



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham Inaugurates New North Rockland Schools Playground

PETE HARCKHAM June 21, 2025

| ISSUE: **SENATOR HARCKHAM. SD40, NORTH ROCKLAND CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, ADA ACCESSIBILITY, FUNDING SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS**



State Sen. Pete Harckham with (l-r) NRCSD Superintendent Dr. Kris Felicello, NRCSD Assistant Superintendent for Business Kleo Girandola and Neary Education Center Principal Christopher Frank, along with students from the center at the new playground

State Senator has delivered more than \$113 million for municipalities, schools and non-profit organizations in the 40th Senate District

Haverstraw, NY - New York State Senator Pete Harckham inaugurated a new adaptive playground here at the Neary Education Center on Friday, June 20 that can be enjoyed by

young students of all capabilities. The legislator secured \$150,000 of State Senate funding for its construction at the center, a Pre-K to Grade 6 school for personalized learning in the North Rockland Central School District (NRCSD).

“I am delighted that we could help make this playground a reality for Neary Education Center children,” Harckham said. “An adaptive playground is more than just a place to play—it’s a space where children of all abilities can come together to explore, imagine, and connect. Adaptive playgrounds don’t just meet the needs of some children; they enrich the lives of all.”

NRCSD Superintendent Dr. Kris Felicello, said, “This new adaptive playground sets the standard for North Rockland in what a fully inclusive recreation area looks like. We want every child to know that they are valued and treated with kindness and respect. Providing a space in which all students feel welcome, supported and included is critical to our mission. The continued support and generosity of Senator Harckham demonstrates his commitment to providing quality education and wellness opportunities for students with unique needs in our school community.”

The playground provides a safe, comfortable environment for children of all abilities. The recreation area is designed to cater to a range of needs, including those related to mobility and cognitive differences, ensuring that no child is excluded. The playground utilizes specialized equipment and sensory-friendly features specifically designed to accommodate the sensory sensitivities often associated with autism spectrum disorder.

The fully-accessible ADA structures include swings, a motorcycle seesaw and mounted drums—all uniquely designed features that prioritize inclusion and accommodate children with a variety of challenges. Also included is special turf surfacing for child safety. The NRCSD will merge accessibility and inclusivity seamlessly into a play experience that is both

welcoming and functional for students and staff.

Since the 2022 state redistricting, which brought a section of Rockland County that included the Town of Stony Point into Senate District 40, Harckham has championed the NRCSD, helping it to secure almost \$116.4 million in total school aid last year, an increase of \$2.3 million over the previous year.