

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 & Instagram: United Community Schools & United Community School PTO

United Community 2026-27 Preschool-6th Grade: Information Guide

*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 1) 515-432-5319 (ext 0)	ewells@united.k12.ia.us chove@united.k12.ia.us
Principal	Maggi Butler	515-432-5319 (ext 4)	mbutler@united.k12.ia.us
Attendance	Cara Hove	515-432-5319 (ext 0) *message line available 24/7	chove@united.k12.ia.us
School Nurse Health plans, medications, allergies, illnesses	Nurse Samie	515-432-5319 (ext 5)	swalker@united.k12.ia.us
Professional School Counselor	Jack Nurre	515-432-5319 (ext 106)	jnurre@united.k12.ia.us
YSS Before/After School Program “Kids Club”	Tabbi Etten (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 2)	goskvig@united.k12.ia.us transportation@united.k12.ia.us
Nutrition Services Director Kitchen Manager	Hunter Keasey	515-432-5319	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 300 students in Preschool-6th Grade living in the communities of Boone, west Ames, and Luther, Iowa. Our dedicated staff 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: **C**ooperation, **A**ssertiveness, **R**esponsibility, **E**mpathy, and **S**elf-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 2027, 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 2027, 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 2027, 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 2026-27 school year

At United, we are committed to utilizing evidence-based instructional materials and practices to ensure every student has the opportunity to learn and achieve at high levels.

Kindergarten - 6th Grade

Curricular Area	Materials Utilized
Structured Literacy	Wonders (2020), UFLI, Word Origins, Mystery Writing, Handwriting Without Tears
Math	Illustrative Mathematics, Building Fact Fluency
Science/Social Studies	Mystery Science, Time for Kids, School Links
Social Emotional & Academic Behavioral Learning	Fly Five, Responsive Classroom, Zones of Regulation,

Preschool

Curricular Area	Materials Utilized
Academics	Creative Curriculum, Handwriting Without Tears
Social Emotional Learning	Creative Curriculum, Little Spot of Emotions, Kiwi

 **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 old-fashioned “Harvest Day” this fall, as well as our annual “Prairie Day” in the spring!

Related Arts, Kindergarten-6th Grade: At United Community students get the opportunity to participate in Related Arts classes! These include General Music, Physical Education (PE), Art, Classroom Guidance, Library, Computer Science, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics) offerings. Additionally, we offer Instrumental Music (Band) for students in 5th and 6th Grade. Our Related Arts teachers are passionate about the content area that they teach and look forward to having your child(ren) in their classrooms this school year!

PE Days: Please make sure your child wears tennis shoes on their PE days at school. If possible, having your child wear athletic-wear and minimal jewelry on PE days would be great! If your son or daughter has longer hair, it is their personal preference as to wearing it pulled back or not. Teachers will be sharing classroom Specials schedules with their back to school information!

The **United Community School (District) Calendar** can be found here: [2026-27 District Calendar](#)

☀️ Please take note that our **K-6th Grade 1st 2 days of school on Monday, August 24th, and Tuesday, August 25th, are scheduled as early dismissal days (1:20pm dismissal).** ☀️

Preschool-6th School Day: Our Preschool-6th Grade day begins at **8:10 am** (*in their seats*). Students may start entering the building at **7:45 am**. **Preschool students** will enter at the North/Presschool entrance. To help ensure a safe, secure, and smooth start to the school day, we ask that families say goodbye to their children at the designated drop-off location. Parents and visitors should not enter the school building during morning drop-off unless they have checked in through the main office. Thank you for helping us create a safe and orderly arrival for all students. Our school day ends each of those days at **3:20 pm**.

Preschool-6th Grade School Arrival: All students can enter the building at **7:45am** and are asked to go either straight to breakfast or to their assigned before school location.

7:45am	• Breakfast is available before school begins at 7:45am and is served until 8:05am. • <i>Please note:</i> Preschool breakfast is also now served in the cafeteria! • If your child is being dropped off early between 7:45 - 8:00 am and not eating breakfast, please drop off your child at the main entrance red awning - (Preschoolers will still be dropped off at the North/Presschool entrance) and staff will direct them where they need to go.
8am	• 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	• 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**.

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 0). 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	• YSS Kids Club: Students are dismissed from the classroom (program is open until 6pm)
3:20 pm	• Parent car pick-up: Students will stay in their classrooms until their parent/guardian's car number is called and projected on a TV in each classroom. Families will receive their assigned number at the back to school conferences. Students will exit to their assigned route (Pink or

	Green - there will be no yellow route this year!)
3:20 pm	● Bus: Students are dismissed from the classroom and go to bus recess on the playground or in the gym until the buses arrive around 3:30 with supervision provided by United Community Staff.
3:30 pm	● 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 main doors and come into the office and retrieve their child/children from Principal Butler.

United Community After School Car Pick-Up Procedures

All Routes (Pink & 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 & green) routes for pick-up, as there are 2 different routes, which serve 2 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 week of pick-up may 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 preschooler & Kindergarteners *and their siblings*

Green: The green route is for Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (with **no** all-day preschool or Kindergarten 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 back o school conferences! **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 0), 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.

Student Illness: Your student will need to stay home for illnesses including but not limited to: fever of 100.0, vomiting, and/or diarrhea. We have a 24-hour policy which requires students to remain home until 24 hours after the fever has

subsided without fever reducers or the last episode of vomiting. Please refer to the Student/Parent handbook on the UC website for more information.

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 0) 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.
- 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!

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 2026-2027 application is now available on the school website, <https://www.unitedcomets.org/district/nutrition/>.

****Student Breakfast \$2.50 (reduced breakfast .30 cents) – **Student Lunch \$3.30 (reduced lunch .40 cents) -**
***Ala Carte Milk .65 cents (milk is included with the school provided meal however there is a charge for milk taken with a lunch brought from home.) **Adult Breakfast \$3.15, **Adult Lunch \$5.15**

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.

Snacks: To help maximize instructional time and keep our focus on student engagement in both academic learning and social-emotional development, snack time will be provided for our **Preschool and Kindergarten students only** during the school day this year. Students in all grade levels are still encouraged to join us for **breakfast each morning from 7:45–8:05 a.m.** We appreciate your support as we continue to make decisions that prioritize meaningful learning opportunities while ensuring our youngest learners receive the additional support they need.

K-6 School Fees: Kindergarten - 3rd grade Registration/Textbook Rental - \$60.00 (*reduced \$30.00*) – 4th - 6th grade Registration/Textbook Rental - \$85.00 (*reduced \$42.50*). This can be paid through [Infinite Campus](#) or with cash/check in the main office.



United Community is looking to hire school bus drivers and school bus substitute drivers for the 2026-27 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!