



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo sponsors legislation to bring more fairness, local input and transparency to teacher evaluations, student testing

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO May 13, 2016

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION, SCHOOLS, COMMON CORE**



UTICA -- State Senator Joseph Griffo of Rome and Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi of Utica announced today they are sponsoring a package of legislation designed to bring about more fairness, local input, and transparency to teacher evaluations and student testing now required by the State.

“The longer we allow our educational system to stray off course, the more our children will struggle to realize their true potential and talents. As I have always said, standardized tests are not an effective means to judge every child’s intellectual capacity and skills, and therefore these scores are not a fair and honest way to evaluate our teachers. My legislation would reset the whole flawed testing process by allowing stakeholders in education the opportunity to determine the best approach to teach our children and judge the performance of their teachers,” **Senator Griffo said.**

“It is abundantly clear to me the process for testing students and evaluating teachers is flawed. The bills I am sponsoring provide fairer ways to evaluate the performance of students, teachers and our individual schools, by cutting down on the amount of time tests take from classroom learning, and by providing a more significant role for parents, students, and teachers. This legislation seeks a better way to determine what students are learning, and how teachers are performing, by allowing more local participation in the evaluation process,” **Assemblyman Brindisi said.**

Senator Griffo and Assemblyman Brindisi’s education package includes legislation that would:

- **(A.10058/S.07461)** Reduce testing by directing the Board of Regents to establish a committee to shorten the length of standardized tests and find ways to increase their transparency. Additionally, tests would be given to students, parents, and teachers so that they can be used to improve the manner in which teachers teach and students learn.
- **(A.10057/S.07463)** Repeal State Takeover of Failing Schools and put the school reform process back in the hands of local educators, parents, and other stakeholders who are in the best position to understand the specific needs of the school district.

- **(A.10056/S.07462)** Immediately decouple teacher evaluations from test results, and direct the Board of Regents to establish a committee to research and develop an alternate, research-based method for teacher evaluations, which will ensure that students and teachers both have better experiences in the classroom.

Kernan Elementary School in Utica was recently downgraded by the State Education Department to 'priority school' after being on its 'focus schools' list last year. Kernan now must implement a reform plan under the state's existing guidelines for school reform. Utica's Martin Luther King, Junior Elementary School recently was upgraded to a 'focus school', from earlier 'priority school' status.

Griffo added: "We cannot continue to expose our students and our teachers to a system that does not recognize the unique circumstances all of our schools confront every day in their communities. Local educators who best know their schools and students must have a greater voice in deciding how to improve the learning environment of those schools, and I believe my legislation will help guarantee that vital input. The only way to overcome the challenges our schools face is to identify the methods that aren't working, reconsider them, and ultimately guarantee our teachers have the resources, the support and the encouragement they need to always do what's in the best interest of their students."

"Currently, the state's one size fits all Receivership Program does not adequately take into account the specific needs of schools like Kernan and King and has been a dismal failure. The Utica School District has a significant population of ESL students, and special needs students. The district's refugee population is one of the largest in the country. Classroom sizes are large, and average family incomes are low. This legislation seeks to develop a research-based education policy that will be overseen by local educators and other

stakeholders who understand each school's unique characteristics," **Brindisi said.**

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