



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Legislature Passes Brindisi-Griffo Bill Authorizing Utica Schools To Make Kindergarten Mandatory

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 11, 2014

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*Bill introduced at request of the school board and its administrators*

UTICA – New York state senators today joined their Assembly counterparts by passing a bill that would allow Utica City School District to require five-year-olds to attend kindergarten.

The Senate bill ([S7193](#)) passed, 58-0, unofficially. The Assembly bill ([A9472](#)) passed, 120-10, on June 2. It now goes to the governor for his approval or disapproval.

If signed, the law would take effect immediately. It would apply to children who are five years old before Dec. 1 in a given school year. It exempts home-schooled students and those in non-public schools.

“The Utica City School District provides a full-day kindergarten because it properly prepares the children to learn and to engage with others – skills they use throughout their school careers. This bill gives the Utica City School District the same powers as the Syracuse, Rochester and New York City schools have. I urge the governor to show support for his own initiative and sign this bill,” said Griffo, R-Rome.

“The Utica City School District already provides a quality full-day kindergarten program for students,” said Brindisi, D-Utica. “It is important that five year-olds benefit from the educational experience gained in kindergarten. Students who don’t attend kindergarten are at a definite disadvantage when they do attend school.”

“I would like to thank our local legislators for supporting the Utica City School District in its effort to require the attendance of all of our children in kindergarten,” said Utica School District Superintendent Bruce Karam. “This important legislation is aligned to the governor’s initiative to promote early childhood education across the state and mandatory kindergarten attendance has been in place in other cities such as Syracuse and Rochester for many years. As we all know, beginning education at an early age can only benefit our students as we continue our mission to increase student achievement and to help our students along the path to future college and career readiness. Therefore, I strongly support mandatory full day kindergarten.”