



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

## Senator Flanagan's Legislation To Restore School Funding Lost Under The Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) Approved By Senate Education Committee

JOHN J. FLANAGAN February 4, 2014

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION**

| COMMITTEE: **EDUCATION**

Senator John Flanagan (2<sup>nd</sup> Senate District) announced that his legislation to accelerate the restoration of funding lost by school districts under the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) has been approved by the Senate Education Committee. The legislation would establish a definitive timetable for making full restoration of GEA funding to all school districts over a three-year period.

The bill will now go to the Senate Finance Committee for further consideration. From there, the bill is expected to be sent to the full Senate for a vote.

In 2010, Democrats controlling the Senate, Assembly and Governor's Office used the GEA as a budget maneuver to help close a multi-billion dollar state deficit. The GEA is used to reduce the total amount of state aid received by a school district. Since its inception, the GEA has resulted in billions of dollars less to school districts, placed greater strain on local taxpayers and led to a reduction in educational resources for students.

At the time of its implementation, Senator Flanagan opposed the GEA and took immediate steps in 2011 to eliminate its fiscal impact on schools. Upon regaining control of the Senate in 2011, Senator Flanagan and his Republican colleagues took the lead in making the following funding restorations to the GEA over the last three budget cycles: \$229 million in 2011-2012; \$400.2 million in 2012-2013; and \$517.5 million in 2013-2014. This three-year total of \$1.147 billion represents a 41.2% restoration of the GEA.

Restorations would have been far greater if Assembly Democrats had not advocated using an additional \$280 million in budget funding for Foundation Aid, instead of continuing to reduce the GEA by that amount as originally intended. The Assembly's actions were detrimental to many Long Island school districts, particularly those in the 2nd Senate District. In fact, had Assembly Democrats not pursued this action, the total restoration of funding to the GEA would now be at 55.8% - which would have translated into millions of dollars more for local districts.

Dissatisfied with the current pace of restorations to the GEA, Senator Flanagan introduced Senate bill 5452 which passed the Senate in 2013 with an overwhelming majority. Unfortunately, the Assembly has failed to take any action on the bill.

"For the past three years, Senate Republicans have worked in a bi-partisan fashion to eliminate our state deficit and adopt an on-time responsible state budget that keeps spending below 2 percent. These actions, and others, have established a good, strong foundation for our economy to grow and recover at a steady pace. The State always has an obligation to prioritize funding of our schools, particularly when our economy shows signs of improving. While the Governor's Executive Budget proposal to restore an additional \$300 million to the GEA should be commended and viewed as a good starting point, it simply does not go far enough. The Senate Republican Majority will work with other legislative leaders to advance my legislation and advocate for making even greater restorations to the GEA as part of the upcoming budget negotiations," stated Senator Flanagan.

[Please click here to Join Senator Flanagan In Ending The Gap Elimination Adjustment \(GEA\)](#)