



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

Grisanti Sponsors Bill To Increase Instruction On Disabilities Passes Senate

MARK GRISANTI May 2, 2012

| ISSUE: **DISABILITY**



BUFFALO, NY-May 2, 2012-Senator Mark Grisanti (R-60) today announced passage of his bill S. 2352 that would amend the education law to provide curriculum on the understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities to students in grades seven to twelfth. This bill is intended to promote greater awareness and tolerance of students with disabilities, Disability curriculum provides a forum for discussion and inspires respect for individual differences and ultimately provides a roadmap for creating an accepting society. Present law requires

the NYS Board of Regents create a curriculum that educates elementary students only. The intent of this law is to promote mutual respect of people with disabilities for students from K-12.

“When students learn that people with disabilities are more similar than different, have strengths and talents and want to participate in school activities, they are more accepting. It is important that students continue to learn about the differences that make each one of us unique throughout their entire education career,” said Senator Grisanti (R-60). “Additionally, this law will help to ensure that disabled students are better able to succeed in mainstream classrooms as it will influence and change the way that students interact with others of differing abilities,” said Senator Mark Grisanti (R-60).

It is the State’s responsibility to provide a sound basic education to all students. Part of the NYS Regents learning standards includes a goal to provide the framework that promotes citizenship and civic responsibility. Learning how to cherish differences and work with others comes out of a curriculum about the historic contributions of those with disabilities.

In Western New York there is a Museum of Disability History that has a curriculum for grades K-12 on the history of people with disabilities focusing on awareness, sensitivity and diversity. Pilot programs in Western New York schools have shown that this is an effective way to prepare young students to be more tolerant of their disabled peers. This curriculum is free on the web for teachers, special educators, advocates and parents of children with disabilities thus providing no additional cost to school districts statewide.

If passed by the State Assembly and signed by the Governor, the law would be effective on July 1, 2012 and shall apply to all school years which commence after this date.