



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

Senator Grisanti Calls For Buffalo School Board Annual Budget To Be Approved By Voters

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Senator Mark Grisanti (R, I-60) today announced that the Senate has passed bill S.1044 requiring the City of Buffalo's board of education to submit their annual school district budget to voters for approval prior to final adoption of the spending plan.

Senator Grisanti's introduction of this bill, combined with his recent introduction of legislation that calls for the annual election of school board members in Buffalo to be moved

from May to November, are efforts to try and increase the community's participation and involvement with the Buffalo School District. Grisanti believes encouraging more people to vote will allow special interest groups to have less influence over the day-to-day business of the city's school system.

"I am continuing my effort towards improving a school district that is failing, and it is my hope that allowing citizens to have a say in how the city is spending nearly \$1 billion of their money annually on education will contribute to greater voter interaction and community involvement," said Senator Grisanti. "The struggles of our school district is not something that is going to be solved overnight, but I believe allowing city residents to have a voice each year on the proposed budget is another step in the right direction. We need greater accountability from the elected members of Buffalo's board of education as well as the appointed employees who work for the city."

Though the majority of revenue for New York State's largest public school districts comes from state aid, local property tax levies make up a significant portion of school spending. In the City of Buffalo, nearly one-half of the property tax levy is allocated to the school district, but local residents have no direct input on the annual budget, unlike suburban districts. Buffalo is one of five school districts in the state that does not hold an annual vote on their proposed budget.

This marks the second consecutive year Grisanti has sponsored and passed this legislation. Grisanti is hopeful his colleagues in the state Assembly will support his efforts and pass a similar bill so that the legislation can be introduced into law.

"As educated citizens, we are used to being asked to make important decisions when it comes to electing people to public office," said Senator Grisanti. "Other school districts throughout

Western New York and across the state allow taxpayers to vote either in favor or against the proposed spending plan. I want Buffalo residents to have the same opportunity. The Assembly needs to join with me to change and help improve the process so we can move forward on reaching our shared goal of improving the educational opportunities provided to our children."