



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian X. Foley

## Senator Foley Stands Up to Bullies

BRIAN X. FOLEY June 11, 2010

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Senator Brian X. Foley (D – Blue Point) hosted a forum for school administrators in the 3rd Senate District to provide them with information about addressing the issue of bullying within their schools.

Bullying in schools is not a new issue, however, in recent years it has taken on new forms and has often continued outside of classrooms. Cyberbullying, sending threatening or nasty text messages, emails or instant messages, or posting nasty pictures or comments on blogs or

websites, has been on the rise and is often seen to occur in conjunction with physical, verbal and nonverbal or emotional bullying in schools. Fifteen to twenty-five percent of students reported they had been bullied in at least one way with some frequency. About the same amount, fifteen to twenty percent, admitted to bullying classmates with some frequency. It has also been found that bullying is not always student-on-student. An alarming forty percent of teachers admitted to having bullied a student.

“Bullying is something that cannot be tolerated among our students, whether it occurs within the four walls of the school or within the limitless walls of the internet after school hours,” said Senator Foley. “The goal of today’s event is to give school administrators the most up-to-date information about the known dangers and effects of bullying, the legal aspects of it and how administrators can best work with parents to address concerns. I am encouraged by the number of school districts who sent representatives – this shows their commitment to seriously addressing this issue and doing everything they can to protect their students.”

“We certainly would like to thank Senator Foley for providing yet another venue to educate us and provide us with further resources,” said James Nolan, Superintendent of the Schem School District.

The idea for the forum grew out of two calls received by Senator Foley’s from the families of two students who were victims of bullies. The students, one a sixth grader and one an eighth grader, were victims of both cyberbullying and physical bullying.

A student who is a victim of bullying can suffer from depression, loneliness, anxiousness and low self-esteem, and may also frequently feel unwell or have thoughts of suicide as a result of the bullying. There are a number of signs that can signal a parent that their child may be being bullied, including torn, damaged or missing pieces of clothing, books or other

belongings, unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches, the child being afraid of going to school, walking to or from school, riding the school bus or taking part in organized activities, or the child appearing sad, moody, teary or depressed.

It has been found that there are some characteristics that students who bully other students share. These include being impulsive, hot-headed, dominant, easily frustrated, lacking empathy, having difficulty following rules and viewing violence in a positive way. Bullying can also have a negative impact on those who are victimizing others. Children who bully others are more likely to get into frequent fights, be injured in a fight, vandalize or steal property, drink alcohol, smoke, be truant from school, drop out of school and carry a weapon.

As a follow-up to today's event, Senator Foley is putting together a task force made up of representatives from each school district within the 3rd Senate District.