

Welcome to United Community School!

🌟 “Comets, it’s time to shine!” 🌠

1284 U Ave. Boone, IA 50036

515-432-5319 <https://unitedcomets.org/>

👍 Like us on Facebook: United Community Schools & United Community School PTO

United Community 2025-26 Preschool

*In this table you will find **important phone numbers and contact information** you may need throughout the school year:*

Position	Staff	Phone	Email
District Secretary Building Secretary	Emma Wells Cara Hove	515-432-5319 (ext 2) 515-432-5319 (ext 1)	ewells@united.k12.ia.us chove@united.k12.ia.us
Principal, Preschool-6th	Elyse Brimeyer	515-432-5319 (ext 5)	ebrimeyer@united.k12.ia.us
Attendance	Cara Hove	515-432-5319 (ext 1) *message line available 24/7	chove@united.k12.ia.us
School Nurse Health plans, medications, allergies, illnesses	Samantha Walker	515-432-5319 (ext 6)	swalker@united.k12.ia.us
Professional School Counselor	Jack Nurre	515-432-5319 (ext 229)	jnurre@united.k12.ia.us
YSS Before/After School Program “Kids Club”	Keegan Patterson (Site Supervisor)	515-291-0374 515-233-3141 (ext 4403)	kcunited@yss.org
Bus/Transportation Bus routes, bus sign-up	Grant Oskvig	515-432-5319 (ext 3)	goskvig@united.k12.ia.us transportation@united.k12.ia.us
Nutrition Services Director Kitchen Manager	Cindi Sprecher Hunter Keasey	515-432-5319 (ext 279)	kitchen@united.k12.ia.us

Welcome to United Community! We are so glad to have your family as a part of our school and you matter greatly to us! The United Community School District serves approximately 350 students in Preschool-6th Grade living in the communities of Boone, west Ames, and Luther, Iowa. Our phenomenal staff includes administrators, teachers, paraeducator/associates, office and health office staff, technology specialists, building and grounds and nutrition services teammates, bus drivers - and so many more! - who are passionate about our school and teaching the early childhood and elementary-level learners. There are many things that make our school special, but our favorites include our genuine and caring staff, small class-sizes, outdoor learning spaces, and the *united* family-like feel of our school.

United Community CARES! At United Community, we are continually focused on being a school community where students are learning, thriving, and feel a strong sense of belonging! We are committed to five social and emotional competencies that form our CARES framework, they are: **Cooperation, Assertiveness, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-regulation.** We ❤️ UC!



United Community School District Mission, Vision, Values, & Goals

Mission Statement: “Learning, Thriving, Belonging”

Motto: “Comets, it’s time to shine!”

At United Community, we follow the Responsive Classroom Core Belief:

In order to be successful in and out of school, students need to learn a set of social and emotional competencies—cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control—and a set of academic competencies—academic mindset, perseverance, learning strategies, and academic behaviors.

At United Community, we value the Responsive Classroom 6 Guiding Principles:

Principle 1: Teaching social and emotional skills is as important as teaching academic content.

Principle 2: How we teach is as important as what we teach.

Principle 3: Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.

Principle 4: How we work together as adults to create a safe, joyful, and inclusive school environment is as important as our individual contribution or competence.

Principle 5: What we know and believe about our students—individually, culturally, developmentally—informs our expectations, reactions, and attitudes about those students.

Principle 6: Partnering with families—knowing them and valuing their contributions—is as important as knowing the children we teach.

Reading Goal

By the spring of 2026, 80+% of United Community 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Grade students will be proficient or advanced on the ISASP English Language Arts test.

Math Goal

By the spring of 2026, 80+% of United Community 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Grade students will be proficient or advanced on the ISASP Mathematics test.

Social-Emotional & Behavior Goal

By the spring of 2026, 80+% of United Community K-6th Grade students will be proficient on the SAEBRS screener.

School Safety Goal

United Community staff and students will successfully complete 100% of emergency drills by the end of the 2025-26 school year.

As your family is getting ready for the 2025-26 school year, take a moment to visit with your child(ren) about their hopes, dreams, and goals as they embark on a new learning journey with UC! As summer break comes to a close, work with your child on routines and skills that will be helpful to your family and support your child(ren) in feeling successful. Some examples could include: Tying shoes and other fine motor skills like zipping, buttoning, opening/closing items (ziplock bags, snacks, turning faucets on and off), creating a bedtime routine that could include reflection time and calm reading, practicing your morning routine from wake-up time to leaving your home, identifying letters, numbers, colors, shapes, etc. (Preschool-2nd Grade), reading aloud at home or to loved ones over the phone (reading aloud to pets counts, too!) At United we genuinely and respectfully view *families as the most important partner* in a child's school experience.

 The 2025-26 **School Supply List** can be found [here](#).



A Letter to Parents about Morning Meeting

At United Community, your child experiences a wonderful new beginning each school day! It's called Morning Meeting and it's a great way to build community, set a positive tone, increase excitement about learning, and improve academic social skills.

Morning Meeting usually takes between twenty and thirty minutes. First thing each morning, the children and their teacher gather in a circle. They begin by greeting each other. Every day, your child hears their name spoken by a classmate in a friendly and cheerful manner.

Next, a few students share some interesting news followed by a conversation with the class. This helps students listen carefully, think about what they hear, formulate good questions, and learn about each other. When children share, they have a chance to feel that their ideas are valued and that other children care.


After sharing, there is an activity for the whole class. Classrooms may sing or recite a poem or play a math game. The activity time helps the class feel united as a group, reinforce academic skills, and helps the children learn how to cooperate and solve problems.


Finally, classrooms read the Morning Message chart, which helps students think about the day ahead. Sometimes, this time is used to review and practice reading, punctuation, or a math skill.


Every day, Morning Meeting lets children know that school is a safe place where all children's feelings and ideas are important.


Sincerely, Mrs. Brimeyer


❤️ All **Preschool families will have a scheduled home visit (in-district families) or back to school Parent/Teacher Conference at United (out-of-district families)** with your child's Preschool teacher prior to their 1st day of school on Friday, August 30th! Preschool families who live outside of the United school district will sign-up for a teacher "Meet & Greet" and School Supply drop-off with our K-6 families on Monday, August 25th. Additional information will be provided by your child's Preschool teacher. Preschool home visits are an opportunity for your child to get to know their teacher and are arranged by your child's homeroom teacher. ❤️

 **Preschool Curriculum:** At United, we are focused on content area delivery to build knowledge around prioritized content - the Iowa Early Learning Standards and the IQPPS Standards. Our teachers explicitly teach, model, and reinforce priority learning through early childhood standards and objectives. We focus on individual needs with our students to provide comprehensive lessons that support the varying learning levels of the students in our classrooms. We ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum where students are at the center of their learning. Teachers, associates, and administration monitor student growth and achievement in an on-going manner to provide rigorous curriculum and a positive, nurturing, and safe learning environment.

 **Literacy:** We believe in an explicit, systemic, and sequential approach to teaching reading that touches on all the areas of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and the ultimate goal of comprehension. To achieve our goal, United is a school-wide LETRS building! Preschool through 6th Grade teachers are placed in cohorts to accomplish this learning. LETRS teaches the skills needed to master the foundational and fundamentals of reading and writing instruction: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and written language.

 **Math:** Our math instruction is moving to completely student centered and problem based in grades Preschool through 6th. In a mathematics class, students should not just learn *about* mathematics, they should *do* mathematics. This can be defined as engaging in the mathematical practices: making sense of problems, reasoning abstractly and quantitatively, making arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others, modeling with mathematics, making appropriate use of tools, attending to precision in their use of language, looking for and making use of structure, and expressing regularity in repeated reasoning. To ensure all students are reaching their fullest potential in math, we believe in students exploring problems and finding the most efficient way to solve them. Similar to Literacy, United teachers are lifelong learners and we all strive to learn through continuous professional development.

 **Assessment:** Health, safety, and social emotional well being is a main priority with our students in providing a successful school year. At United, we deliver a comprehensive early childhood curriculum through research-based strategies and our Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum. Teachers regularly monitor student progress, growth and achievement through our Teaching Strategies GOLD ongoing observational-based preschool assessment continuum. We encourage you to be a partner in providing your input as a family member on observations and completed tasks of your child in your presence. This will support us in reaching our learning goals together as a home and school team. United's GOLD Checkpoint Dates are November 24th, March 3rd, and May 29th. In the fall and spring, parents are invited to United for a Parent/Teacher Conference (November and March). We share student progress reports 3x throughout the school year (fall, winter, spring).

 **Outdoor Programming:** United Community is home to a school prairie, arboretum, and outdoor classroom. Your child will have the opportunity to experience robust outdoor learning experiences throughout the school year, including our *new* old-fashioned "Harvest Day" this fall, as well as our 2nd annual "Prairie Day" in the spring!



Approximate Time Frames for Learning in Preschool

15-20 minutes per day	Emergent Literacy Activities focus on language development, vocabulary, comprehension, rhyming, scribbling, writing, or drawing and phonological awareness
10-15 minutes per day	Emergent Math Activities, Games, and Challenges focus on counting, sorting, sequencing, and patterning.
10-15 minutes per day	Social Emotional Learning focuses on self-help skills, emotion management and self-regulation skills, friendship skills, taking turns.
10-15 minutes per day	Purposeful Play focuses on connections to core learning and may include games, activities, sensory opportunities, and challenges. Art, music, science, social studies, and movement are incorporated.
60+ minutes per day	Exploratory Free Play focuses on uninterrupted play directed entirely by the child, examples include: imagination, dramatic play, building, outdoor choice time, etc.

Additional Learning Opportunities

Learning takes place in many ways for our youngest learners. Additional learning opportunities are intended to provide ideas for families on how we will continue engaging your child in learning. We welcome communication from home to school in sharing what you see your child modeling through learning and play and ways your child engages with materials and toys at home. We encourage you to play with your child with some of the same activities and learning at home on days we are not in school.

Ideas include:

- Play - Interactive play and make believe are the most important learning for preschool-aged children
- Ask questions - What? Where? When? Why? How?
- Reading aloud and looks at books together
- Board/card games and challenges
- Pretend and imaginary play
- Sensory play - Play doh, water, bubbles, sand, dirt
- Learning new skills - Helping with chores, in the kitchen, with laundry (matching socks, folding), putting groceries away, gardening
- Puzzles
- Designing and building structures with blocks, legos, or other available materials

The **United Community School (District) Calendar** can be found here: [2025-26 United School Year Calendar](#). This calendar includes no school days for breaks, holidays, early dismissal days, and staff professional development days.

Preschool-6th School Day: Our Preschool school day begins every day at **8:10am (in their classrooms)**. Students may start entering the building at **7:40am**. Preschool instructional days are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Students are also able to attend on Wednesdays, with this day being a more play-based and “lighter” academic lift day. Our normal school day ends at **3:20pm**, unless it is an early release. On early release days, the United Community school day ends at **1:20 pm**. If your family has selected a ½ day morning only option, your child’s school day ends at **11:15am** on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Preschool-6th Grade School Arrival: All students can enter the building at **7:40am** and are asked to go either straight to breakfast or to their assigned before school location.

7:40am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breakfast is available before school begins at 7:40am and is served until 8am. <i>Please note:</i> Preschool breakfast is also now served in the cafeteria! If your child is being dropped off early between 7:40-8am and not eating breakfast, please drop off your child at the United main entrance (burgundy awning) and staff will direct them where they need to go.
8am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preschool-6th Grade classrooms open Students arriving between 8-8:10am can go straight to their classrooms for soft start and start of day routines.
8:10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School starts and attendance is taken If your student arrives after 8:10am, they need to be checked-in at the United main office with a parent sign-in. Late arriving students will be given a "late pass" to give to their classroom teacher upon arrival to their classroom.

Preschool - 6th Grade School Dismissal: Our school day ends at **3:20 pm**. To ensure a safe and smooth end of day, we implement staggered dismissals by grade-level, type of transportation, etc. Please check the chart below to determine your family's school dismissal plan.

Changes to your regular school transportation plan: If your child's dismissal or arrival procedure will change for the day, please call the office at 515-432-5319 (ext 1). Please do not send only the teacher an email or leave them a message as it can be difficult for them to check emails and voicemails during the day. The office staff will relay the message to your child's teacher who will ensure your child receives the information. We always want everyone in the loop! Thank you!

3:20 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YSS Kids Club: Students are dismissed from the classroom (program is open until 6pm)
3:20 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent car pick-up: Students will stay in their classrooms until their parent/guardian's car number is called and projected on the CleverTouch screen in each classroom. All families will receive their assigned number during back to school activities. Students will exit to their assigned route (Pink, Yellow, Green).
3:20 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus: Students are dismissed from the classroom and will immediately load their designated bus by 3:30pm.
3:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent car pick-up students who have not been picked up are asked to head to the main office where a United Community staff member will contact a parent/guardian. Late parents/guardians will need to drive to the yellow route and come into the office and retrieve their child/children from office staff.

United Community After School Car Pick-Up Procedures

All Routes (Pink, Yellow, Green)

Your family number will receive your car number sign at Open House! **Always make sure your family's number is displayed in the front passenger side of your vehicle.**

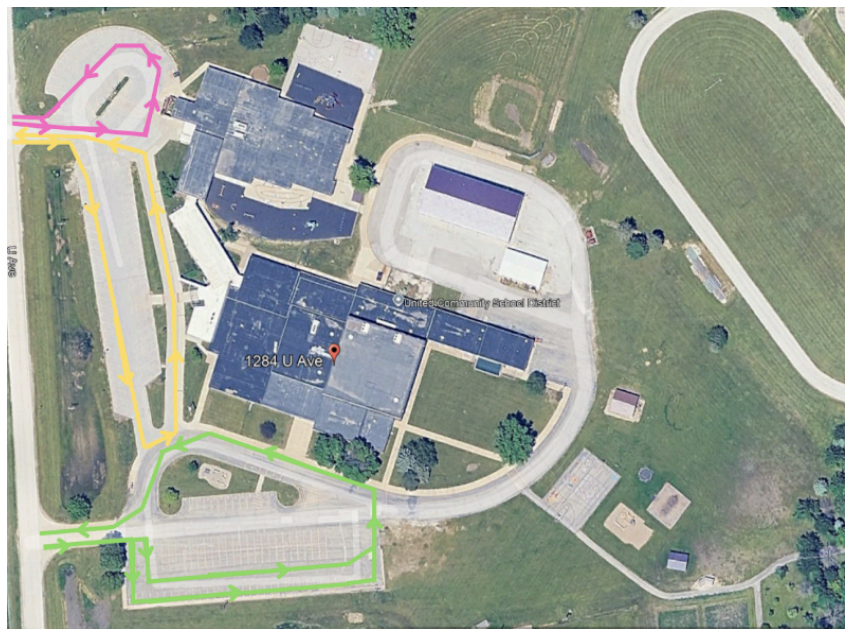
Please refer to the map below with the colored (pink, yellow, green) routes for pick-up, as there are 3 different routes, which serve 3 different purposes. To make the process run smoothly and keep our children safe, please adhere to the traffic direction shown below and pay attention as the traffic moves through the loop.

- **Please note:** The first day of pick-up and the first few weeks of school will take longer than usual as parents adjust to the pick-up procedure. Please be patient. This will also be the case for inclement weather days.
- **Our school day ends at 3:20.** If you are going to be late, please remember that you need to make different arrangements for your child's pickup or arrange to sign up for drop-in childcare or regular childcare services.

Pink: The pink route is for all-day preschoolers *and their siblings*

Yellow: The yellow route is for Kindergarten and 1st grade students *and their siblings*

Green: The green route is for Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (with **no** all-day preschool, Kindergarten, or 1st grade siblings)



Expectations:

1. Remain in your vehicle in the loop. **Please do NOT park.**
2. A staff member on duty will walk your child(ren) to your vehicle while in the lane.
3. Pull forward to the stop sign at the end of the lane. Do not stop at the main entrance for your student as it causes a back-up in the lane.
4. Your family number will receive your car number sign at Open House! **Always make sure your family's number is displayed in the front passenger side of your vehicle.**



Information on bussing can be found on our school website under the Transportation section, or by clicking here: [Transportation | United Comets](#)



YSS Kids Club is so much more than childcare! Kids Club offers daily enrichment activities that encourage children to explore their own interests and provide them with the opportunity to learn new things! Child care is provided before and after school. Before school care begins at 6:30am,

through 8:00am, when school begins. After school care begins when school day ends, through 6:00pm. Kids Club also provides childcare on scheduled early outs and most no school days (i.e. staff professional learning days), all day childcare is available 6:30am-6:00pm. To register your child or learn more information about our program, you can contact us at kcunited@yss.org or see this [informational flyer](#).

School Security & Raptor System: United Community uses the *Raptor Visitor Management System*. The Raptor system allows us to screen visitors, contractors, and volunteers in our schools. This aligns with other safety planning the district is engaged in and it strengthens our campus safety for students and faculty ensuring we have the safest environment possible for students and staff. Part of keeping students and faculty safe is knowing who is in our building at all times, and the Raptor system allows us to do that.

Upon entering our school, parents, grandparents, guardians and visitors will be asked to present a picture ID, such as a Driver's License, which will be scanned into our Raptor system. If a parent or guardian does not have a US government-issued ID they should make arrangements to speak to a secretary to discuss a different form of identification that can manually be entered into the Raptor system. Raptor will issue a name badge that identifies the visitor, the date, and the purpose of their visit. The Raptor system checks the visitor's name and date of birth for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. The registered sex offender database is the only official database checked by the Raptor system. No other data from the ID is gathered or recorded and the information is not shared with any outside agency.

A visitor's badge will not be necessary for those who visit our schools simply to drop off an item in the office or pick up paperwork. If you are leaving the office area to go into the school building, **a visitor badge will be required**. Additionally, once Raptor has recorded your name, you will not need to show your ID for future visits. As the secretaries become acquainted with you they can print your name badge when you come into the office, saving the step of running your ID through the system.

The safety of our students is our highest priority and the *Raptor Visitor Management System* allows us to quickly screen parents, visitors and volunteers that are new to us or have never visited the school building. Thank you in advance for your understanding and support in enhancing the school safety protocols in our district!

Student Absences, Preschool-6th: If your child is going to be absent from school or late due to an appointment etc. (not tardies), please call the attendance line at 432-5319 (ext 1), and leave a message stating your student's name, teacher's name, and reason for the absence. It is common for parents to email the student's teacher in such an event, but we ask that you please communicate with an office member as well (phone or email). Additionally, you can leave a voice message at any time overnight or early morning.

Arriving late or picking-up your student during the school day: The United Community Main Office is located directly inside the main entrance doors on the West side of the building. You will need to ring the doorbell to notify office members of your arrival. For parents picking up early or dropping off late (*not tardies*), we ask that you come inside with/or for your student and sign them in/out.



United Community is excited to share that we will be using the **Seesaw app** school-wide this year!

Seesaw allows for families to stay connected with your child's learning, get a real-time look into your child's progress, and to communicate with teachers. Stay tuned for login information that families will receive at the beginning of the school year from your child's teacher.

United Community Parent Teacher Organization (PTO): Our PTO is very active and it is a great way to engage with other parents in our school! Our mission is to support all of our students and wonderful teachers! If you would like to get involved, join us on the first Thursday of every month from 6:30 - 7:30pm. Meetings take place in the United Community school library!

School Volunteers: We are always looking for classroom volunteers to make positive connections with our students! If you are interested, Please contact our Building Secretary, Cara Hove, at 515-432-5319 (ext 1) or chove@united.k12.ia.us if you are interested. Thank you!

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Working with students to help them achieve their learning goals in reading, math - building learner confidence and self-esteem, reading and math fluency, accuracy, and comprehension.
- Practicing skills with handwriting, reading sight words (commonly used words), math facts, fine motor (tying shoes, zipping, buttoning), reinforcing good social and conversational skills.
- School car drop-off (AM) and pick-up (PM) volunteers (*information to follow*)
- If you have an area of expertise/skill that could benefit our school (not mentioned above), we would love to get you connected with our students and staff, as well!

Classroom Homeroom Parents/Guardians: This year, United Community would like to organize having a minimum of 2 homeroom parents/guardians per classroom (Preschool- 6th grade) to serve as active and engaged adults partnering with your child(ren)'s classroom in planning classroom activities with teachers and students throughout the year (including classroom parties and field trip volunteering). Please contact our Building Secretary, Cara Hove, at 515-432-5319 (ext 1) or chove@united.k12.ia.us if you are interested. Thank you!

Breakfast/Lunch: The school meal menus can be found on the United website once school begins! *Things we work on at lunch to create independence:* duration of meal time, opening containers, carrying trays, cleaning up after oneself.

Meal Account Payments: Families who do not qualify for free or reduced meals can make payments in their students meal account through Infinite Campus or with cash/check in the main office. If you believe your family will qualify for free or reduced meals, the 2025-2026 application is now available on the school website, <https://www.unitedcomets.org/district/nutrition/>.

****Student Breakfast \$2.40 (reduced breakfast .30 cents) – **Student Lunch \$3.20 (reduced lunch .40 cents) -**

***Ala Carte Milk .60 cents (milk is included with the school provided meal however there is a charge for milk taken with a lunch brought from home.)**

Backpack Buddies: Backpack Buddies provides a weekly free weekend meal and snack bag for United Community food insecure students and their families. Program sign-up will be available at the start of the school year!

Birthday Celebrations: Outside food and drink items may be brought in for birthdays. Your child may bring a pre-packaged food item for their birthday to share with the class.





Healthy Snacks: Preschool students will be provided snacks daily. Students who are in Grades K-6 will have the opportunity to bring healthy snacks to school. In order to promote healthy eating and to provide food that students are not allergic to, the following food are examples of acceptable healthy snacks:

Carrot or celery sticks	Popcorn, puff corn
Fruit cups, apple sauce	Raisins
Granola bars	String cheese
Jello cups	Crackers, Ritz, Goldfish
Nutri-grain bars	Protein bars

**This list includes foods that do not contain allergens. Please note that classrooms that contain an allergy may have different outside food requirements.*



United Community is looking to hire school bus drivers and school bus substitute drivers for the 2025-26 school year! Pay is \$51.25 per bus route. If you are interested, please contact Grant Oskvig, 515-432-5319 ext. 351, gorskvig@united.k12.ia.us.

  How to Dress for Recess at United!  	
Based on the “Feels Like” temperature via National Weather Service www.weather.gov	
0° & ↓	Inside recess
1-40°	Coats & gloves required (hat/hood suggested) Snow pants & boots required to play in snow
41-60°	Personal preference (required to take a coat, jacket, or heavy sweatshirt outside)
61°+	Go have fun in whatever you are wearing!