



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt Calls For SED SmartSchools Action, Transparency

ROBERT G. ORTT June 4, 2018

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Last week, **Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I,Ref-North Tonawanda)** issued a letter to the New York State Education Department (SED), denouncing the painfully sluggish application process of the state's SmartSchools NY Program. The SmartSchools NY Program, created in 2014, was developed to help schools around the state to invest in technological infrastructure advancements for students to improve educational environments.

In spring of 2017, Newfane Central School District applied to the program for funding that would be used to install Wi-Fi in the district's classrooms. As of June 2018, the district's application is only in the third of five review phases.

"The pace at which this process has happened is unacceptable and I completely understand the frustration of the school district's administrators, parents, and students," said Ortt. "I've urged Commissioner Elia to prioritize the SmartSchools application process and assist with cutting through this program's red tape. The internet is an essential tool of the education process in this rapidly growing world of connectivity. The longer this process takes, the more difficult the job becomes for our educators and the farther behind our students fall. State expenditures should take some time to ensure thorough review and accountability on behalf of taxpayers, but over a year is simply unacceptable. We must speed this process up and keep our school districts better informed on the application review process."

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