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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Utica City School District Achieves Historic Accountability Milestone

For the first time since federal accountability tracking began in 2002, no UCSD school has received a Targeted or Comprehensive Support designation from New York State

UTICA, NY — The Utica City School District has reached a historic benchmark in state accountability. For the first time since New York State began formal federal tracking in 2002, no UCSD school has been designated for Targeted or Comprehensive Support.

The New York State Education Department released the official 2025–26 accountability determinations on February 12, 2026. The accountability system evaluates schools annually based on academic achievement, student growth, graduation rates, English language proficiency, attendance, and subgroup performance. Schools identified for the highest levels of support are subject to formal state intervention and oversight.

The 2025–26 determinations mark the first time in 23 years that every Utica school is in good standing.

“This milestone reflects the disciplined, focused work happening in every building across this district,” said Superintendent Dr. Christopher Spence. “Utica is one of the largest urban school districts in New York State. We serve students from more than 50 countries, including students learning English for the first time and students navigating significant challenges outside of school. For every one of our schools to be in good standing simultaneously is unprecedented in modern district history. It happened because our educators refused to lower expectations and refused to give up on any child.”

This accountability achievement builds on measurable academic progress across the district. In 2024–25:

- ELA proficiency increased from 31% to 40%
- Math proficiency rose from 36% to 41%
- Students met or exceeded state growth benchmarks in five of six grade levels in both subjects
- Enrollment increased for the third consecutive year, reaching approximately 9,500 students

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"Our educators embraced new instructional strategies, engaged deeply with student data, and committed to continuous improvement," said Steven Falchi, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. "This result is not accidental. It reflects intentional systems work and an unwavering commitment to every classroom and every learner."

Dr. Spence emphasized that while the milestone is historic, the district remains focused on sustained improvement.

"This is progress — not a finish line," Dr. Spence said. "We are proud of this achievement, grateful to the families who trust us, and committed to continuing this upward trajectory. This is what Utica United looks like in action."

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