



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Senator Suzi Oppenheimer Names Dr. Eileen Santiago 2010 Woman of Distinction

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June 8, 2010

ISSUE:

- [Women](#)



At a ceremony held in Albany on May 25th, Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck) paid tribute to Dr. Eileen Santiago, naming her a 2010 Woman of Distinction. For the thirteenth year, the New York State Senate has honored contemporary women whose contributions have enriched the quality of life in communities throughout the state. Dr. Santiago is the principal of the Thomas A. Edison School in Port Chester.

“Dr. Santiago is a true revolutionary, though she would not call herself one,” said Senator Oppenheimer. “By establishing one of the first full-service community schools in Westchester, she revolutionized traditional notions of education and, in so doing, enriched the lives of countless children by providing them with the tools and support they need to sustain a lifetime of learning.”

A community school is an innovative model of schooling, premised on educating the “whole child” by providing a host of comprehensive support services directly at the school site. Under Dr. Santiago’s leadership, Edison currently offers a school-based health center, on-site mental health services and after school enrichment programs and provides families access to case management, mental health and adult education services. Over 94% of the student body, which includes a high percentage children living in poverty and many recent immigrants, is enrolled in the on-site health care program.

Since becoming a community school in 1998, the Edison school has staged an impressive turnaround. When state assessments first began in 1999, 19% of Edison's fourth graders passed the English Language Arts test. Last year, 75% of Edison's fourth grade students passed. In mathematics, the school has consistently had 85-90% of its third, fourth and fifth graders earning passing scores.

"Dr. Santiago believed that by helping students come to school healthy, well-fed and ready to learn, they would succeed," observed Senator Oppenheimer, "and by every measure she was right. For her many contributions, Dr. Santiago truly is a Woman of Distinction."