and restorative practices.
 - Maintain UCS Wellness Resources Center for UCS stakeholders.
 - Prioritize celebrating success and positive reinforcements at the building and district level for both staff and students. Actions may include but are not limited to the following; enhanced use of the new Utica Community Schools website, social media posts, UCS Podcademy sessions, and Board Recognition.
 - Utilize operating and grant funds to support student wellbeing.
 - Provide resources that support the whole child including safety and security, social, emotional, and nutritional.
 - Enhance available social and emotional learning supports for students.
 - Enhance existing procedures to monitor and provide supports for students who are chronically absent (supports/resources for both student and family).
 - Increase parent engagement through the Parent Network, English Learner Family Liaisons, provision of options for parents with both virtual and in-person conferences and other opportunities.
 - Establish consistent systemic vehicles for securing both input and feedback from all stakeholders on key decisions.
 - Establish system-wide approach to sustained training as related to a safe and secure learning environment. Training would include but not limited to the following areas: Standard Response Protocols, Run-Hide-Fight, CPR, Stop the Bleed, AED, Crisis Prevention Intervention and Threat Assessment.
- Increase in reports of feeling safe, engaged, and celebrated throughout the school district as demonstrated by survey results from students, families, and staff (MiPHY and other district sponsored surveys).
 - Improve student on track attendance.
 - Reduce student behavior incidents leading to discipline as measured by discipline data in student information system.
 - Increase family participation in classroom, building, and district programs and activities.

Culture of Transformation

THEORY OF ACTION

IF WE...

Allocate financial resources based on student needs.

Ensure there are effective educators, leaders, and other staff at every level of the organization focused on improving student outcomes.

Ensure each student has access to facilities that are designed, maintained, and utilized in line with modern building standards, safety, and in ways that meet students' needs.

THEN...

Students will have equitable access to curricular and extra-curricular resources and spaces that will enable the highest levels of student performance, development, and competition.

SO THAT...

All students will acquire the passion and skills to positively transform their future.



Culture of Transformation

OUR PRIORITY FOCUS

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Sustainable Innovation

- Design of authentic and relevant learning experiences
- Budget strategically with sustainability
- Recruit and retain students and staff
- Long-range facility and asset planning

We will ensure programming, resources and facilities support reimagining UCS.

For Students

- All students will have access to the experiences and supports to prepare for the college and career of their choosing and to thrive as a citizen in their community.
- Students have access to extra and cocurricular learning spaces that enable high levels of student performance, development, and competition.

For Staff

- All staff will have access to the materials, equipment, resources, and spaces needed to carry out their job responsibilities.

For Utica Community Schools

- The district will maintain a strong financial position that continues a stable and sustainable fund balance, recognizing the long-term financial health of the district ensures the resources are available to meet the needs of a diverse student population and continued student success.
- The district will ensure the recruitment and retention of a high-quality diverse workforce, the development of effective educational leaders, and a school culture that engages and fosters collaboration, respect, and inclusion for all staff and students.
- The district is prepared for changes in enrollment levels and the impact on resource allocation and facilities.
- Facilities are safe, modern, and comfortable for students and staff.



Culture of Transformation

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

KEY PROGRESS INDICATORS

- Invest in facilities and programming to meet the needs of our earliest learners.
 - Expand learning opportunities for students at all levels and programs that include relevant experiences and community partnerships.
 - Expand recruiting activities that provide more opportunities to attract greater workforce diversity.
 - Support new recruits with peer mentor programs and provide equitable leadership and internship opportunities.
 - Provide a positive on-boarding experience, transparent and equitable pathways for advanced career opportunities and wellness support programs.
 - Leverage our top in state salary scale and healthcare programs to support recruitment and retention that maintains low attrition rates.
 - Encourage and assist in the creation of succession plans for each department to ensure continuity of instructional and support services.
 - Facilities will support the safety and security of all students, families, and staff.
 - Invest in facilities designed to promote creativity, collaboration and critical thinking including extra and co-curricular spaces.
 - Regularly maintain district facilities and assets.
 - Enhance and replace instructional technology.
 - Demonstrate responsible stewardship of the public's investment with transparency and accountability in budgeting, efficient utilization of school district resources, and excellence in financial reporting.
 - Maintain an adequate fund balance for general operating cashflow, potential funding shortfalls, and delivery of uninterrupted services, while sustaining investment grade bond ratings.
 - Obtain the Association of School Business Officials International award for excellence in financial reporting annually as well as receive an unmodified (clean) audit report.
- Achieve a clean financial audit opinion on an annual basis.
 - Annually earn national financial reporting award.
 - Maximize full funding with local revenues and grant opportunities.
 - Maintain or increase student enrollment.
 - Retain staff in all employee groups.
 - Renovate or construct new facilities (schools, sites, athletic fields, playgrounds).
 - Maintain and replace district assets, as needed.



The Road Ahead

UCS Empowered creates a path that our community will travel to take an exemplary school district to an even higher level. The route was designed hand in hand with the dreams and hopes that were articulated by representative voices in our school community.

The direction charted here identifies our priorities, focus and investment strategies. It will leverage the partnership of staff, students, families and community members to inform current and future work and proactively address the challenges that may face our school community.

The plan embeds excellence in everything we do. Our plan:

- Identifies how our facilities and financial resources will support a safe and positive learning environment and give teachers and students the tools they need to drive achievement.
- Focuses on engaging students to ignite their passion, find a sense of purpose, and grow individually and socially.
- Respects the partnerships we have with the community through district accountability and transparency.

Guiding this plan is the new vision and mission of our district adopted by the UCS Board of Education. We will meet this vision and mission through the actions and evaluation processes identified through UCS Empowered.

Utica Community Schools strategic plan was developed in partnership with Hanover Research, a research firm that provides high-quality, custom research and analytics that helps clients in K-12 education and other sectors to make informed decisions, identify and seize opportunities, and heighten their effectiveness.





Questions? Email questions@uticak12.org