



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

Senator Metzger, Sullivan 180, and Sullivan BOCES Partner on New School Health Initiative and Award

JEN METZGER February 22, 2020

| ISSUE: **EMPOWERING A HEALTHIER GENERATION SCHOOL AWARD, SULLIVAN COUNTY SCHOOLS**



Ferndale, NY...Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42), Sullivan 180, and Sullivan BOCES are pleased to announce the launch of a new initiative to encourage health and well-being in Sullivan County Schools. The "Empowering a Healthier Generation School Award" will recognize school districts doing exemplary work to promote opportunities for health and wellness by providing monetary awards and grants to further strengthen their efforts.

The program is structured as a competition over the 2020/21 academic school year to encourage the school districts to think of bold and innovative ways to support the health and well-being of their school communities. The school districts that demonstrate the most progress on promoting school health and wellness are eligible to receive monetary awards, including a first place \$200,000 State and Municipal Capital (SAM) grant from Senator Metzger's office.

"Making sure that young people here in Sullivan County have access to healthy choices is vital to their physical, emotional, and social well-being, as well as their scholastic success," **said Senator Metzger.** "I am thrilled to partner with Sullivan 180 and Sullivan BOCES in promoting health and wellness in Sullivan County schools, and look forward to seeing the positive impacts this new health initiative will have on our young people."

Over the course of the year, school districts are encouraged to plan and implement policies, programs and activities that address physical health, mental health, and increased parent and community involvement to promote the health and well-being of their school communities. School districts participating in the award competition will have access to incentives and resources from Sullivan 180's many community partners to encourage them to develop and expand programs that support health and wellness for their students, staff, parents, and community, with the goal of improving the overall health and well-being of Sullivan County.

According to Sandra Gerry, Chair of the Board of Directors for Sullivan 180, "Our schools are doing many wonderful things, but there is more work to be done. The 'Empowering a Healthier Generation' award program will be a catalyst for schools to do more to address health among their students, staff and in their communities."

Aside from Metzger's grant award, additional awards will be announced throughout the year. The final awards will be made at the end of the 2020/21 academic school year.

According to Robert Dufour, Ed.D. District Superintendent Sullivan BOCES, "I foresee every school district in Sullivan County applying for this grant. Schools have a number of budgetary constraints that limit the opportunity to expand initiatives not tied to instructional requirements. Being awarded funds to expand wellness initiatives will benefit everyone in the school community."

"Children are our future, and if we want to make Sullivan County a healthier community, we need to focus on them," **concluded Rowland.**