



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Says a Variety of Vital Education Issues Will Be in Spotlight During Upcoming 2014 Legislative Session

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Queens, NY, December 17, 2013-- NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. (D-Queens), a long-time member of the Senate Education Committee, today noted that a variety of important issues deeply affecting New York's school children, families, teachers, school administrators and the state's entire educational system are expected to take center stage during the upcoming 2014 legislative session.

"During the first three months of the session, we will be developing and negotiating the new State Budget for 2014-2015, and a big part of every state spending plan is centered within our efforts to provide necessary and equitable funding for schools in New York City and across the state," Addabbo said. "But on top of the education policy and funding issues that are part of the State Budget, the Senate, Assembly and Governor will also be looking at a number of complex initiatives impacting how our children learn, how our teachers teach, how our overall education system is

judged, and who we hold accountable for the ultimate operations and performance of New York City schools.”

Among these issues, the Senator said, are the implementation of the “Common Core” federal learning standards, the effectiveness of teacher evaluation procedures and policies, and discussions about the fate of mayoral control of New York City schools, which expires in 2015.

Addabbo noted that he has been hearing frequently from many constituents, parents and educators regarding the controversial “Common Core” learning standards that were devised by the federal government and are being pursued with the goal of better preparing school children for a college education and future careers. The new learning standards are now being applied for English and Math and are expected to be integrated into other courses of study in the coming years.

“No one can argue against the ideal of better preparing our kids for good jobs through a higher education, which is increasingly necessary for adult success in this global economy,” said Addabbo. “However, imposing federal standards in a ‘one-size-fits-all’ manner doesn’t take into account significant differences in local schools, their student populations, their staff, their funding levels and many other variables. Many of my constituents have questions about the implementation of the standards, their cost, their effectiveness, associated student data collection proposals, and how they will affect the quality of education our children are receiving.”

The Senator said he is going to continue to discuss Common Core and possible reforms of the standards in his district with concerned parents, teachers, principals and other education stakeholders.

Addabbo said the issue of teacher and principal evaluations will also continue to be reviewed and debated by state legislators in the coming year. “In 2012, New York State passed a law to implement a statewide system of teacher and principal evaluations, as well as a measure to provide parental access to certain evaluation information,” Addabbo said. “We need to examine how this is working, and most of all, determine whether it is helping or hindering the performance of our educators and children. While I support the basic concept underlying these laws, I have also expressed my concern that some aspects of teacher and principal evaluations can be very subjective and that the personal family lives of many students – including those living in poverty or whose first language is not English – can certainly have a tremendous impact on their success in the classroom. We need to continue these discussions.”

With the law establishing mayoral control of New York City schools expiring in 2015, Addabbo said that discussions whether to abolish, continue or reform the current system governing local schools are also likely to have a place during the 2014

session. "I would like to see some reforms to provide school principals with more authority and flexibility and offer parents more meaningful input into the education of their children," Addabbo said. "With all of the other significant changes taking place in our educational system, it makes sense to start thinking now about what we want our New York City school governance structure to look like in 2015."

Addabbo, who currently serves as a member of the Senate Education Committee and Senate Select Committee on Libraries, said he will continue to make educational issues a top priority when the new legislative session begins on January 8th with the Governor's State of the State Address. "I look forward to being back in our State's Capitol to work on education policy and other important issues and urge my constituents to contact me at any time with their concerns," Addabbo said. "Hearing from the people I represent is both a pleasure and a necessity in being able to speak on their behalf in Albany."