



## *Administrative Service Center*

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Robert S. Monroe  
Interim Superintendent

December 10, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As we approach the school year's mid-point, I want to provide a brief update and express appreciation for the hard work that is being done. During this remote learning period, I greatly appreciate the support and partnership of our families and I am proud of our UCS staff and how they are addressing the many needs of our students.

While remote learning has presented multiple challenges, our teachers and staff members are going above and beyond to help our students succeed. In fact, there is encouraging data on teacher student relationships: At UCS, more than 99 percent of our students and teachers report making regular connections, even in this remote environment.

For instance, Mrs. Susan Rawling in our Career and Technical Education (CTE) program challenges her students to realize that the pandemic and remote learning will soon pass, but student actions now can positively impact their future. One of her students, Jasleen Singh, credits Mrs. Rawling and her CTE teachers for helping to push towards her dream of a scholarship and medical school. Jasleen notes that in addition to normal activities, Mrs. Rawling creates special health care packages so that she and other students can gain additional hands-on experience in the remote setting.

The partnership we have with families remains critical as we take the next step toward the return to in-person learning. While our recent experiences clearly demonstrate that COVID-19 does not originate in our facilities, the increased spread in our communities can easily cross school boundaries and impact our classrooms. In November alone, we had more than 1,000 students and staff in quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure.

The good news is that we can return to in-person learning if we take steps to slow the spread of COVID-19. Simple steps such as mask wearing, social distancing and hand washing do matter. Each of us can make a difference and ultimately help our district welcome students back to schools.

We continue our work to ensure a safe return to in-person learning for students on Tuesday, January 19. As we make plans for this return, we are also exploring the transition of smaller groups of students earlier in the new year, depending on safety. These groups were also recently identified by the State of Michigan as priorities for in-person services, including special education, English Language Learners and hands-on CTE programs.

### **Utica Community Schools Board of Education**

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In these days leading up to the holidays, **let's remember Mrs. Rawling's challenge to her students: *This pandemic will pass. Our actions today can positively impact our future.*** Please join me in continuing to recognize our students and staff members as they model resilience. Thank you for your continued partnership and support. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of our kids!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert S. Monroe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert S. Monroe  
Interim Superintendent