



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

# **Senator Martins Meets With School Superintendents to Discuss New Teacher Evaluations**

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State Senator Jack M. Martins recently met with school superintendents from school districts in the Seventh Senate District at the Wheatley School in Old Westbury to discuss the new teacher evaluations and the impact to the schools.

The new evaluations are tied to student performance on standardized tests and local tests. New York was fortunately awarded \$700 million from the federal government's "Race to the Top" program, which seeks to improve student scores by holding teachers more accountable. The new evaluations were designed by the State Board of Regents as part of the state's application for the federal funds.

Senator Martins discussed with the superintendents the concerns regarding the new performance evaluations for classroom teachers and building principals. Under the new system, which goes into effect this school year as the first year of a phase-in, the state will differentiate teacher and principal effectiveness using four categories – Highly Effective, Effective, Developing and Ineffective. For the 2011-2012 school year, for those districts with new collective bargaining agreements (entered into after July 1, 2010), only classroom teachers in the common branch subjects who teach English language arts and/or mathematics to students in grades 4 to 8 are subject to the new evaluations and the building principals where those teachers are employed.

The new evaluations could mean that up to 40 percent of the evaluation is tied to student achievement on state standardized tests.

Senator Martins shared the concerns of the superintendents over the evaluations. "With the proposed changes, school administrators and principals would have to be retrained by third party contractors for a new evaluation rubric. Our taxpayers have to pay for these contractors and the training at a projected cost of over \$100,000 per district," Senator Martins said.

With Long Island being known for the quality of many of its school districts, Senator Martins questions whether implementing another system will ultimately benefit those school districts who are already high achieving districts.

"The reality is that in an area like ours, with numerous outstanding schools that regularly outperform national averages, we run the risk of fixing something that isn't broken," he said. "I will continue to meet with our school superintendents as this process moves forward to discuss concerns and see how we may be able to work together to make certain that our school districts aren't negatively impacted."