



UTICA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative Offices – 929 York Street
Utica, NY 13502-3999

Bruce J. Karam
Superintendent of Schools

Phone: (315) 792-2222
Fax: (315) 792-2200
bkaram@uticaschools.org

Superintendent's Opening Remarks Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Tonight, I will be presenting an update on the Utica City School District's in-person hybrid learning plan along with a recommendation to begin its implementation effective March 8, 2021 as a result of the current COVID-19 environment which has significantly improved over the past several weeks.

Since the closure of schools across the country last March due to the sweeping COVID-19 global pandemic, this disease has taken the lives of over a half of a million people in the United States, including loved ones right here in our own community. These are sobering numbers. Our hearts go out to all those who have felt loss during this very difficult year, especially those in the Utica City School District community who have been deeply affected by the loss of family members and cherished loved ones who can never be replaced.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Utica City School District has prioritized the safety and well-being of our students, staff members, parents, grandparents and family members above all else.

Only one month ago, the Mohawk Valley region and Oneida County were faced with some of the highest COVID-19 infection rates in New York State. In fact, back in January, the infection rate in Oneida county surpassed the 11% mark, placing a strain on our local hospitals and causing the region to be designated a yellow zone by the Governor. Since that time, we have seen a steady decline in the infection rate over the past several weeks. Currently, the seven-day rolling average in the Mohawk Valley stands at 2% while the seven-day rolling average for Oneida County is now below 1.5%.

The significant decrease in the COVID-19 infection rate, coupled with the rollout of the state's vaccination program has provided a much safer environment in which to open our schools to in-person instruction under our hybrid plan beginning with our elementary K-6 students.

Bruce J. Karam, Superintendent of Schools