

Utica, partners offer new academic programs

■ School districts join forces in advanced studies initiative.

By Frank DeFrank

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Up to 225 ninth-graders from three Macomb County school districts will be eligible for two advanced programs to be offered by Utica Community Schools next fall.

The Center for Science and Industry and the Utica Academy for International Studies will enable students to receive advanced technical training or pursue an International Baccalaureate Diploma.

Both programs also are available to students in the Armada Area Schools and Mount Clemens Community Schools districts as part of a partnership the districts formed last year to secure a federal grant.

"We are extremely proud to be able to offer two more comprehensive and challenging academic programs for our students," said Christine Johns, Utica superintendent.

"Utica Community Schools has a well-deserved reputation for providing a high-quality and rigorous learning environment for its students."

The Center for Science and Industry program is a 4-year program that will focus on advanced training in engineering technology, mechatronics and multimedia technology.

Course offerings can introduce students to professions like engineering, industrial robotics and automotive engineering.

In its first year, the program will enroll 100 ninth-graders. Officials plan to expand the program by one grade each year.

"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.

"... They will have access to work-based learning op-

portunities at all levels, including job shadowing, mentoring and work-site internships."

The Utica Academy for International Studies, the Baccalaureate program, sets rigorous standards for students who will focus their studies in six areas: math, science, world literature, world history, English and a second language and subject chosen by the student. Students also are expected to participate in fine arts, physical activity and community service projects.

Students who earn an International Baccalaureate Diploma typically are welcomed at colleges and universities worldwide as among the best students.

The first-year enrollment in the Academy for International Studies is limited to 125 ninth-graders. Plans call for annual expansion until an estimated 500 students will be enrolled for the 2011-2012 school year.

Admission to the advanced programs will require students to take admission exams and meet other criteria, including providing recommendations from teachers.

Last July, Utica, Armada and Mount Clemens school officials received a \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to create and implement advanced programs to benefit students from all three communities.

The Center for Science and Industry and the Utica Academy for International Studies are part of that initiative. Both programs are open to students in Armada and Mount Clemens as well as Utica.

Arnold Kummerow, superintendent of Armada Area Schools, said his district and Mount Clemens, like Utica, also will offer opportunities to students in the partner districts.

Armada's Macomb Academy of Arts and Sciences, for example, will be expanded and seats will be available for students from the other districts.

"We also plan to start next year a middle school academy of arts and sciences," he said.

For more information on the programs, call (586) 797-6804.