Dear Utica City School District Community,

It is with profound sadness and a heavy heart that I write to inform you of the tragic passing of Ms. Elizabeth Gerling, our beloved principal at Columbus Elementary School.

During this tremendously difficult time, our thoughts and deepest condolences are with Ms. Gerling’s family. We cannot begin to fathom the depth of their loss, and we extend our utmost support and sympathy to them.

This news comes as a shock to all of us. Ms. Gerling was not just an exceptional educator and leader but also a dear friend and colleague to many. Her passing will undoubtedly have a deep impact on our staff, students, and the entire Utica City School District community.

As we navigate through this challenging period, please know that we are here to support one another. We understand that many of you may be struggling to process this loss. To assist our community during this time, we will have counselors available for anyone who needs to speak with someone on August 22, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need support using the following number: 315-368-6869

The timing of this tragedy, just a few weeks before the start of the new school year, adds to our collective sorrow. As we were looking forward to the promise of a new academic year, we now find ourselves mourning the loss of a cherished member of our school family.

In the coming days and weeks, we will continue to honor Ms. Gerling’s memory and her profound impact on our district. Her dedication to education and her unwavering commitment to our students will not be forgotten.

As we grieve together, let us also support one another with compassion and understanding. Our strength as a community will help us through this difficult time.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to our district office.

With deepest sympathy,

Dr. Christopher Spence
Superintendent, Utica City School District