

7/12/18-SCHOOLS ACROSS ONEIDA COUNTY WILL SOON BE GETTING ARMED PATROL OFFICERS. YESTERDAY THE COUNTY LEGISLATURE APPROVED THE CREATION OF 23 PART TIME POSITIONS THAT WILL PROVIDE SECURITY FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS. THE JOBS WILL BE FILLED BY RETIRED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WORKING FOR JUST OVER 25 DOLLARS AN HOUR. THEY'LL BE ASSIGNED TO SCHOOL BUILDINGS BASED ON CONTRACTS CURRENTLY BEING HAMMERED OUT BETWEEN THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT AND LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

7/13/18-ARE BETTER ATHLETIC FACILITIES WORTH AN INCREASE IN TAXES? THAT'S THE QUESTION UTICA VOTERS WILL BE ANSWERING IN AUGUST. YESTERDAY OFFICIALS WITH THE UTICA SCHOOL DISTRICT UNVEILED A NEW 15-MILLION DOLLAR CAPITAL PLAN. THE THREE PART PROPOSAL WOULD PAY FOR RENOVATING AND REBUILDING SPORTS FIELDS, CONCESSIONS, AND SUPPORT FACILITIES AT SCHOOLS ACROSS THE DISTRICT. ONE PART OF THE PLAN THAT'S STILL UP IN THE AIR IS HOW BIG OFF A TAX HIKE WILL BE NEEDED TO PAY FOR ALL THE WORK.

7/19/18-THE UNITED WAY HAS LAUNCHED THEIR ANNUAL BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE. THE ANNUAL EFFORT COLLECTS SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS. THAT INCLUDES EVERYTHING FROM PENS AND PENCILS TO NOTEBOOKS AND BINDERS. YOU CAN DROP OFF DONATIONS AT ANY BERKSHIRE BANK LOCATION. A COMPLETE LIST OF NEEDED ITEMS IS AVAILABLE AT UNITED WAY V-G-U DOT ORG. YOU CAN ALSO DONATE ONLINE. COMPLETE BUNDLES OF SUPPLIES THAT ARE PROVIDED DIRECTLY TO STUDENTS ARE AVAILABLE AT UNITED WAY KITS DOT COM.

7/27/18-IS STUDENT PERFORMANCE IMPROVING? ANSWERING THAT QUESTION IS GETTING HARDER BECAUSE OF HIGH OPT OUT RATES FOR THE STATE'S ACADEMIC TESTING. LOCAL AND STATE LEADERS SAY BACKLASH AGAINST THE COMMON CORE TESTING STANDARDS IS MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO ACTUALLY JUDGE HOW EFFECTIVE THOSE STANDARDS ARE. SOME DISTRICTS ARE SEEING IMPROVEMENTS IN TEST SCORES, BUT THOSE FIGURES AREN'T RELIABLE BECAUSE THEY RELY ON SMALLER TESTING POOLS. IN SOME DISTRICTS, LESS THAN HALF OF THE STUDENTS TOOK PART IN MATH AND ENGLISH EXAMS.