

= Union City High School =

Union City High School is a three @-@ year comprehensive public high school serving students in tenth through twelfth grades from Union City , in Hudson County , New Jersey , United States , operating as part of the Union City Board of Education . The four @-@ story school is located between Kennedy Boulevard and Summit Avenue , from 24th to 26th Street , with additional facilities a block south on Kerrigan Avenue . Through its predecessors , the school has been accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Secondary Schools since 1928 .

As of the 2013 @-@ 14 school year , the school had an enrollment of 2 @, @ 530 students and 161 @. @ 0 classroom teachers ( on an FTE basis ) , for a student ? teacher ratio of 15 @. @ 7 : 1 . There were 2 @, @ 247 students ( 88 @. @ 8 % of enrollment ) eligible for free lunch and 137 ( 5 @. @ 4 % of students ) eligible for reduced @-@ cost lunch .

The school opened in September 2009 , merging the student bodies of the city 's prior two high schools , Union Hill High School and Emerson High School , and marking the first high school opened in the city in 90 years . The school , which was built on the site of the former Roosevelt Stadium , cost \$ 180 million , covers 4 ½ acres and includes a rooftop football field . The school 's colors are navy blue and silver .

= = Grade structure = =

Union City High School holds only Sophomore through Senior students . The Academy for Enrichment and Advancement ( AEA ) , which is housed one block south on Kerrigan Avenue between 22nd and 23rd Streets , is a special interest academy that is part of the High School . The AEA provides classes for students of grades 9 - 12 who show interest in the fields of science and engineering .

Since its inaugural school year , Union City High School has offered college @-@ level courses to students , and through its partnerships with nearby colleges and universities , increased the number of such courses for the 2010 ? 2011 school year , enabling students to accumulate up to 12 - 15 college credits by graduation that can be readily transferred to New Jersey public colleges . In addition to Liberal Arts courses , students can take advanced placement biology , chemistry , physics , anatomy & physiology , forensic science , robotics , geometry , algebra 2 , and calculus at the AEA . Students preparing for civil engineering and architecture careers can take pre @-@ engineering , computer networking and computer aided design ( CAD ) at the AEA . The AEA is also one of the few high schools in New Jersey that offers a course in Mandarin Chinese .

= = History = =

The site on which Union City High School sits was originally the location of the Hudson County Consumers Brewery Company . It was purchased for \$ 456 @, @ 000 , and turned it into a gated playground . Through the efforts of Director of Public Affairs Harry J. Thorout and the Federal Works Progress Administration , which awarded the project \$ 172 @, @ 472 , as part of Franklin D. Roosevelt 's New Deal , it was turned into the art deco Roosevelt Stadium , which opened in 1937 . Though primarily a football stadium that served as a home to future National Football League greats Lou Cordileone and Frank Winters and College Football Hall of Famer Ed Franco , the stadium also housed events in semi @-@ pro baseball , soccer , track , boxing , as well as numerous special events , such as an exhibition baseball game featuring Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig . Roosevelt Stadium was also the home to the annual Thanksgiving Turkey Game between rivals Emerson High School and Union Hill High School , the two high schools that previously served the city . The last Turkey Game was hosted by the stadium in 2004 . Three subsequent Turkey Games were held at the Midtown Athletic Complex until 2007 , after which the two high schools would be converted into middle schools . José Martí Middle School , which is located on Summit Avenue at 18th Street , was converted into José Martí Freshman Academy .

On July 11 , 2005 , acting New Jersey Governor Richard Codey and Union City Mayor Brian P. Stack , along with other officials , broke ground in preparation for the new complex , budgeted at \$ 180 million . \$ 172 million of the funds were provided by the state , with Union City providing the remaining \$ 8 million , making it one of the most expensive schools in New Jersey . Cliffside Park @-@ based RSC Architects , in partnership with architecture firm HOK New York , designed the 360 @,@ 000 @-@ square @-@ foot ( 33 @,@ 000 m2 ) school , which includes 66 classrooms . Piscataway @-@ based Epic Management served as the construction manager for the project . In early March 2006 , a large piece of the Hudson Brewery 's original brick foundation was found intact , along with the base of a manhole still connected to an original sewer that opened underneath the brewery . The artifacts were removed for historic preservation .

Union City High School opened for students on September 3 , 2009 , marking the first high school built in Union City in 90 years . The school 's inaugural principal was David Wilcomes . A ribbon @-@ cutting ceremony was held on September 25 , and attended by Union City Mayor Brian P. Stack , New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine and Senator Bob Menendez . A subsequent opening gala was held September 26 , and featured appearances from celebrities such as New York Giant Harry Carson , and actor and Union Hill High School graduate Bobby Cannavale , and a performance by musician Tito Puente , Jr . A performance by Cuban singer Cucu Diamantes was cancelled by the city 's Board of Education , causing controversy . The Board cancelled the performance in response to threats of protest by anti @-@ Castro activists over Diamantes ' performance in a concert in Havana , Cuba days earlier .

The commencement ceremony for the school 's first graduating class was held June 23 , 2010 . Delivering the keynote speech to the 628 graduates was New Jersey State Associate Supreme Court Justice Roberto A. Rivera @-@ Soto . Subsequent commencement keynotes have been delivered by Judge Esther Salas , and former New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey .

On October 28 , 2011 , the city broke ground on the school 's \$ 930 @,@ 000 , state @-@ funded Student Sanctuary , a 16 @,@ 900 square foot , triangular landscaped pedestrian plaza in front of the school at the corner of Kennedy Boulevard at 24th Street . On December 18 , 2012 , the school 's 50 @-@ year time capsule was filled with items representing the school and then buried on the Sanctuary grounds , with a scheduled opening in 2061 . The Sanctuary , which was designed by Becica Associates L.L.C. , Borst Landscape and Design , and Environmental Resolutions Inc . , was opened with a ribbon @-@ cutting ceremony on May 22 , 2013 , marking the completion of the school . It features a small amphitheater , a rain garden , a functioning waterfall , a fountain , decorative brick paved walkways , patios , and over 100 different species of all @-@ season shrubs and grasses . The Sanctuary provides e a point of relaxation to students and residents , and has been referred to by students and the press alike as a " tranquil oasis stylishly [ that ] contrasts with the urban surrounding . " In addition to its rural features , which provides research opportunities for the school 's environmental sciences classes and its horticultural and environment clubs , the Sanctuary also features technological conveniences such as free Wi @-@ Fi to allows students and staff to use their equipment outside , and in @-@ ground speakers that allow the amphitheater to host performances and other events .

= = Faculty and staff = =

Former athlete Otis Davis , who won two gold medals in track and field events at the 1960 Summer Olympics , works at Union City High School as coach , mentor and verification officer . He is also co @-@ founder and current president of the Tri @-@ States Olympic Alumni Association , mentors student athletes at the school .

In July 2012 , English as a Second Language ( ESL ) teacher Kristine Nazzal was named Hudson County 's Teacher of the Year by the New Jersey Department of Education . Nazzal was among 300 teachers who appeared on the September 23 , 2012 episode of NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams to discuss issues pertaining to education .

= = Academic achievements = =

The school was the 301st @-@ ranked public high school in New Jersey out of 339 schools statewide in New Jersey Monthly magazine 's September 2014 cover story on the state 's " Top Public High Schools " , using a new ranking methodology . The school had been ranked 323rd in the state of 328 schools in 2012 . The magazine ranked the two predecessor schools 271st ( Emerson ) and 285th ( Union Hill ) out of 322 public high schools statewide , in the magazine 's September 2010 cover story on the state 's " Top Public High Schools " , after being ranked 288th ( Emerson ) and 233rd ( Union Hill ) in 2008 out of 316 public high schools statewide .

University of California , Berkeley Professor David L. Kirp , in his 2011 book , Kids First , and his 2013 book , Improbable Scholars , praised Union City 's education system for bringing poor , mostly immigrant children ( three quarters of whom live in homes where only Spanish is spoken and a quarter of which are thought to be undocumented and fearful of deportation ) into the educational mainstream . Kirp , who spent a year in Union City examining its schools , notes that while in the late 1970s , Union City schools faced the threat of state takeover , as of 2013 they boast achievement scores that approximate the statewide average . Kirp also observes that in 2011 , Union City boasted a high school graduation rate of 89 @. @ 5 percent ? roughly 10 percentage points higher than the national average , and that in 2012 , 75 percent of Union City graduates enrolled in college , with top students winning scholarships to the Ivy League . Kirp attributes Union City 's success to among other things , the positive educational atmosphere of Union City High School generated by educators such as principal John Bennetti . Deborah Short of the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington DC singled out the school 's initiatives , saying that the Union City High School " has created a culture that respects differences and promotes learning . The school expects its students to do well and it gives them lots of support . "

= = Facilities = =

The 360 @, @ 000 @-@ square @-@ foot ( 33 @, @ 000 m2 ) school houses 66 classrooms equipped with Mac computers , automatic lights , SMART Boards and Wi @-@ Fi to enable students to use laptop computers in their studies .

The arts are served by two art class rooms devoted to painting , sculpture and pottery , sewing machine @-@ equipped rooms for fashion classes , television production facilities , and three music classrooms , each of which is equipped with grand pianos . Dancers have two separate rooms with floor to ceiling mirrors and ballet bars . The school 's cafeteria is located on the second floor and is equipped with several walk @-@ in freezers and a half @-@ dozen pizza ovens . The school 's restrooms utilize automated no @-@ touch sinks .

The school 's " world @-@ class " gym includes bleachers that seat 1 @, @ 800 people , and a weight room accessible directly from the gym . Elsewhere on the first floor is an aerobics room that houses cardio exercise machines .

A centrally located Media Center is located on the first floor and includes dozens of Mac computers . Although it was initially suggested to name the room after Pulitzer Prize @-@ winning poet and United States Poet Laureate W.S. Merwin , who grew up in Union City , it was eventually named after former New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey . It is located next to the outdoor Senior Courtyard . An American flag that stands in that courtyard , when raised , overlooks the athletic field . The Media Center is also used for community functions , such as an April 2011 book signing by Professor David L. Kirp .

The school 's centerpiece is its three @-@ acre athletic field , called the Eagle 's Nest , located on the second floor roof , an idea that inspired from a field that lies on top of a parking garage on the campus of Georgetown University . The field features skyline views of the Empire State Building and Midtown Manhattan . The architecture of the athletic complex , which cost \$ 15 million , was designed to resemble the former Roosevelt Stadium , which previously occupied the site . A number of classrooms on the third and fourth floors overlook the field , which rests on two floors of steel and reinforced concrete . The field 's bleachers seat 2 @, @ 100 spectators . The field 's on @-@ campus location eliminates not only the students ' prior need to walk or be bussed from school to a

separate location to play , but the need for the two prior schools to share the field . Although the merger of the former Union Hill Hillers and Emerson Bulldogs had experienced some difficulties a year prior when the students were still housed at separate high schools ( called Union City High School 's North and South campuses , respectively ) , the merge had been ameliorated by the move of the unified student body to the single new school . The athletic facility has been singled out as one of the most unusual in the United States . It was included in MaxPreps ' 2012 list of " 10 more high school football stadiums to see before you die " . Due to the athletic field 's unique location , it deals with unusual logistical challenges , such as balls that land on the streets surrounding the school ; space limitations that place the band close to the visitors ' sideline , thus making it sometimes difficult to hear ; and games that are interrupted by school fire drills .

The school 's 910 @-@ seat auditorium also serves as the Union City Performing Arts Center . The Center opened on October 16 , 2009 with a celebration that featured an art gallery of over 160 paintings , as well as performances by a number of musicians , poets and dancers . Included in the performances were a guitar solo by Francisco " Pancho " Navarro , who appeared in 2002 Salma Hayek film Frida , a dance performance by Tap Ole Dance Company that was choreographed by Megan Fernandez , who had appeared on the reality television program America 's Got Talent , and a poetry reading by Graciela Barreto , who had been named poet laureate of Union City in September . Drama classes are aided with a separate black box theater for small productions , which doubles as a community conference center . Public events used by the auditorium including the 2010 swearing @-@ in ceremony for Union City Mayor Brian P. Stack , and the Union City International Film Festival , the first one of which was held in December 2010 . The school 's athletic field and auditorium are made available to local residents in order to utilize the school as a community center for the city .

The federally funded , social services nonprofit group , North Hudson Community Action Corporation 's ( NHCAC ) pediatric health center , which is housed in the building , opened in early July 2010 , in order to allow the corporation 's facilities on 31st Street to expand its women 's health and internal medicine capacity . The center was opened in July so that the patient flow could be monitored when students were not in school , in order to determine how to integrate the center 's operations with the school 's , educate students on managing their health , and allow them to utilize its services in order to decrease health @-@ related absenteeism , once the school session resumed . Union City Superintendent of Schools Stanley Sanger indicated that eventually , health screenings would be provided to all Union City students . NHCAC runs a health screening facility six days a week by two doctors . The facility has a separate entrance / exit from the street , and is closed off to the rest of the school . The state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art 2 @,@ 286 @-@ square @-@ foot ( 212 @.@ 4 m2 ) full pediatric facility includes four private examination rooms and an on @-@ site laboratory . It is open to low @-@ income Hudson County families and sees approximately 20 @-@ 25 patients 18 and under daily , charging sliding @-@ scale fees for its services , though NHCAC President and city commissioner Christopher Irizarry expressed hopes to eventually increase that capacity to 50 patients a day . It is the third of NHCAC 's ten such facilities in North Hudson , New Jersey to implement electronic health record @-@ keeping , which allows patients to schedule appointments online , see doctors more quickly and facilitate quicker lab results and filling of prescriptions at pharmacies .

The staff 's parking garage , built a block south of the school , also serves nearby residents and business .

= = Athletics = =

The Union City High School Soaring Eagles compete in the Hudson County Interscholastic League , following a reorganization of sports leagues in North Jersey by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association ( NJSIAA ) . With 2 @,@ 316 students in grades 10 @-@ 12 , the school was classified by the NJSIAA for the 2014 @-@ 15 school year as North I , Group IV for most athletic competition purposes , which included schools with an enrollment of 1 @,@ 108 to 2 @,@ 479 students in that grade range . Prior to the 2010 realignment , the school had been

assigned to the North Jersey Tri @-@ County Conference for the 2009 @-@ 10 season .

Union City High School 's first head football coach was Joe Rotondi , previously the coach at Union Hill High School , who was appointed to the position when that school merged with Emerson High School for the 2008 @-@ 09 season . Due to a less successful than anticipated record ( 5 @-@ 5 in 2008 and 3 @-@ 7 in 2009 ) , he was replaced by former Ferris High School coach Wilbur Valdez in early 2010 .

In addition to fielding a team in football , Union City High school fields teams in wrestling , basketball , soccer , volleyball , bowling , baseball , cross county , lacrosse , swimming , tennis and track and field .