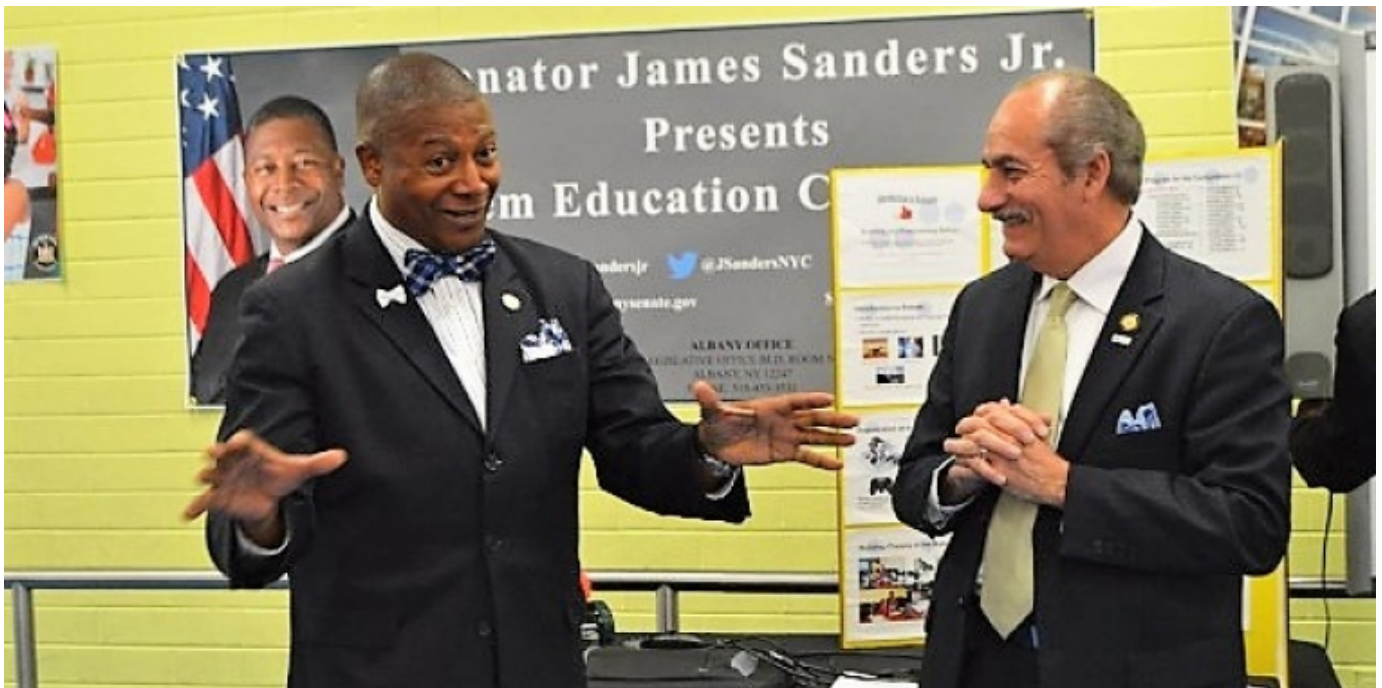




NEW YORK STATE SENATOR  
James Sanders Jr.

## Sanders Hosts Education & Career Fair

JAMES SANDERS JR. May 6, 2017



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) hosted an Educational Conference & Career Fair on Saturday, May, 6<sup>th</sup> at MS 53Q in Far Rockaway to educate both parents and students about important programs such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and the new Excelsior Program that will make tuition free for qualifying students at city and state colleges.

In speaking about Excelsior, Dr. Guillermo Linares, acting president of the NYS Higher Education Services Corporation, stressed the importance of having a college degree in order to compete in the workforce. Long gone, he said, are the times when a high school diploma

was sufficient. In addition, Linares said that a successful career attained through a good education not only benefits the student financially, but the whole community, because they can then invest in others.

In order to qualify for the program, a student must be a NYS resident whose family household adjusted gross income (as filed on their 2015 federal tax returns) does not exceed \$100,000 for the 2017-18 academic year and complete 30 credits per year. The recipient can receive up to \$5,500 from the Excelsior Scholarship, minus any amounts received for TAP, Pell or other scholarships. The remainder of is covered through a credit paid through SUNY or CUNY.

“For far too long, a lack of financial means has prevented bright young people from becoming the stars they were destined to be,” Sanders said. “I support tuition-free public college throughout the state. Last session I introduced the New York Promise Program, which would do just that, for qualifying students, and ensure that our children have access to the educational opportunities necessary to compete in today’s economy.”

Also in attendance to speak on the benefits of higher education was Adenike Cumberland of the United Negro College Fund, an organization whose mission is to recognize the underrepresented and help them become highly qualified college graduates. It gives out 10,000 scholarships annually through 400 corporations, Cumberland said, adding that it is important to have a plan, a dream, and a goal.

UNCF is well known for its slogan: “A mind is a terrible thing to waste,” and now they have added, “But it’s a wonderful thing to invest in.’

STEM education was also an important part of the discussion at the fair. Danillo Archbold,

CEO and Cofounder of Zion STEM Academy, spoke about how some of the highest paying jobs are in STEM fields like Mechatronics, which New York University defines as the “synergistic integration of mechanical engineering, control theory, computer science, and electronics to manage complexity, uncertainty, and communication in engineered systems.”

The starting salary in the Mechatronics field is \$96,000, Archbold said. Other high earners include: statisticians who take home a median salary of \$80,110; and mathematicians and environmental engineers who make \$111,000 on average respectively, Archbold said.

Another part of the fair focused on the concept of dressing for success. Kevin Livingston, founder and president of 100 Suits for 100 Men, gave out suits and neckties. To make the apparel upgrade more interactive, he invited two students to compete against other, to see who could tie a necktie the fastest. The two participants in that competition received a special tie designed and donated by football player Colin Kaepernick.

Lakia Echols of Make My Mother Proud gave away a myriad of prom dresses in different styles, colors and fabrics. Whether the female students favored gowns that were adorned with beads, encircled in ruffles, covered in sequins or just plain and simple, there was a dress to accommodate each one.

The event was conducted in Partnership with Sports & Arts in Schools Foundation, The Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation, Zion Youth and Family Community Center of Elmont, Simple College Solutions, 100 Suits for 100 Men, and Make My Mother Proud, and Queens Library.