



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Bed Bug Cases Drastically Increased During First Five Months Of School Year

MICHAEL GIANARIS February 7, 2011

### Gianaris Pushes for Increased Notification and Education

QUEENS, NY – The number of confirmed cases of bed bugs in New York City public schools has severely increased in the first five months of the current academic year, according to recent statistics released by the New York City Department of Education. Public schools have reported 1,700 confirmed cases from September 2010 through January 2011, with 80% of the cases reported in November, December and January. Compared to last year's total 1,019 cases, schools are on pace to triple the number of bed bug infestations this academic year.

Senator Michael Gianaris' Bed Bug Notification Bill for New York City Public Schools was signed into law by Governor David Paterson in August 2010. Senator Gianaris wrote and first introduced the legislation in 2007, when he was a member of the Assembly. The legislation requires that the Parent Teacher Association and all parents of potentially affected New York City school children receive notification from school health officials upon detection of bed bugs in their child's school. The notification includes informational brochures that enable parents to take preventative steps and make more informed decisions regarding the health and safety of their children and families.

“The best way to combat this sharp increase in bed bug cases is to educate parents and teachers” Senator Gianaris said. “Children should be able to go to school and get a good education without the threat of bed bugs hindering their ability to learn.”

Private homes are the primary source of bed bug infestations, however bed bugs travel to schools on students’ clothes and book bags. Senator Gianaris wants to remind parents and teachers of the importance of containing bed bug cases so that the insects do not spread further.

In 2010, New York City officials pledged \$500,000 to raise public awareness in an effort to fight the bed bug epidemic. The Education Department’s Office of School Support Services also implemented a four-step protocol for handling potential bed bug cases in schools.