



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

Senator Flanagan Visits Lake Grove School

JOHN J. FLANAGAN April 19, 2010

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Senator John Flanagan (2nd Senate District) recently visited the entire 5th grade class of Eugene Auer Elementary School to talk to the students. The visit was arranged by Ms. April Mindlin, a teacher at the Lake Grove school, to provide students with an opportunity to learn first-hand about Senator Flanagan's work and to give them a better understanding of New York State government.

The meeting was set up after Senator Flanagan received letters from Ms. Mindlin's students outlining their ongoing efforts to protect amphibious life in the Caleb Smith State Park Preserve. The students travel to the park on a regular basis to monitor the amphibious life and to test the water as part of the Open Space Stewardship Program through Brookhaven National Laboratory.

The goal of the program, which is sponsored by the science department in Middle Country Central School District, is to raise awareness of mass extinction of amphibians both locally and globally. They are being assisted in their efforts by the BOCES Outdoor Education program which provides them free access to the preserve and the use of lab space and monitoring equipment.

After reading the letters about the student's efforts, Senator Flanagan contacted Ms. Mindlin to arrange a way for him to personally congratulate the children for their efforts.

Senator Flanagan opened the meeting with a quick summary of the State Senate outlining the role he plays and how the legislature works. He took a number of questions from the students about current news events. During this time, many of the children took the opportunity to express their deep concern about the environment and the importance of keeping Long Island's state parks open – a view Senator Flanagan completely agrees with.

Following the questions, Senator Flanagan conducted a mock legislative session with the students playing the role of senators and assemblymembers. In this exercise, Senator Flanagan played the role of governor and the 5th graders took turns discussing the merits of two pieces of legislation before taking a vote on the proposed new laws. This allowed them to experience what Senator Flanagan and his colleagues do in Albany during session and illustrated the legislative process from beginning to end.

"This was a great opportunity to bring state government directly to these students and I thank Ms. Mindlin for arranging this meeting. The student's knowledge of current affairs and their enthusiasm for the environment were truly impressive and I hope they enjoyed our time together," stated Senator Flanagan.