Dear UCS Community,

I want to share with you an update regarding our district’s continued response to the senseless tragedy at Oxford High School. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to the students, staff and families directly impacted by this event. Specifically, I would like to address the need to maintain our school routines across the district.

As you are aware, there have been a series of threats against school security throughout our region and in our community. I want to be clear that all threats to school security are taken seriously. Every reported threat is thoroughly investigated by law enforcement and our schools – whether that threat occurred in our community or in our region. We share all information with our local police departments and work in partnership with them to immediately address the issues.

During their investigations, law enforcement provides information on whether the issues represent a credible threat to school security. This information is critical to the determination of whether to make adjustments to the school schedule. In all cases, the school sends their school community a message once we have accurate information on the incident.

Regardless of the nature of a threat, the standard procedure in our communities is to have an increased police presence during and immediately following investigations. Our local police departments and the Macomb County Sherriff’s Department already have a regular presence near our schools and conduct “check ins” with the office. Tomorrow, we will have law enforcement presence in every school in Utica Community Schools.

In addition, we recognize that any decision to cancel school will remove a critical support structure for our students. The partnerships between staff and students - and between school and our families - are key to supporting students who may be experiencing stress.

UCS staff members are skilled in providing students the tools and skills they need during this critical time. Research is clear that this loss of relationships will remove the support that students need when they experience isolation or feel disconnected. Our staff members have been encouraged to talk with our students, calm their fears and continue to build relationships at school.

Social Media does not represent an effective support system and can never replace the type of work our team does every day with students. Earlier today, we addressed an issue where several students not in attendance took the opportunity to make false social media claims regarding a fabricated threat to one of our junior high schools. It created unnecessary alarm as several parents picked their children up based on the false reports manufactured by the students.
I want to share with you again information recommended by our special services staff on how to talk with your children. Please contact your building administrators should you need additional support.

Also, I want to express my appreciation for the UCS team for their continued resilience, dedication and commitment to our students. Working together, we are continuing to make a difference in the lives of our students.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Monroe
Superintendent of Schools