

5/1/18-FEWER STUDENTS OPTED OUT OF THE LATEST ROUND OF STATE TESTING. THAT'S ACCORDING TO SCHOOL OFFICIALS ACROSS THE AREA. JUST TWO YEARS AGO SOME DISTRICTS SAW THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS REFUSE TO TAKE NEW YORK'S ANNUAL ENGLISH AND MATH ASSESSMENTS. BUT A MOVE TO SHORTEN TESTING FROM THREE DAYS TO TWO AND GIVE THE SCORES LESS WEIGHT IN TEACHER AND STUDENT EVALUATIONS SEEMS TO BE REBUILDING CONFIDENCE IN THE TESTS.

5/16/18-THOUSANDS OF VOTERS HIT THE POLLS YESTERDAY FOR THE STATE'S ANNUAL SCHOOL BUDGET REFERENDUMS. THERE WERE NO MAJOR SURPRISES, WITH EVERY DISTRICT ACROSS ONEIDA AND HERKIMER COUNTY GETTING THEIR BUDGET APPROVED. IT'S BECOME INCREASINGLY RARE FOR VOTERS TO TOSS OUT BUDGETS SINCE THE STATE IMPOSED THE TWO PERCENT CAP ON ANNUAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASES. THE ONLY MAJOR SURPRISE HAPPENED IN UTICA, WHERE JUST ONE VOTE SEPARATES SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES BRIANA MORIARTY AND JOSEPH HOBIKA JUNIOR, MAKING A RECOUNT LIKELY.

5/17/18-ONLY A HANDFUL OF VOTES SEPARATES THREE CANDIDATE'S IN UTICA'S SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION. RESULTS FROM TUESDAY'S BALLOTING WERE THROWN INTO DISARRAY WHEN A RECOUNT OF THE BALLOTS SHOWED BRIANNA MORIARTY, JOSEPH HOBIKA JUNIOR, AND DONALD DAWES ARE WITHIN FOUR VOTES OF EACH OTHER. NOW THE FINAL RESULTS WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL NEXT WEEK, AFTER A JUDGE SAID THE DISTRICT DIDN'T PROVIDE ENOUGH TIME FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTS TO BE RETURNED.

5/22/18-NEW YORK IS SPENDING MORE PER PUPIL THAN ANY OTHER STATE IN THE NATION. THAT'S ACCORDING TO NEW CENSUS FIGURES, WHICH FOUND THE EMPIRE STATE LAYS OUT JUST OVER 22-THOUSAND DOLLARS A YEAR PER STUDENT. THAT'S JUST SHORT OF DOUBLE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. IN TERMS OF ABSOLUTE DOLLARS NEW YORK CAME IN SECOND, SPENDING 61 BILLION DOLLARS. THAT PUTS IT BEHIND CALIFORNIA'S 73 BILLION DOLLARS, BUT NEW YORK HAS ONLY 2.6 MILLION STUDENTS WHILE CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOLS HANDLE 6.2 MILLION.

5/23/18-UTICA'S SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION IS FINALLY OVER. THE RACE WAS THROWN INTO DISARRAY LAST WEEK WHEN THREE CANDIDATES WERE WITHIN FOUR VOTES OF EACH OTHER AND A JUDGE ORDERED MORE TIME FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTS TO BE TABULATED. OFFICIALS OPENED CLOSE TO A HUNDRED ADDITIONAL BALLOTS AND COMPLETED THE FINAL COUNT YESTERDAY. THE FINAL RESULTS HAVE ANTHONY LAPOLLA IN THE TOP SPOT, FOLLOWED BY JOSEPH HOBIKA JUNIOR AND DONALD DAWES, EDGING OUT FIRST TIME CANDIDATE BRIANA MORIARTY.