



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Senator Suzi Oppenheimer Addresses Needs of Emotionally Vulnerable Children at Clear View School Annual Meeting

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May 26, 2010

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Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck), chair of the Senate Education Committee, gave the keynote address at the annual meeting of the Clear View School in Briarcliff on May 13, 2010.

“Every time I visit a school like Clear View, I come away with a profound sense of appreciation for the work that takes place here,” Senator Oppenheimer told the audience. “The children who attend these special schools are so emotionally damaged that many consider them unteachable. But here at Clear View, these children find refuge and support. Nurtured by a dedicated staff of teachers and therapists, they gradually gain the confidence to become active learners once more.”

Clear View is one of more than a hundred 853 schools in the State, so named for the chapter of the NY State Education Code that governs their existence. 853 schools are private schools serving high needs children who are not able to function in a traditional school setting. Many of these children come from foster care, juvenile justice or special education programs and suffer from severe emotional problems. The schools are funded through tuition payments from the local school districts from which the children reside.

Senator Oppenheimer acknowledged the unique and difficult economic challenges facing 853 schools and noted that her staff is actively looking at ways to

improve the rate setting methodology that is used to determine tuition reimbursements for these schools. The Senator has also sponsored several bills to improve the financial stability of 853 schools by authorizing the state to provide short term loans in anticipation of a school's revenues, providing reimbursement for payments made for MTA mobility taxes, and permitting these schools to maintain fund balance reserve accounts.

Expressing her gratitude to the teachers and administrators at Clear View and other special needs schools, Senator Oppenheimer concluded: "You foster understanding among children who have long been misunderstood; you build confidence among students whose life challenges have destroyed their self esteem, and you bring hope to families whose everyday circumstances seem without hope. Most importantly, you remind us all that every child can learn."