



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Ortt's Bill to Improve School Emergency Plans Signed into Law

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| ISSUE: **SCHOOLS**



**ALBANY** – Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) today announced a provision of his legislation to require mandatory lockdown drills in school districts across the state has been signed into law as part of the recently enacted \$155.6 billion New York State Budget. The measure would mandate a minimum of four lockdown drills be carried out in the first half of the school year.

“It’s surprising that after the numerous horrific school attacks over the past two decades, sensible legislation such as this hasn’t already been adopted,” **said Senator Ortt.** “This

amended law holds the safety of our children to a higher standard. It's vital that we prepare our school districts as best we can in order to respond quickly and efficiently before, during and after an incident. I'm hopeful that with this new requirement in place, it could prevent a bad situation from becoming worse and help save lives."

Currently, lockdowns are recommended, but not required in school districts. The revised law lessens the required amount of fire drills in a school year and replaces those drills with scenario-based lockdowns. New York State law mandated at least 12 fire drills in school districts annually. Now, schools will be required to conduct a minimum of eight fire drills and at least four lockdown drills from September to the end of December.

A lockdown would be executed if there were an imminent threat of violence in or around the school. The purpose of a lockdown is to ensure all school staff, students and visitors are secured in rooms away from immediate danger in order to minimize injury or death and neutralize the threat. A lockdown involves clearing the hallways, locking classroom doors, hiding students from view in a pre-designated "safe area" within the room. No one is allowed to leave until the situation has been resolved.

The act will take effect July 1.