



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

As Students Head Back to the Classroom, Ritchie Announces Results of 2013 School Survey

PATTY RITCHIE August 28, 2013

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As students in Central and Northern New York prepare to head back to the classroom, State Senator Patty Ritchie is releasing the results of her 2013 School Survey, which shows that most people give high ratings to area schools, but have concerns about more rigid standards under the state's new Common Core as well as bullying in schools.

[Click here for full results of Ritchie's 2013 School Survey](#)

Nearly 2,100 people weighed in through the survey, designed to gather public opinion and ideas for use in the next legislative session.

“Providing the best educational opportunities possible to students in our region is a top priority for me, and I am thrilled that so many people participated in this survey, sharing their ideas for ways to improve our schools,” said Senator Ritchie.

“With input on everything from school safety to curriculum, the feedback I received through this survey will truly be invaluable as I continue to advocate for local education.”

Some of the key findings in Senator Ritchie’s 2013 School Survey include:

- 84% rate the quality of education at their schools as “excellent” or “good.”
- 74% have concerns about Common Core—new standards to establish benchmarks for education—and their impact on learning, while 54% think tougher teacher standards are unnecessary.
- 73% think more needs to be done to recognize great teachers. In June, Senator Ritchie honored more than 40 area educators for their dedication and commitment to learning through her “Teachers of Excellence” program; an initiative she plans to continue next year.
- 81% oppose providing additional aid increases to better-performing schools.

- 72% think their schools are safe, while 52% say bullying is a growing problem. Last month, a measure Senator Ritchie voted in favor of to protect students from cyberbullying by requiring schools to work with parents and law enforcement to respond forcefully when bullying occurs went into effect
- 79% are against arming teachers—a proposal by one national anti-crime group.
- 56% think the tax cap is helping to hold down property taxes. In 2013, over 90 percent of school districts kept taxes below the cap. In addition, this year's State Budget included a record level of savings under the School Property Tax Relief program, or STAR.
- 84% would support a vocational diploma.
- On the question of how to spend increased state aid, 41% of respondents think aid should be directed into classrooms, 21% for property tax relief and 16% to restore cuts to sports and extracurricular programs.

The questionnaire represents Senator Ritchie's latest effort to help support Central and Northern New York schools. This year, New York State increased its commitment to public education with the largest school aid package in four years. In addition, the school aid package was weighted to rural and Upstate schools, and provides \$25 million more than last year in education aid to districts in Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties.

In addition, Senator Ritchie also sponsored legislation (S.2116) that changes state aid formulas to better reflect the needs of rural districts. The bipartisan bill recognizes the impact that industrial decline has had on the tax base of local communities and seeks to spread education costs across the state more fairly.