



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

Grisanti Continues to Fight for Stronger Schools and More Options for Parents

MARK GRISANTI | October 21, 2014

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION**



Senator Mark Grisanti recently renewed his call to help both struggling schools and children with his support of the Education Investment Incentives Act and introduction of the Parental School Choice Program for the City of Buffalo.

These initiatives are in addition to his work to provide increased aid to public schools in Western New York for early education, school safety, technology, higher academic standards and other important programs.

The Parental Choice Private School Voucher Program would amend the education law in New York State so that eligible students who are entering kindergarten or ninth grade and who live in the Buffalo school district could be selected as one of the 300 students given vouchers up to \$10,000 to attend a participating private, non-public or an out-of-district school of their choice.

Students are eligible if their family of four earns \$39,000, which is 1.75 times the federal poverty level. Vouchers will continue for selected students until they graduate from their selected schools or until the student turns 21.

“What taxpayers may not realize is that no matter where you live in Erie County, your tax dollars go to the City of Buffalo schools,” said Grisanti. “By finding a better, smarter, cheaper way to educate our kids in the City of Buffalo, this will save your tax dollars. The money saved can then be used to increase school aid in our suburban and rural schools that desperately need it because of the inequality in the funding formula and the Gap Elimination Adjustment which were enacted prior to my arrival in the state senate.”

This legislation applies solely to the City of Buffalo only. It does not provide for vouchers in suburban and rural school districts. In fact, this legislation would actually free up tax dollars that could then be given to suburban and rural school districts increasing their school aid, said Grisanti.

“School vouchers will empower parents to determine the course of their children’s education and will provide opportunities for success regardless of where they reside. Voucher programs have made huge impacts in cities like Milwaukee where graduation rates have significantly increased. The time is now for a bold new program to shake things up.”

The proposed education investment tax credit would provide a credit for up to 90 percent of a charitable donation to public schools and non-profit organizations that support public schools or provide scholarships for students to attend a K-12 school, including a religious school. The tax credit would apply to individual and business donors liable for personal income tax and corporate franchise tax.

“This legislation is a win for schools, a win for taxpayers and most of all a win for children,” said Senator Mark Grisanti. “This bill would not only help charitable foundations but would also enable public schools to raise more charitable funding to support programming that is more vulnerable to budget cuts. Such funding would be in addition to state school aid and would not be subject to the school property tax cap.”

Bishop Richard Malone of the Diocese of Buffalo said, “The Education Tax Credit legislation enjoys the support of the vast majority of lawmakers because it would both increase financial support to public schools and give tens of thousands more children access to other schools of their parents’ choosing. Now it is up to Governor Cuomo to demonstrate his leadership on this issue just as he has done on so many other issues that affect New Yorkers.”

The Education Investment Incentives Act is co-sponsored by Grisanti and has bi-partisan support in both the Senate and Assembly. It is also supported by Timothy Cardinal Dolan.