



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Scores for Oswego City School Sports

PATTY RITCHIE June 21, 2016



Following on the heels of record State Budget increase in school aid to Oswego City Schools, Senator Patty Ritchie today delivered more good news to students and families, in the form of a \$150,000 special grant to help rescue the city schools' sports programs that were slashed by the district.

"When the city schools slashed funding and Oswego's students faced an end to most school sports, I immediately went to work to find a way to help, and today I'm pleased to announce that the 'Bucs' won't stop here, and that Oswego's student-athletes are back in the game,"

said Senator Ritchie, invoking the name of the district's sports mascot.

"School sports serve an important role in providing students a complete educational experience, by encouraging fitness and health, teaching interpersonal and leadership skills, improving academic achievement, building community spirit and helping them to make lifelong memories and friendships," Senator Ritchie said. "And now students and families can look forward to another season of action and cheering on their teams."

Earlier this year, Oswego city schools leaders, facing a projected budget deficit, decided to eliminate many of the district's sports programs, including varsity football, girls hockey, cheerleading, wrestling and all modified sports, unless parents could find a way to pay for the programs outside the taxpayer-supported budget.

"Our student-athletes are already making plans for the next school year, and worried about whether they would be able to participate in school sports," said Susan DiBlasi, an Oswego schools parent who is helping coordinate fundraising for district sports programs as a member of the Buc Boosters. "We are so grateful to Senator Ritchie for this generous grant funding that not only helps restore sports programming, but also gives us needed time to build long-term support and funding so that Oswego school sports can continue long into the future."

"As soon as the district announced that it was cutting Oswego's sports programs, Senator Ritchie contacted me to find out how she could help. She listened and cared enough to ask this community what we wanted, and she delivered more than we expected," said Shane Broadwell, the Majority Leader of the Oswego County Legislature.

Senator Ritchie's \$150,000 special sports grant is separate from—and comes in addition to—the record funding that she secured in this year's State Budget for Oswego city schools.

The 2016-17 State Budget provides a total of \$19.68 million to the district, an increase of 9.9 percent from the prior year. That amount is \$1 million more than originally proposed by the Governor in his Executive Budget.

Since 2011, when Senator Ritchie first took office, state education aid to Oswego city schools has increased by 48 percent, and per-pupil aid has increased by almost six times the rate of inflation. The percentage aid increase for Oswego city schools is higher than any of the 33 school districts that are included in Senator Ritchie's district.

"I take seriously my responsibility to stand up for the schools, students and families I represent, and to fight for our fair share of state education dollars every single year, and I'm pleased to be able to deliver this special grant in addition to the record state aid to Oswego schools," Senator Ritchie said.