



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

## Helping the North Rockland School District

[WILLIAM LARKIN](#) March 18, 2016

The North Rockland school district isn't unique in that it's facing fiscal challenges—it's the fiscal challenges it faces that are unique. North Rockland's problems will require real solutions to ensure that the district's students and teachers receive the resources they need for a first class education.

The heart of North Rockland's troubles is the astounding \$11.5 million per year that it pays for bonds it issued to finance a \$224 million court settlement with Mirant. To help alleviate this pressure, I am working on several proposals to be included in this year's State Budget.

First, I am working to secure North Rockland additional special state education grants to build off the \$450,000 in funds that I secured for the district last year.

Secondly, I've asked for language to be included in the State Budget that either funds or offsets the district's Mirant debt costs. Requiring the state aid formula to factor in these costs would greatly benefit North Rockland and help direct state aid away from the creditors and back into the classroom.

Thirdly, last June the State created a \$19 million pool of funding available to municipalities and school districts that have experienced significant tax reductions resulting from power plant closures or judicial determinations. Since that time, I have done everything I can to

make sure North Rockland gets a piece of this funding, including written requests to Governor Cuomo and Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan. In addition to these requests, I'm pushing to increase this \$19 million fund in this year's State Budget. Increasing this fund will improve North Rockland's chances of getting a portion of this funding should many municipalities and school districts make similar requests.

Lastly, my colleagues and I in the Senate Majority are pushing for a 7% increase in state education aid and a full restoration of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) in this year's State Budget. Fully restoring the GEA will send another \$865,000 to North Rockland.

I feel privileged to represent the North Rockland School District in the New York State Senate and, as I hope you can see, am very eager to help the school district and its students reach their full potential.