



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo invites NY Education Commissioner to Utica for public input on new standards

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO May 15, 2017

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UTICA – State Senator Joseph Griffo is inviting the New York State education commissioner to consider hosting a public hearing in Utica so that residents of the Mohawk Valley can provide valuable input as the state finalizes new education standards.

In a letter sent to state Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia last week, Senator Griffo, R-Rome, suggested the city of Utica would be an ideal central location for such a hearing, easily

accessible to many residents of the local school districts that may want to weigh in on the evolving standards.

“The Mohawk Valley is a very diverse region, with districts such as Utica being high needs and low wealth, as well as a number of suburban and rural districts that approach the current standards with great cynicism,” Senator Griffo wrote in his letter. “Also, Utica is home to many refugees that are the English Language Learners your proposed new standards are looking to help, so I believe engaging face to face with the local educators who are familiar with the challenges these students face would provide significant insight toward crafting the best education standards possible.”

As the state aspires toward new education standards that would take into consideration the many factors of student learning, Senator Griffo applauded Commissioner Elia for wanting to hear from those who best understand local schooling needs.

“I appreciate your recognition that our parents, teachers, superintendents, boards of education and other stakeholders must be involved in this process if we are going to provide the best education we can for our students,” Senator Griffo wrote. “I believe you and your panel would be served well to hear firsthand what the parents, teachers and education stakeholders in the Mohawk Valley believe should be done to improve learning.”

**THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF SENATOR GRIFFO’S LETTER TO STATE
EDUCATION COMMISSIONER MARYELLEN ELIA:**

May 12, 2017

*MaryEllen Elia, Commissioner
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234*

Dear Commissioner Elia:

I am encouraged by your plans with the New York State Education Department to host multiple public hearings across the state to explain the draft plan for new education standards, while inviting important commentary from the public to help finalize this new path for our state's education system. I appreciate your recognition that our parents, teachers, superintendents, boards of education and other stakeholders must be involved in this process if we are going to provide the best education we can for our students.

As you proceed with this listening tour, I respectfully invite you to host such a regional hearing in the Mohawk Valley, particularly in the City of Utica, which is a population center easily accessible to the residents of the many affected school districts in our region. The Mohawk Valley is a very diverse region, with districts such as Utica being high needs and low wealth, as well as a number of suburban and rural districts that approach the current standards with great cynicism. Also, Utica is home to many refugees that are the English Language Learners your proposed new standards are looking to help, so I believe engaging face to face with the local educators who are familiar with the challenges these students face would provide significant insight toward crafting the best education standards possible.

I believe you and your panel would be served well to hear firsthand what the parents, teachers and education stakeholders in the Mohawk Valley believe should be done to improve learning.

I appreciate your consideration, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

*Joseph A. Griffo
State Senator*

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