



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Marisol Alcantara

## Senator Marisol Alcantara Passes Her First Bill Into Law

MARISOL ALCANTARA January 31, 2017

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, EDUCATION**

Washington Heights, NY — Senator Marisol Alcantara (D-Manhattan) passed her first bill into law today, legislation that will require the state department of education to develop suicide prevention materials for educators and create a central website of mental health resources for schools across the state. This law will benefit all New York students struggling with mental health issues, but is of particular concern for Latino students, as they have a higher risk of suicide and depression. In 2015, close to 1 in 4 of New York State's Hispanic youth considered suicide, and 1 in 7 of our Hispanic youth actually attempted suicide. As the situation stands, many school administrators and educators do not have the necessary time or funding to develop their schools' mental health resources, and so any existing resources are unevenly implemented across the state. This law provides more options and more resources for educators who are concerned about their students' well-being without adding to stretched school budgets or packed teacher schedules. School administrations that feel their mental health resources are adequate are under no obligation to utilize these resources, but the website's presence will also help individual educators and students learn about techniques for suicide prevention. Too many young New Yorkers feel alone and without information about their mental health, a situation that drives many promising young people to throw their lives away. It is past time for basic, commonsense information about mental health to be available in our schools, the place where young New Yorkers learn about everything else required to be a healthy, productive member of our society.