



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

# **American Heart Association says lives will be saved by CPR in Schools bill**

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# American Heart Association®

*Learn and Live*

Buffalo, NY –Today the American Heart Association applauded Senator Mark Grisanti for introducing legislation that holds the power to create a generation of lifesavers in New York: the CPR in School bill. The bill ensures all students learn bystander CPR before they graduate, preparing them to respond to sudden cardiac arrest, whose victims usually die before Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) arrive because nobody administered CPR. For two local families, the bill has special meaning. Suzy McCarthy and her family advocate in honor of their daughter and sister, Madison Lee. Madison was just five years old when she suffered cardiac arrest while attending kindergarten. Annette Adamczak is dedicated to teaching hands-only CPR to high school students across Western New York, in memory of her daughter, 14 year-old Emily Rose. Both moms have helped many families and students in Western New York with CPR trainings and cardiac screenings. But they won't stop there. They are determined to help families across the state by advocating for CPR training prior to graduation. "It took 18 minutes for first responders to arrive and start CPR for Madison," Suzy McCarthy said. "Time matters, and if everyone in New York can respond in a cardiac emergency, lives can be saved. I'm proud to be Senator Grisanti's constituent and it means so much to our family that he has championed this bill." "Perhaps if we had started CPR immediately, or had an AED on hand, the outcome may have been different," Adamczak said. "That is the reason for our family's passion to bring CPR into schools. One of these young adults that are learning Hands-Only CPR may save the life of someone they know; maybe a friend, maybe their coach, or maybe your child. I have now taught many students that reside in the senator's district." "Schools prepare students with essential life skills,

and CPR skills are among the most critical lifesaving skills that make our communities safer, year after year. Twelve states are now ensuring students learn CPR prior to graduation and it's time to add New York to the list," said Senator Mark Grisanti (R,I-Buffalo). "I'm honored to sponsor the CPR schools legislation in the New York State Senate and I am proud to work in partnership with advocates like Suzy, Annette and their families to help make this bill become a law." Approximately 400,000 people have sudden cardiac arrest outside of a hospital every year, and only about 10 percent of them survive, most likely because they don't receive timely CPR. Given right away, CPR doubles or triples survival rates. "Having a new generation of lifesavers will benefit everyone, and CPR in Schools will be the key," said Anthony Balester Jr., General Manager of the Orchard Park Fire District. "Teaching students bystander CPR could save thousands of lives by filling our communities with young adults trained to give cardiac arrest victims the immediate help they need to survive until EMTs arrive." "Why wouldn't we teach our kids CPR and how to act in an emergency? Teaching CPR to students is incredibly easy and inexpensive," said Joe Biondo, instructional leader of health and physical education at Orchard Park High School. "It can be taught in just one or two class periods. But the benefits are priceless. The bill also provides flexibility for schools by allowing CPR to be taught in either health or physical education class." Sudden cardiac arrest occurs when electrical impulses in the heart become rapid or chaotic, which causes the heart to suddenly stop beating. It is most often caused by coronary heart disease, but it can also be caused by trauma, an overdose, or drowning. Within a few, sudden seconds, the victim's heart stops beating; blood stops circulating; oxygen stops flowing to the brain; and the victim stops breathing. Five minutes is the difference between life and death. If no CPR is provided or no defibrillation occurs within 3 to 5 minutes of collapse, the chances of survival drop. The CPR in Schools legislation S6402/A6240 is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymember Harvey Weisenberg, D-Nassau County. The bill is currently before the Education Committees in both houses. To join the American Heart Association's work to teach students CPR, go to [www.supportcprinschools.org](http://www.supportcprinschools.org).