



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Announces Opening of John Jay Middle School Playground

PETE HARCKHAM March 21, 2025

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State Sen. Pete Harckham with (l-r) Katonah-Lewisboro School District Superintendent Dr. Raymond Blanch, Assistant Superintendent for Business Lisa Herlihy, teacher aide Diva Ferris and Assistant Superintendent of Special Services Alex Casabona along with

Senator provided more than \$100K for new Cross River accessible facility

*Cross River, NY* - New York State Senator Pete Harckham announced today the opening of a new accessible playground at John Jay Middle School that will enable students to play and

enjoy themselves in an inclusive environment, and which was made possible by a \$100,000 New York State Senate grant he secured.

“Every child, regardless of ability, can experience the joy of play, the freedom to explore, and the chance to build lasting memories together,” said Harckham. “I am delighted that we can help the school district build this important playground, which is so conducive to learning. This new playground will give students more opportunities to play, explore and have fun together.”

"We want everyone to feel they belong in our schools," said Katonah-Lewisboro School District Superintendent Ray Blanch. "This inclusive playground is in keeping with that mission. The area provides a wonderful space for our students to form friendships while enjoying the modern equipment. That kind of fun never gets old."

“We’ve wanted to provide an inclusive, accessible playground at John Jay Middle School for many years,” said Assistant Superintendent for Business Lisa Herlihy. “This was a community effort that involved our Special Education Department, Special Education PTO, Business Office, and Senator Pete Harckham’s office.”

The playground was built because the school needed a space for play, gathering, and forming friendships close by the school building. Several groups, including parents and teachers came together to design an inclusive playground that would appeal to middle school students.

A little-used piece of the parking lot was transformed into a rejuvenating recess option. The muted school colors are appealing to middle schoolers, and the benches offer a place to sit and chat. The disc-shaped swing, wobble chairs, and netted globe are fun and challenging for users of all abilities. Total construction costs for the playground were \$400,000.

State funding was provided through the Community Resiliency, Economic Sustainability, and Technology (CREST) program. The CREST program is among the State Senate grant programs administered by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) to support community and economic development.

Since taking office in 2019, Senator Harckham has delivered over \$30 million in State Senate grant funding to grant funding to municipalities, first responders and nonprofits in the 40th Senate District.