



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

6.4.18 - Sen. Fred Akshar joins Harpursville CSD and Students to Unveil New Accessible and Inclusive Playground

FRED AKSHAR June 4, 2018

| ISSUE: **ACCESSIBILITY, PLAYGROUNDS, INCLUSION, EDUCATION**



(HARPURSVILLE, NY) Senator Fred Akshar joined Harpursville Central School District Superintendent Mike Rullo along with teachers and students to unveil a new and improved, accessible and inclusive playground at W.A. Olmstead Elementary school in Harpursville.

Akshar was able to secure \$135,000 in last year's State Budget for the improvements to make the playground more accessible and enjoyable for children of all abilities. Upgrades include

ADA-friendly wheelchair ramps, slides, structures and a new rubberized playground surface.

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Senator Fred Akshar said, "We're lucky to live in a diverse community, filled with families and children of every ability. We owe it to ourselves and our community to take care of one another. All anyone needs to be successful is opportunity, and we have a fundamental and moral obligation to provides opportunities for our children no matter their abilities. A more inclusive, accessible playground provides more opportunities for all the children of our community to play together, make new friends and learn from one another."

Superintendent Mike Rullo said, "I cannot begin to express my gratitude to the Senator for his leadership and advocacy for our students. This is yet another example of Senator Akshar's support of public education and, moreover, his support of the young people in our community. Through his generosity, our playground is even more ADA accessible than ever! All students will have access to the play structures and all students will be able to participate with their peers in a way that they couldn't just a short time ago. I cannot wait to watch our children play together, safely, fulfilling every characteristic of what it means to be a joyful kid and a friend. Just the thought is heartwarming, actually watching the children play is going to be awesome! Thank you, Senator Akshar!"

The idea for the project came from Harpursville CSD parent Sierra Kulas, who contacted Senator Akshar's office with the project in December of 2016.

Sierra Kulas said, "We cannot describe how appreciative, thankful and excited we are for not only Kalen and Kyan, but all those at Harpursville School to enjoy the new handicapped accessible playground! The boys cannot wait to explore with all their friends. Thank you to Senator Akshar for making this happen!"

The \$135,000 was allocated through the State and Municipal Facilities Program of the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY).

“I'm pleased to have played a small part in this project in securing the funding, but this project has never been about money, it's always about people,” said Akshar. “Our community is filled with incredible, passionate people like Superintendent Rullo and Sierra Kulas, and thanks to their engagement and dedication, this idea became a reality.”

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