



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

## Senator Metzger's Community Conversations Discuss the Impacts of Distance Learning on Students, Teachers, and Families during COVID-19

JEN METZGER May 8, 2020

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**Hudson Valley and Catskills, NY...**State Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42) hosted the fourth episode of her COVID-19 [Community Conversations](#) online series last evening, joined by Sullivan County eighth and 12th grade English teacher Matt Haynes and fifth grade special education teacher Laura Denman. Streamed live on [Senator Metzger's Facebook page](#), the half-hour-long digital episodes feature local experts addressing topics important to Hudson Valley and Catskill communities.

In Thursday's discussion, held during Teacher Appreciation Week, the teachers candidly discussed how their students are vocal about missing the social side of being in school and are experiencing screen-learning burnout, and also how families with multiple children are coping with managing different learning schedules and navigating technology and broadband connectivity issues in their rural school district. Twenty percent of the students in Tri-Valley Central School District do not have internet access. Haynes and Denman reassured parents that teachers and their schools are available to provide support during this difficult time, whether it's resources, school meal delivery, or counselor services.

"As a parent of two high schoolers myself, I greatly appreciate the dedication, compassion, and complete flexibility of teachers in efforts to meet students and families where they are during this challenging time," said Senator Metzger. "The conversation with teachers Matt Haynes and Laura Denman underscored how we truly are all in this together, and I hope that families throughout the district I represent are aware that their children's educators are available to them if they need assistance."

Matt Haynes, eighth and 12th grade English teacher at Tri-Valley and Secondary School Vice President of the Tri-Valley Teachers' Association, "I was honored to be a guest on Senator Metzger's Community Conversation series. Public education is something that I believe very strongly in. Despite the pandemic we are currently facing, it has been inspiring to see so many people come together to express their support for our local schools. The remainder of this year and the start of next year are going to be vital for our kids. We can't survive cuts in funding. Instead, we need to continue to invest in public education so that our students continue to receive the support they need. I want to thank Senator Metzger for allowing us to have this important conversation."

Senator Metzger's [Community Conversations](#) series will continue to occur [via Facebook live](#),

streaming twice-weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5:00 PM, and additional topical episodes in the series will be announced as New York State continues to grapple with the novel coronavirus global pandemic. Next Tuesday's episode will cover [COVID-19 Mental Health Awareness and Resources with two experts from The Institute for Disaster Mental Health at SUNY New Paltz](#). A full list of topics and guests is available [here](#).

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