

UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS NEWS RELEASE

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Two exciting new educational opportunities will be available to Utica Community Schools ninth graders at the start of the 2008-2009 school year.

Ninth graders interested in advanced technical training in the areas of Engineering Technology, Mechatronics and Multi-Media Technology will be able to apply for admission in the district's new Center for Science and Industry.

In addition, the Utica Academy for International Studies will open its doors next September, offering district students unprecedented access to the skills necessary to earn an International Baccalaureate Diploma**.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme is an internationally respected program that sets rigorous academic standards, world-wide. Ninth and tenth graders enroll in the two-year preparation program to ready them for acceptance into the two-year IB Diploma Programme, which will be part of the Academy their junior and senior years.

The academically rigorous IB curriculum centers in six areas: mathematics, science, world literature, world history, English, a second language and a subject selected by the student. Designed to develop international understanding and competence, IB students are also expected to take part in fine arts, physical activity and community service projects.

IB is also well-known internationally for providing specific and consistent learning criteria; its graduates are welcomed by colleges and universities world-wide as among the most talented and committed students. In addition, the international business community has long prized graduates of an IB Diploma Programme for their ability to think strategically and cooperatively within differing cultures.

In its first year, the district Academy for International Studies will be available to 125 Utica Community Schools ninth graders. Enrollment will be expanded in subsequent years until the full IB Diploma Programme, with an estimated enrollment of 500, is achieved for the 2011-2012 school year.

The successful Academy applicant will take and pass an admissions exam and meet other criteria which will include teacher recommendations. There is no cost for students to participate in the UCS Academy.

These two rigorous programs – Center for Science and Industry and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme -- join a growing list of specialized academic learning opportunities for UCS students, including the Utica Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology, a secondary program for students with particular interest and talent in these subject areas.

"We are extremely proud to be able to offer two more comprehensive and challenging academic programs for our students," said Dr. Christine M. Johns, Superintendent of Schools. "Utica Community Schools has a well-deserved reputation for providing a high-quality and rigorous learning environment for its students. As the second largest public school district in the State of Michigan, we are uniquely positioned to provide this outstanding IB Diploma Programme."

Students with an eye for technical careers have the opportunity to enroll in the district's Center for Science and Industry, also slated to open in the fall. In its inaugural year, 100 students will be enrolled.

A four-year program, the Center encompasses three foundation-level courses of study: Engineering Technology, Mechatronics and Multi-Media Technology.

Engineering Technology will prepare students for a career in the field of engineering, while Mechatronics blends the applications of mechanical, electronics and software engineering concepts, resulting in integrated automated operating systems. In the professional world, Mechatronics is used in the fields of industrial robotics, automotive engineering and a variety of other occupations. Students enrolled in Multi-Media Technology will have classes related to digital print, animation, video game design and television production.

"The Center for Science and Industry is perfect for students who want a career in technology and want to see the "why" and relevance of their high school course work," Johns said. "What is particularly exciting is that, as Center students, they will have access to work-based learning opportunities at all levels, including job shadowing, mentoring and work-site internships."

Course work begins with a two-year preparation for ninth and tenth graders, who will attend the Center for half the school day. Regardless of their specific course of study, all ninth graders will take 20 weeks of Art Foundations and 20 weeks of Drafting/CAD 2. They will also take ninth grade English, taught in the context of technical reading and writing, as well as geometry, with an emphasis on technical mathematics.

Tenth graders will choose one of the three disciplines and take courses to prepare them for entry into study for Engineering Technology, Mechatronics or Multi-Media Technology. All tenth graders will take English 10 and Algebra I.

To attend the Center, students must apply as ninth graders. The program will begin with ninth graders and expand a grade each year.

Both the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme and the Center for Science and Industry are part of the district's new educational partnership with Armada Area Schools and Mount Clemens Community Schools. The partnership, known as the Alliance for Academic Excellence, is intended to

expand learning opportunities for students enrolled in the three school districts. As part of the partnership, Armada and Mount Clemens students will have access to Utica's programs

****** The Utica Academy for International Studies is a candidate school* for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. This school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. These are schools that share a common philosophy—a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that the Utica Academy for International Studies believes is important for our students.

**Only schools authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) as IB World Schools can offer any of its three academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), or the Diploma Programme. Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted.*

For further information about the IBO and its programmes, visit <http://www.ibo.org>.