



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## **Senator Young Secures \$500,000 for Panama Central School**

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OLEAN – Senator Catharine Young (R, C, I - 57th District), announced that she secured \$500,000 to cover the cost of Panama Central School District’s penalty payment to the New York State Education Department.

Senator Young spearheaded the effort with Assemblyman Andy Goodell, (R, C, I – 150th District) who advanced the measure in the Assembly.

The state penalized the school district in 2012, by \$4.9 million, for missing final cost reports for a 2005 capital improvement project. Senator Young has secured \$3 million since 2013 to help the district pay down the penalty and avoid passing the burden onto taxpayers in the rural school district. The remaining penalty balance is

now \$1.9 million.

“This funding ensures that Panama Central School District taxpayers do not have to shoulder an undue tax burden caused by circumstances beyond their control,” Senator Young said. “The district faced severe financial hardship which was caused by simple human error.”

In addition to the strain on the district’s budget, Senator Young added that the penalty payments also prevented a proposed merger between Panama Central School District and Clymer Central School District.

“The Senate included impact grants in the state budget to help districts like Panama that face significant financial hardships,” Senator Young said. “Because this was caused by a mistake, the Senate fought hard at the budget negotiating table in 2012 and 2013 to fully pardon the penalty, but the Assembly Speaker and Governor would not agree.”

Legislation sponsored by Senator Young to forgive Panama Central School’s full penalty was approved by both the state Assembly and Senate in 2018, and is awaiting Governor Andrew Cuomo’s signature.

“This is an injustice,” Senator Young said. “Absent full penalty forgiveness, the students who attend Panama Central School and the district’s taxpayers are left holding the bag for administrative oversights from nearly a decade ago.”

Senator Young vowed to continue her efforts to protect Panama Central School taxpayers and ensure the district continues to have the resources it needs to provide students with the best education possible.