



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo, Brindisi Announce \$400,000 Commitment To Rome City Schools

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 16, 2014

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ROME – Sen. Joseph A. Griffo and Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi today announced they have secured a combined \$400,000 for the Rome City School District after receiving assurances from school officials that they will submit to an immediate review, followed by a full audit by the state Comptroller's Office.

“This funding will help to reduce class sizes, retain experienced teachers, and provide a quality educational program for the students of Rome,” said Brindisi. “It is important that we give the next generation of leaders the tools they need to succeed in school, so that they can continue that success after they graduate. I also want to thank Comptroller Tom DiNapoli

for agreeing to review the financial condition of the district, to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are being spent wisely."

"I'm always happy to go to bat for a local school district, especially when it leads to job and program restorations," said Griffo. "But I also have an obligation to the taxpayer to make sure we're accountable for their money. This agreement is a boost to the school at a critical time, but also respectful of all taxpayers."

Griffo and Brindisi each secured \$200,000 from respective Senate and Assembly education grants. The money is expected to result in the restoration of six teaching positions and a preservation of the programs at the high school, including the current staffing for music ensembles.

Under the agreement, the state Comptroller's Office will initiate a review of the financial condition of the district and review its last few budgets. It will then launch a full scale audit, which will investigate the schools' internal controls, its contracts, its reserves and its spending, among other items. The audit, the first of its kind for Rome since 2008, is expected to take up to 9 months.

Residents of the Rome City School District will consider a \$108.2 million budget during a district-wide vote Tuesday.

"Senator Griffo and Assemblyman Brindisi have delivered strong, tangible advocacy for the students of Rome. The additional monies that our legislative representatives worked effortlessly to bring to our schools will go directly into our classrooms. The monies from Senator Griffo and Assemblyman Brindisi will enable the district to hire back more teachers, lower class sizes and preserve programs for students. The community is extremely fortunate to have such talented and committed representation in Albany. The Rome City School District is grateful for their efforts," said Rome City School District Superintendent Jeffrey P. Simons.

"Senator Griffo has always been very generous whenever possible to this school district. We always appreciate the hard work he does to get extra funds for the school district. Assemblyman Brindisi has been working very hard as well, doing as much as he can for the area and for our district," said Rome City School Board of Education President Patricia S. Riedel.

Brindisi and Griffo have an extensive record of supporting education in New York.

Both have consistently voted to restore funds taken unfairly from schools during the state's 2008 financial crisis through the Gap Elimination Adjustment. Both legislators have also

called for the GEA to be fully restored faster than scheduled. They also both sponsor legislation in their respective houses to ensure that the state fully funds any new mandates on school districts.

When Governor Cuomo proposed giving Rome an additional \$817,604 in school aid – a 1.5 percent increase from the prior year – Griffo and Brindisi advocated on the school's behalf in their respective houses. The Legislature subsequently added \$999,000 to the governor's proposal for a total of \$1,816,604 – an increase of 3.24 percent in aid from the 2013-14 school year.