State Education Department Issues Legal Opinion Agreeing WITH Lanza & Cusick: Put the Kids on the Bus!

ANDREW J LANZA   September 24, 2012

Lawmakers Urge City to Reverse Decision Which Denied Some Schools Bus Service

In a joint letter penned to Chancellor Dennis Wolcott at the New York City Department of Education, Senator Andrew Lanza (R-Staten Island) and Assemblyman Michael Cusick (D-Mid Island) urged the City to reverse its decision to deny yellow school bus service to 7th and 8th grade students at Marsh Avenue School for Expeditionary Learning and Staten Island School of Civic Leadership.

In their letter, Lanza and Cusick call upon the City to reverse its interpretation of the statute, authored by the Staten Island lawmakers, which excludes schools that are in the intended service area but did not exist in the past. The lawmakers also point to a written correspondence from the New York State Department of Education to the Mayor's Office dated September 5, 2012. As expressed in that letter it is also the opinion of the New York State Department of Education that the intent of the law is to provide service to students who attend schools which may not have existed in the past but who are in the intended service area.

 "The law's language is straightforward and the Senator and I have maintained that it includes all students on Staten Island who had qualified for the waivers in 2009 that were in the intended service area," said Assemblyman Michael Cusick. "Putting the children at Marsh Avenue Expeditionary Learning School and Staten Island School of Civic Leadership in harm's way is unconscionable and the City must reverse its decision immediately before another tragedy strikes."

Senator Lanza said, "The State Department of Education's interpretation of our law is welcome news but no surprise," said Senator Andrew Lanza. "The intent of this law is clear and unambiguous and its time the City follows the law and puts the safety and transportation needs of our students above politics."

The two letters referenced above are attached.

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