



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

# Celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week 2024

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**Brooklyn, NY** –State Senator Kevin Parker stands in solidarity with educators across America as the nation celebrates Teacher Appreciation Week. Recognizing the invaluable contributions teachers make to our communities, Senator Parker champions the reintroduction of a comprehensive legislative package, aimed at ensuring these bills receive the attention and support necessary for their passage. This legislative effort seeks to enhance New York State's education system, aligning it with the needs of both educators and students. Senator Parker's legislation consists of the following pivotal bills designed to support teachers and improve education outcomes.

The first of these bills, **Senate Bill S.3408**, the Bilingual Teachers of Tomorrow Program, aims to address the critical shortage of bilingual teachers in schools by establishing a teacher recruitment and retention initiative. By providing grants and outlining application procedures, the bill enables schools to attract and retain certified bilingual teachers effectively. This program not only responds to the immediate need for qualified bilingual educators but also ensures the long-term enrichment of education for diverse student populations. By supporting bilingual teachers, the bill empowers them to provide culturally responsive education, fostering an inclusive learning environment for all students, particularly those from linguistically diverse backgrounds.

In addition to the Bilingual Teachers of Tomorrow Program, Senator Parker is championing a second critical piece of legislation: **Senate Bill S5275**, which ensures adequate funding for New York City schools through a tax surcharge. This bill is essential for teachers as it guarantees competitive wages, making it easier to attract and retain qualified educators. By addressing the root cause of teacher turnover due to financial constraints, it creates a stable environment, allowing teachers to focus on teaching without financial stress. Additionally, it improves school facilities, creating a safer and more conducive workplace for educators. Ultimately, this legislation prioritizes teachers' well-being and aims to enhance the quality of education in NYC schools.

Lastly, **Senate Bill S.6768** directs the commissioner of education to establish an incentive program for school districts aiming to implement elementary school foreign language programs. This bill recognizes the critical window of opportunity for

language acquisition in young children and the increasing importance of multilingualism in a globalized world. By initiating foreign language education earlier, students can develop proficiencies in languages other than English, better preparing them for the global workforce. The focus on high-needs districts ensures additional support where it's most needed, while the provision of tuition incentives for prospective foreign language teachers guarantees the availability of a qualified workforce to effectively implement these programs.

"Teachers are the cornerstone of our society, shaping the leaders and innovators of tomorrow," said Senator Parker. "During National Teacher Appreciation Week, we honor their unwavering dedication, passion, and commitment to nurturing the minds of our youth. As we express our gratitude, let us also reaffirm our commitment to supporting teachers and investing in the future of education."

Senator Kevin Parker encourages residents of New York to join him in expressing appreciation for the remarkable contributions of teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week and beyond.

### **About State Senator Kevin Parker**

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse Brooklyn district comprising sections of Flatbush, East Flatbush, Kensington, Ditmas Park, Midwood, Flatlands, Canarsie, Georgetown, Old Mill Basin, Mill Basin, Marine Park, and Bergen Beach. A lifelong Brooklyn resident, he is the Chairman of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee and sits on the Senate Finance; Rules; Banks; Internet and Technology; Rules; and Budget and Revenue.