



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Darrel J. Aubertine

Aubertine Discusses 2010-11 Budget with School Officials

DARREL J. AUBERTINE February 18, 2010

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Senator seeks input on minimizing the impact of cuts on local students and property taxpayers

WATERTOWN (February 18, 2010)—State Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine today brought school officials from more than 30 school districts in Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties together to discuss the 2010-11 New York State Budget and the impact of reduced funding locally.

“Throughout my time in public office, I’ve worked to increase school aid for our districts and we’ve seen record levels of funding in recent years,” Sen. Aubertine said. “Unfortunately, as one of the largest segments of the state budget, in these difficult financial times, cuts are inevitable. We’ve given school districts and local governments two years to prepare for this, holding off on mid-year cuts and using stimulus money to keep funding stable. Now the challenge is working with the districts to ensure that the needs of our children can be met without further burdening the taxpayer.”

In late 2008, Sen. Aubertine met with school officials to discuss proposed mid-year school cuts and the overwhelming consensus among administrators was that mid-year cuts were unfair because budgets had been set already. The administrators said that if cuts had to be made, they needed time to prepare. In 2009, Sen. Aubertine worked to protect aid for the school districts by using stimulus funding, which district wide provided a modest increase in aid.

Late last year, the Senator, as chair of the Upstate Caucus, led the push against another round of proposed mid-year cuts on the grounds that not giving school districts time to prepare would lead to property tax increases, when cuts made as part of the budget process would give school districts the latitude to protect the taxpayer.

“Today’s meeting was intended to give our local districts the opportunity to share their concerns and ideas moving forward,” Sen. Aubertine said. “I am working to ensure that our school districts are in the best position possible to absorb these cuts, educate our children, and protect the local property taxpayer.”

To soften the blow of decreased aid, Sen. Aubertine has long been a proponent of mandate relief for school districts and supports many of the proposals by the Governor to free up school districts to make better, locally driven, efficient decisions with the aid and tax revenue available. He has also called for the school aid formula to best reflect the ability of school districts to handle reduced state aid particularly for the poorer rural districts in comparison to wealthier districts.

“This is an unprecedentedly difficult time in our state’s history and there are no easy decisions to be made,” Sen. Aubertine said. “The fact of the matter is that we need to make targeted cuts across the board, beyond just education funding, to rein in spending and improve the way we put together our state budget so that we can be leaner and more efficient for the taxpayer. I am working with my colleagues to protect our interests, but at the end of the day, our state cannot support maintaining our current spending levels.”