



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

## “The Buffalo News”- Another Voice-”Real reform is the answer to education dilemma” By Mark Grisanti

MARK GRISANTI March 26, 2011

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION**

A commentary by Billy Easton of the Alliance for Quality Education that was recently published in The Buffalo News regarding the proposed cuts to education funding in New York State missed the mark. Taxes — throwing money at the issue — doesn't work. You cannot spend yourself into prosperity; it has never happened.

I support a well-measured restoration of funding for education. We are at a point in time where there has to be careful planning and consideration given to each and every problem relating to our students. We need to re-evaluate our current course and establish revisions that will both maximize benefits to students as well as minimize wasteful spending.

I voted to restore funding to the “4201” schools throughout the state that include deaf, blind and physically and mentally disabled students. Among these is St. Mary's School for the Deaf in Buffalo. I also voted for \$270 million in funding to come back to the schools, 68 percent of which will be coming right back here to upstate and Western New York and especially focusing on needs-based districts.

The alliance states I don't care for kids, but nothing could be further from the truth.

When it comes to public education, we have failed our children. It's time to take the necessary steps to ensure that we have learned from our mistakes rather than continuing in the same broken fashion.

We need a solution that includes transparency, accountability and measurable results. In the City of Buffalo, the graduation rate is only 52 percent and only 12 percent are considered "college ready." These children are not only receiving a low-quality education but it is also an expensive one; it costs more than \$23,000 to educate one child in the Buffalo Public School District.

Additionally, part of the process is negotiation and compromise. The alliance is not willing to come to the table. Its all-or-nothing approach will not be successful in Albany and will ultimately hurt children across the state.

The alliance has yet to address the \$9 million of cosmetic surgery benefits provided by your tax dollars to City of Buffalo school employees. Its leadership also refuses to discuss any issue that would save the state money, such as Medicaid or welfare fraud, areas that are ripe for reform.

Finally, the alliance has spent more than \$2.5 million on television ads addressing the budget and targeting certain senators like myself. Instead of spending money on intimidation tactics, why not use that money to help fund after-school programs or other educational opportunities that could be cut in this year's budget?

Raising taxes hasn't solved the problem before and it won't solve the problem now. I was not elected to keep doing the same thing over and over and expect different results; I was elected to fix a broken system. That is what I intend to keep doing as long as I am in office.

*Mark Grisanti, R-Buffalo, represents the 60th District in the New York State Senate.*

*Link to The Buffalo News Op-Ed [here](#):*