



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## Career and Technical Education Diploma Offers New Career Path

DAVID J. VALESKY March 7, 2014

This week I was joined by my colleagues in promoting legislation I sponsor ([S.5966](#)) that creates a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) diploma, a specialized path that incorporates career-focused education classes and curriculum into school programs with the goal of preparing students for entry into New York State's growing technical and manufacturing industries.

Manufacturing and technical professions require a different skill set today than 20 years ago, and employers have told me they are having difficulty finding qualified applicants. A 2011 study by the Manufacturing Institute showed that 83 percent of manufacturers surveyed are finding it difficult to hire qualified employees. This legislation would enable students to get hands-on, applied education at the high school level to meet the demands of companies, preparing them to either work in the field, enter apprenticeship programs, or continue to college.

### **Student Artists**

I had the pleasure of meeting Colin Sullivan this week, who had artwork selected for the 2014 Legislative Student Art Exhibit in Albany. Colin attends school in the Fabius-Pompey District.

### **Securing the Future of Family Farming**

I lent my support to a legislative package that would help young New Yorkers replace an aging generation of farmers. The agricultural industry is a critical and growing part of the

state's economy. With a large number of current farmers reaching retirement age, it is imperative that we attract younger people to the profession through education, support programs and tax reform. The "Young Farmers NY" legislative package includes a college loan forgiveness program, new tax breaks and an easing of property transfers -- all measures designed to encourage young people to choose agriculture as a career.

### **RFP for FreshConnect Farmers' Market Program**

Applications for funding through the "FreshConnect" Farmers' Market program, which assists New York farmers by promoting the sale of locally-grown food products, are now being accepted. The program, in its fourth year, focuses on bringing fresh farm products to nutritionally-underserved communities and improving nutrition education statewide.

Under this initiative, new and existing farmers' markets, municipalities, and not-for-profits may apply for up to \$10,000, and those with the best ideas on how to improve access to farmers' markets participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will be awarded funding.

For more information and to apply for funding under the RFP, visit the [Department of Agriculture and Markets website](#).