

9/4/18-A PARADE OF YELLOW SCHOOL BUSES IS ONCE AGAIN ON THE ROAD. THOUSANDS OF LOCAL STUDENTS ARE RETURNING TO CLASS THIS WEEK, AND OFFICIALS ARE REMINDING DRIVERS THEY NEED TO ADAPT AS WELL. THAT INCLUDES NOT ONLY OBEYING THE NO PASSING RULE FOR BUSES WITH FLASHING RED LIGHTS, BUT FOLLOWING THE SPEED LIMITS IN SCHOOL ZONES. LOCAL POLICE WILL BE PROVIDING SOME INCENTIVE TO TAKE THE BACK TO SCHOOL SEASON SERIOUSLY BY SHADOWING BUSES AND RUNNING SPEED CHECKS NEAR SCHOOLS.

9/4/18-MAKE SURE YOUR CHILDREN HAVE A COMPLETE VACCINATION RECORD. THAT'S THE MESSAGE FROM STATE OFFICIALS. ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE THEIR VACCINATIONS ON FILE ACCORDING TO RULES FROM THE NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. THE MANDATE WILL IMPACT MOSTLY NEW STUDENTS ENTERING KINDERGARTEN. PREVIOUSLY, THEY WERE ABLE TO ATTEND CLASSES WITHOUT HAVING COMPLETED A FULL CHILDHOOD VACCINATION SCHEDULE. NOW ANY STUDENT WITHOUT THE REQUIRED SHOTS WILL HAVE TO SCHEDULE THEM TO CONTINUE ATTENDING SCHOOL.

9/6/18-SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS NEW YORK ARE SEEING THEIR ENROLLMENTS PLUNGE, EVEN AS UTICA'S CONTINUES TO CLIMB. THAT'S ACCORDING TO A NEW REPORT FROM THE EMPIRE CENTER. THE STUDY FOUND THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ACROSS THE STATE HAS FALLEN TO LOWS NOT SEEN SINCE THE 1970S. EXPERTS SAY THAT'S A SYMPTOM OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LEAVING NEW YORK. BUT UTICA IS ONE PLACE THE TREND IS MOVING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, WITH OFFICIALS HARD PRESSED TO KEEP UP WITH THE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN ENTERING THE DISTRICT.

9/6/18-IS IT TOO HOT FOR SCHOOL? THAT'S WHAT SOME OFFICIALS WITH THE STATE'S TEACHER'S UNION WERE ASKING YESTERDAY. HIGH TEMPERATURES ACROSS NEW YORK HAD THEM RENEWING THEIR CALL FOR A LAW CALLING OFF CLASSES IF ROOM TEMPERATURES HIT 82 DEGREES. THE MEASURE WAS FIRST PROPOSED DURING A HEAT WAVE LAST YEAR, BUT DIDN'T MOVE FORWARD IN THE LEGISLATURE. SUPPORTERS SAY IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN WHEN THEY'RE SUFFERING FROM HEAT STRESS IN CLASSROOMS WITHOUT AIR CONDITIONING.

9/10/18-IF YOU WANT TO FIND OUT HOW YOUR CHILDREN DID ON THIS SPRING'S STATE TESTS YOU'RE OUT OF LUCK. THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS RELEASED THE SCORES TO SCHOOLS, BUT THEY'RE KEEPING THEM SECRET FROM PARENTS UNTIL LATER THIS MONTH. OFFICIALS SAY THE DELAY IS NECESSARY TO CALIBRATE THE RESULTS. BUT CRITICS SAY THE EMBARGO IS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED AND PREVENTS THE PUBLIC FROM EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STATE'S HIGH STAKES TESTING PROGRAM.

9/11/18-SIX SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS ONEIDA COUNTY WILL BE STAFFED WITH ARMED PATROL OFFICERS THIS FALL. THE PROGRAM WAS APPROVED BY THE ONEIDA COUNTY LEGISLATURE LAST MONTH, AND CAMDEN, NEW YORK MILLS, SAQUOIT VALLEY, WATERVILLE, WHITESBORO, AND WESTMORELAND HAVE CONTRACTED WITH THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT FOR SPECIAL PATROL OFFICERS. THE COST OF THOSE DEPLOYMENTS WILL BE SPLIT BETWEEN THE DISTRICTS AND THE COUNTY, WITH AN INITIAL COMMITMENT OF 5-HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS FROM COUNTY OFFICIALS.

9/17/18-SCHOOL DISTRICTS SHOULDN'T BE PUNISHED IF A LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS REFUSE THE STATE'S STANDARDIZED TESTS. THAT'S THE CENTRAL MOTIVE BEHIND NEW REGULATIONS THE STATE BOARD OF REGENTS WILL CONSIDER TODAY. IT'S A CHANGE FROM EARLIER THIS YEAR, WHEN REGULATIONS WOULD HAVE OBLIGATED DISTRICTS TO USE THEIR FEDERAL FUNDS

TO BOOST TEST PARTICIPATION. THAT REQUIREMENT WILL BE REMOVED AS LONG AS DISTRICTS CAN DEMONSTRATE THEY'RE STILL MEETING ACADEMIC GOALS.

9/18/18-THE DAYS OF THE NUMBER TWO PENCIL ARE NUMBERED. AS PART OF IT'S REVAMP OF THE COMMON CORE CURRICULUM THE STATE IS NOW MOVING TO ADMINISTERING TESTS ONLINE. STUDENTS WILL USE COMPUTERS TO TAKE THE TESTS INSTEAD OF FILLING IN THE FAMILIAR CIRCLES WITH A PENCIL. OFFICIALS SAY COMPUTERIZED TESTING WILL MAKE SCORING INSTANTANEOUS, ALLOW FASTER ANALYSIS OF STATEWIDE RESULTS, AND CUT SOME COSTS. THE BIGGEST HURDLE IS MAKING SURE STUDENTS HAVE ENOUGH COMPUTERS OR TABLETS TO TAKE THE EXAMS.

9/19/18-SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS THE STATE NEED TO DO MORE TO FIGHT ABSENTEEISM. THAT'S ACCORDING TO STATE COMPTROLLER THOMAS DINAPOLI, WHO RELEASED A NEW STUDY OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE YESTERDAY. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT CLOSE TO TWENTY PERCENT OF STUDENTS ARE MISSING TEN OR MORE DAYS OF INSTRUCTION EVERY YEAR. DINAPOLI FAULTED THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FOR NOT HAVING PROGRAMS IN PLACE TO FORCE DISTRICTS TO BE PRO-ACTIVE IN FINDING OUT WHY STUDENTS ARE MISSING CLASSES.

9/24/18-SCHOOLS NEED TO DO A BETTER JOB OF KEEPING STUDENTS AWAY FROM DRUGS. THAT'S THE MESSAGE FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN A NEW MEMO. IT ASKS ADMINISTRATORS TO PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON THE DANGERS OF OPIOIDS AND SYNTHETIC MARIJUANA, BOTH OF WHICH CONTINUE TO SHOW RISING LEVELS OF USE. THE SYNTHETIC DRUGS IN PARTICULAR HAVE BECOME A GROWING PROBLEM AMONG STUDENTS BECAUSE THEY'RE CHEAP AND MARKETING AS INCENSE OR HERBAL PRODUCTS IN ORDER TO GET AROUND DRUG LAWS.

9/27/18-LESS THAN HALF OF NEW YORK STUDENTS PASSED THE LATEST ROUND OF SCHOOL TESTING. THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT RELEASED THE PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THIS YEAR'S STANDARDIZED TESTS YESTERDAY. THE RESULTS SHOW JUST 45 PERCENT OF STUDENTS IN GRADES THREE THROUGH EIGHT WERE RATED PROFICIENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS. AND ALMOST TWENTY PERCENT OF STUDENTS STATEWIDE OPTED OUT OF THE TESTS. DETAILED BREAKDOWNS OF PERFORMANCE BY DISTRICT AND SCHOOL WILL BE AVAILABLE LATER THIS WEEK.

9/28/18-THE UTICA SCHOOL DISTRICT DID NOT FARE WELL IN THE LATEST ROUND OF SCHOOL TESTING. RESULTS FROM THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FOUND STUDENTS UNDERPERFORMING THE REST OF THE STATE BY SIGNIFICANT MARGINS. THE PROBLEM WAS PARTICULARLY ACUTE IN MATH. IN THIRD GRADE ONLY 35 PERCENT OF STUDENTS WERE PROFICIENT IN BASIC MATH SKILLS. THOSE GRADES ACTUALLY DECLINED AS STUDENTS ADVANCED. BY EIGHTH GRADE ONLY TEN PERCENT OF UTICA'S STUDENTS WERE ABLE TO PASS THE STANDARDIZED MATH TEST.