



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Pencils Up! Help Me Honor Our Excellent Educators

PATTY RITCHIE April 15, 2013

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### **Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column**

It's often said that to teach, is to touch a life forever. Throughout our region, there are countless educators who are doing just that—impacting young lives and enabling students to succeed each and every day.

Many teachers go above and beyond to inspire those they educate. I want to show my appreciation and support for these teachers and all others in the education field. To do so, I have created the "Teaching Excellence" award.

Through this new program, I am asking parents, students and school principals from across Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties to nominate a teacher worthy of recognition.

From the nominations, I will ask individual school principals to make a final selection of a deserving teacher. If you'd like to make a nomination, click [here](#). The deadline for submissions is May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Our teachers work very hard to prepare students for the challenges they will face in the classroom and beyond. That's why, as your Senator, I'm doing my part to support our schools too.

I'm pleased to report that included in the 2013-2014 State Budget is extra help for our schools. A 5% increase in school aid—nearly \$1 billion more to help students succeed all across the state—is the largest in three years. In addition, changes to the state aid formula I sought,

drive more aid to rural, Upstate districts. Through the new spending plan, Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence County schools will receive an aid increase of \$25 million, that's \$7 million more than in the Governor's proposal.

Supporting schools throughout Central and Northern New York is one of my top priorities. Part of that support is recognizing educators for the outstanding impact they have on their students. I hope you will join me in recognizing some of the best—and the brightest—through my Teaching Excellence award program.