

**UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
Joan C. Sergent Instructional Resource Center
14201 Canal Road
Sterling Heights, MI 48313
Regular Meeting
Link no longer active
December 15, 2025
7:00 p.m.**

Present: Nesovski, Meyer, Rankin, Fitzpatrick, Becker, Austerman
Absent: Smolenski

1. Purpose

Mrs. Denyeal Nesovski, Board of Education Vice-President, welcomed everyone to the regular Board of Education meeting. Mrs. Nesovski stated that in the absence of the Board of Education President, Dr. Smolenski, she would be acting president during the meeting. This complies with the Board of Education Policy 8105 – Board of Education Meeting Rules and Procedures.

2. Meeting Called to Order

Motion by Fitzpatrick, support by Rankin, to call the meeting to order.

Motion carried 6-0.

Mrs. Nesovski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Call to order was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Minutes

Motion by Austerman, support by Fitzpatrick, that the minutes be approved as presented.

Motion carried 6-0.

5A. Recognition – Holiday Musical Performance

Dr. Mark Dziatczak, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, stated that he is pleased to begin our holiday season with carols performed by the Eisenhower High School Choir. The choir is under the direction of Julia Holt, Vocal Music Director at Eisenhower High School.

UCS is recognized each year as one of the nation's top music education districts, a distinction made possible by the dedication and excellence of our staff. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Mrs. Holt for her leadership and guidance of this talented group of vocalists. And to our students, thank you for sharing your musical gifts and continuing to pursue your passion here at UCS. Now here for your listening pleasure is the Eisenhower High School Choir.

The Board of Education and Mr. Monroe thanked the students and the director for providing the beautiful music and sharing their passion and talent with them this evening.

5B. Recognition – Rising Star Award

Mr. Monroe stated that this evening we are pleased to recognize Coordinator of Public Relations, Jennifer Kane for receiving the Rising Star award for the State of Michigan. This honor singles out one school public relations professional who is considered an emerging leader by her statewide colleagues. Mrs. Kane is the first ever recipient of this award from the Michigan School Public Relations Association.

In her short time with Utica Community Schools, Mrs. Kane has integrated herself in our school district family and championed innovative communications systems. Her leadership is evident in such visible projects as our complete rebranding initiative, the Legacy of Excellence event, the use of data to improve marketing, the successful Safety and Success bond issue, our media relations, and our kindergarten recruitment and registration process. Her background in broadcasting has brought a new dimension to our multi-media communications.

We are proud to recognize Mrs. Kane for being a Rising Star – both in Utica Community Schools and as a school communications professional in Michigan.

Mr. Monroe introduced Jessica Stilger, president elect of the state communications association, who presented the award to Mrs. Kane.

6. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Monroe stated that the end of a calendar year represents an opportunity to reflect on accomplishments and look forward to what is next. While we are still only half-way through our school year, I want to take a moment to talk about where we are as a school district. In many ways 2025 will be looked back on as a milestone year for our district.

In August, we opened DeKeyser Elementary. The school's focus on a design that fosters innovation, achievement and safety begins a transformation for how we can best support our students and teachers.

We also began a process that takes a deep look at our student achievement and how we can take a strong school district to its next level. This work continues into the new year and will result in specific actions that are designed to improve outcomes for all students.

These projects and many more now underway are rooted in our UCS Empowered strategic plan. It is a plan that came together with strong community input and our shared commitment to high standards. It provided us with a specific road map that sets a specific course to meet our vision of empowering all students.

Over the past weeks, I've discussed our future at many meetings and through communications to our families. The question I often receive is "why now?" Some of the challenges we are embracing are decades in the making. My answer is that we are making these improvements from a position of strength. Our district is still emerging from a period of difficult financial times when we were working to preserve what we had. Those on this Board of Education remember those times, and as leaders, we need to do everything possible to keep our district out of this position in the future. Much of this depends on our state lawmakers. Even more important, we have the team that can make these improvements happen. It is a team that will create stability and student success even as we work towards a brighter future.

We recognize the impact of change on our staff and community. It is also one reason why we announce many of these changes years in advance. We remain committed to ensuring that positive transitions will create new opportunities for our students and those that will enter our doors in the future. We embrace these changes with a respect to the legacy of our school district. Throughout our history, there have been milestone years like 2025. Times when the community came together to chart a course of change that was not always easy, but created the foundation that we enjoy in our district today.

One part of our legacy that will remain is the day-to-day focus on student success and the relationships that are at the center of our culture. Our team works hard to foster effective relationships with families and students that create a network of support and is an inherent part of the UCS success story. This is something in our legacy that will never change. Lastly, I wish everyone in our community a happy and healthy holiday season and the best for a new year.

7A. Forensics Science 1 Course Proposal – First Reading

Kim Charland, Executive Director of Secondary Curriculum and Programs, stated that Forensic Science 1 is a semester-long course designed for students in grades eleven and twelve. It is aligned with the Framework for K–12 Science Education and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) adopted by the State of Michigan in November 2015.

The Utica Community Schools Secondary Science Leadership Team is actively implementing a 3-5-year vision to strengthen secondary science instruction, in alignment with the UCS Strategic Plan. This initiative builds on foundational work that began in 2015, including NGSS training and the restructuring of grades 6-8 science courses. The current focus is on aligning grades 9-12 science courses with the Michigan Science Standards.

As part of this effort, a new course sequence has been developed that integrates Earth Science standards into Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The team is also working to expand elective offerings for students in grades eleven and twelve to fulfill the third science credit required for graduation. To guide this work, surveys were conducted among students in grades 7-12 and science teachers to gather input on areas of interest and inform the development of new elective courses for the 2026-2027 school year. Based on survey results, Forensic Science emerged as a high-interest course.

This course is designed to provide an updated, high-interest science elective for students in grades eleven and twelve. It reflects the evolving vision of Utica Community Schools' secondary science program by providing deep, meaningful and rigorous learning experiences. The course emphasizes scientific inquiry, real-world applications and interdisciplinary connections, ensuring that all students engage with science in ways that foster curiosity, critical thinking and college and career readiness.

This course proposal has been reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Department, Curriculum Leadership Council, and the Curriculum Subcommittee of the Board of Education.

This is the first reading and no action is required at this time.

7B. Attendance Area Adjustments Presentation

Mr. Monroe stated that Dr. Dziatczak will be presenting enrollment projections, age of facilities, and capacity of buildings for elementary schools in Clusters III and IV, and a portion of Cluster II, and the results of the work of the Enrollment Distribution Advisory Committee (EDAC).

Dr. Dziatczak provided an overview of the EDAC process and purpose which is to review enrollment projections and facility utilization within UCS and provide the district with feedback regarding potential amendments to existing education programs and pathways. A summary of EDAC work over the past few years, which began 2023, was presented. This year the EDAC held six meetings where they reviewed the enrollment projections and enrollment patterns for Clusters III and IV schools, reviewed grade configurations change possibilities and reviewed final Clusters II and IV enrollment recommendations. At each meeting options were presented to the committee members. Committee members were provided time during the meetings to consider the options and develop alternatives and to provide written feedback.

Three recommendations surfaced from these meetings. The first recommendation was to amend the school pathway for West Utica Elementary School students so that all West Utica Elementary School students would attend Eppler Junior High School. No attendance area changes would occur. Implementation would occur in the fall of 2027. The second recommendation was to reassign all Dresden Elementary School students to neighboring attendance areas while making final adjustments to the Cluster III attendance areas with implementation in the fall of 2028. The third recommendation is to reassign all Plumbrook Elementary students with implementation in the fall of 2028.

8A. Resolution – Elementary Attendance Area Adjustments

Dr. Dziatczak stated that the Attendance Area Adjustments Report involving schools in Clusters II, III, and IV, presented student enrollment projections, provided the results of the work of the Enrollment Distribution Advisory Committee (EDAC), and conveyed that the recommended adjustments will enable Utica Community Schools to address changes in enrollment, long-standing concerns related to attendance areas, and create stronger neighborhood ties for students.

This evening a recommendation to dissolve the attendance areas for Dresden Elementary School and Plumbrook Elementary School leading to a reassignment of these students to other district elementary schools and make adjustments to the Burr, DeKeyser, Ebeling, Flickinger, Harvey, Monfort, Oakbrook, Schuchard, and Schwarzkoff elementary schools attendance areas is being presented. Also being presented is the assignment of the West Utica Elementary School attendance area to Eppler for junior high school.

The recommendation has been reviewed by district and school administrators, members of the EDAC, and by the Curriculum and Capital Projects subcommittees of the Board of Education.

Motion by Austerman, support by Meyer, that the Board of Education adopt the resolution dissolving the Dresden Elementary School and Plumbrook Elementary School attendance areas and implementing adjustments to the Burr, DeKeyser, Ebeling, Flickinger, Harvey, Monfort, Oakbrook, Schuchard, and Schwarzkoff elementary schools attendance areas to be in effect beginning with the 2028-2029 school year and implementing an adjustment to the Eppler attendance area beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, as presented. Mrs. Rankin called the roll.

Ayes: Austerman, Meyer, Becker, Fitzpatrick, Rankin, Nesovski
Nays: None

Motion carried 6-0.

8B. Resolution – Grade Configurations

Dr. Dziatczak stated that the Grade Configurations Report presented at the Board of Education meeting on November 17, 2025 provided research findings, Teaching and Learning actions, and hallmarks of quality as rationale to change the current elementary, junior high school and high school grade level configurations.

This evening a recommendation to adjust Utica Community Schools grade level configurations for elementary schools to include kindergarten through grade 5, middle schools to include grades 6 through 8, and high schools to include grades 9 through 12 is being presented.

The recommendation has been reviewed by district and school administrators, members of the Enrollment Distribution Advisory Committee (EDAC), and by the Curriculum and Capital Projects subcommittees of the Board of Education.

Motion by Rankin, support by Becker, that the Board of Education adopt the resolution to organize District schools in the following grade level configurations: elementary (kindergarten through grade 5), middle school (grades 6 through 8), and high school (grades 9 through 12) beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, as presented. Mrs. Rankin called the roll. There were no questions or comments from the Board.

Ayes: Becker, Meyer, Fitzpatrick, Austerman, Rankin, Nesovski

Motion carried 6-0.

8C. Resolution – District Provided Professional Development Advisory Committee

Dr. Dziatczak stated that the Michigan Legislature Enacted Section 101 (10) of the State School Aid Act, MCL 388.1701(10), effective October 1, 2019. This section of the State School Aid Act was amended to allow up to thirty-eight hours of qualifying professional development to count as pupil instructional hours. This legislative change was detailed in a communication sent on November 14, 2019, from the Michigan Department of Education.

Upon the recommendation of the district provided professional development advisory committee from its meeting on November 19, 2025, Utica Community Schools will include a maximum of thirty-one professional development hours as pupil instructional hours to take place during the current academic year. The following two years will include thirty-six professional development hours as pupil instructional hours to be held on the dates below.

2025-2026

August 25, 2025
September 17, 2025
October 22, 2025
November 4, 2025
January 14, 2026

2026-2027

August 27, 2026
August 28, 2026
September 16, 2026
October 21, 2026
November 3, 2026
January 27, 2027

2027-2028

August 26, 2027
August 27, 2027
September 16, 2027
October 20, 2027
November 2, 2027
January 25, 2028

As required, at least eight hours of qualifying professional development counted as hours of pupil instruction under this subsection must be recommended by a district provided professional development advisory committee appointed by the Board of Education. The advisory committee must be composed of teachers employed by the district who represent a variety of grades and subject matter specializations, including special education, nonteaching staff, parents and administrators. The majority membership of the committee shall be composed of teaching staff. This UCS committee met on November 19, 2025 and recommended this schedule. It has also been reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Department and the Curriculum Subcommittee of the Board of Education.

Motion by Rankin, support by Austerman, that the Board of Education approve the District Provided Professional Development Advisory Committee recommendations for the 2025-2026, 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years, as presented. Mrs. Rankin called the roll. There were no questions or comments from the Board.

Ayes: Meyer, Becker, Fitzpatrick, Austerman, Rankin, Nesovski

Motion carried 6-0.

8D. Resolution – Schools of Choice

Dr. Dziatczak stated that the Schools of Choice Resolution will allow eligible students, residing within the boundaries of the Macomb Intermediate School District and within the boundaries of an intermediate school district that is contiguous to the Macomb Intermediate School District in kindergarten through twelfth grade, the opportunity to attend the Utica Community Schools during the 2026-2027 school year.

Once enrolled, Schools of Choice students may continue with Utica Community Schools through graduation. The unlimited Schools of Choice enrollment period will begin on Monday, January 5, 2026 and continue until Thursday, August 27, 2026 for K-12 students. A second enrollment period will be held Monday, December 7, 2026 through Friday, December 18, 2026 for K-6 students.

Motion by Fitzpatrick, support by Meyer, that the Board of Education approve the Schools of Choice Resolution for the 2026-2027 school year. Mrs. Rankin called the roll. There were no questions or comments from the Board.

Ayes: Fitzpatrick, Meyer, Becker, Austerman, Rankin, Nesovski

Motion carried 6-0.

9A. Changes in Certified Personnel

Mr. William Holbrook, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Employee Services, presented the changes in certified personnel since the last Board of Education meeting on November 17, 2025.

Motion by Austerman, support by Rankin, that the Board of Education approve the changes in certified personnel, as presented.

Motion carried 6-0

10A. Financial Report and Schedule of Bills Report

Mrs. Vickie Malinowski, Executive Director of Business and Finance, presented the Financial Report as of November 30, 2025, which consisted of the following funds: General Fund, Special Revenue, Debt Service, Capital Projects and Internal Service. Accompanying the Financial Report was the Schedule of Bills Report for the General Fund and Capital Projects Funds. Prior to the Board of Education meeting, all pertinent information necessary to process payment of the bills was reviewed by Dr. Steven Meyer, Treasurer of the Board of Education, in conjunction with Sherry Koshurba, Controller.

General Fund:

GENERAL FUND (November)	\$28,326,770.73
GENERAL FUND (11/19/25)	\$2,210,076.11
GENERAL FUND (11/26/25)	\$2,969,793.61
GENERAL FUND (11/28/25)	\$138,524.13
GENERAL FUND (12/03/25)	\$374,933.02
GENERAL FUND (12/10/25)	\$943,594.55
General Fund Total	\$34,963,692.15

Bond 2018:

CAPITAL PROJECTS 2022 – (11/28/25).....	\$399,096.27
CAPITAL PROJECTS 2023 – (11/28/25).....	\$596,136.59
Bond 2018 Total	\$995,232.86

Bond 2023:

CAPITAL PROJECTS 2024 – (11/28/25)	\$7,608,429.68
Bond 2023 Total	\$7,608,429.68

The Board of Education accepted the report as presented.

10B. Contract Awards – Consent Agenda

Mrs. Nesovski stated that the following contracts will be considered as a consent agenda. All contracts that will be presented this evening have been reviewed by the Curriculum and Capital Projects subcommittees of the Board of Education and provided to all Board of Education members for their consideration. She asked Dr. Dziatczak and Mr. Graham to review each of the contracts before she will ask the Board of Education for approval.

10B1. Contract Award – Microsoft Subscription License Renewal

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the renewal of the district's Microsoft 365 software subscription in the amount of \$124,232.06 for the December 31, 2025 through December 30, 2026 time frame, as presented. Funding for this renewal is through the General Fund.

10B2. Contract Award - Havel Elementary School Additions and Renovations

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the contracts for the Havel Elementary School Additions and Renovations project in the amount of \$29,302,662.00, as presented. Project funding is through Capital Projects Funds.

10B3. Contract Award – Graebner and Havel Elementary Renovations

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the contracts for the Graebner and Havel Elementary Schools Renovations in the amount of \$1,946,650.86, as presented. Project funding is through Capital Projects Funds.

10B4. Contract Award – Telephone Upgrades

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the purchase of telephone upgrades from BSB Communications Inc. in the amount of \$68,858.58, as presented. Funding for this project is through Capital Projects Funds.

10B5. Contract Award – Athletic Fields Wireless Systems

It is recommended that the Board of Education award the purchase of athletic fields wireless systems to People Driven Technology in the amount of \$78,939.23, as presented. Funding for this project is through Capital Projects Funds.

10B6. Contract Award – Computer Repair Services

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the purchase of computer repair services at unit prices from MMI CPR School Tech Repair LLC dba K12 TechDell, in the amount of \$526,148.00, as presented. Funding for this purchase is through the General Fund.

10B7. Contract Award – Capital Projects Change Orders

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve Capital Projects Change Order #55, as presented.

Motion by Becker, support by Fitzpatrick, that the Board of Education approve the contracts as a consent agenda, as presented.

Motion carried 6-0. There were no questions or comments from the Board.

11. Community Correspondence

Correspondence from the following community members was acknowledged:

Sasha Boykins

Jodie Slongo

12. Public Communication

There was a request from Elizabeth Cupolo to speak during public communication portion of the meeting.

13. UCS Champions

Mr. Monroe stated that incredible student achievement happens every day in Utica Community Schools, as we saw showcased earlier with Eisenhower's holiday music performance. This month's UCS Champion showcases the positive impact our students are able to have on their school community with the support of our amazing staff. Comprised of fifth and sixth grade students, Oakbrook's Government Club emulates the governmental structure of our country with a hyper-local focus. They take their job of representing the student voice seriously and recently passed a bill to give back to children in need.

14. Board Items

Mrs. Rankin wished everyone a fantastic holiday season on behalf of the Board of Education.

15. Adjournment

Motion by Becker, support by Fitzpatrick, to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Motion carried 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelli Rankin, Secretary
Utica Community Schools
Board of Education