



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Provides Personal Safety Alarms for Local Teachers

BRIAN DWYER November 30, 2018

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Joined by education officials and school district staff members in Canton Monday, State Senator Patty Ritchie announced that she has secured \$500,000 in state funding to outfit teachers and school staff members across the 48th Senate District with wearable, push button safety alarms. The devices allow users to easily alert authorities in the case of an emergency—such as a medical situation, a fire or a student safety concern.

“Unfortunately, instances of threats and danger continue to plague schools across our

country and Central and Northern New York has not been immune. The very last thing our parents, children, and school staff members should have to worry about during the school day is safety,” said Senator Ritchie.

“By providing our teachers with these wearable devices, we are ensuring school officials and law enforcement officials are alerted to any emergency situation—whether it be a fire, medical problem or a potential safety concern—as soon as it happens. In turn, we are enhancing the safety of our local schools and the thousands of children and staff members working hard to brighten our future.”

The alarms, which can be activated by a teacher or staff member with the simple press of a button—immediately alert first responders, including police, firefighters and medical providers.

The funding will be awarded to St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES, Jefferson-Lewis BOCES and Oswego CiTi BOCES and then distributed to school districts throughout the 48th Senate District. In all, more than 4,000 teachers and key staff members will be provided the wearable safety alarm.

“One of the main goals of the Canton Central School District is to foster a welcoming and safe learning environment for our students and staff. There are a number of ways to accomplish that, and one of them is ensuring our students, staff and parents know that our school will be prepared to react immediately to an emergency. I want to thank Senator Ritchie for helping provide our community and our neighboring communities an important peace of mind,” Canton Central School District Superintendent Ronald Burke said.

"School safety is top of mind for all of us in public education and we appreciate the Senator's continued dedication to improve upon the existing safety measures in our school buildings,"

said St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES District Superintendent Thomas Burns. “We agree that the best approach to school safety is a proactive one.”

“The safety of our students is the top priority for everyone in education,” CiTi BOCES Superintendent Chris Todd said. “In emergency situations, time is of the essence. To allow our teachers and staff the opportunity to alert authorities with the push of a button could be the difference in saving a life. CiTi BOCES certainly appreciates the efforts of Senator Ritchie to ensure our schools are that much safer.”

“We are deeply grateful to Senator Ritchie for securing funds that will help area school personnel to keep their students and themselves safer. School safety is a complex problem, calling for a complex series of efforts and tools,” said Stephen Todd, District Superintendent, Jefferson-Lewis BOCES. “This effort will provide schools and school personnel with another important tool in their toolbox, and in so doing it will keep students and staff safer.”

Acquiring these alarms for local school districts was a priority of Senator Ritchie’s during the most recent Legislative Session. In addition, Senator Ritchie proposed several other school security efforts, including the restoration of a program—known as the School Resource Officer Program—that places law enforcement officers inside schools to enhance security.

*(ATTN. Photo Editors) Senator Ritchie is joined in the above photo by Canton School Board President Victor Rycroft, District Superintendent Ronald Burke, Canton School Resource Officer Ashley Coffey and St. Lawrence/Lewis County BOCES Superintendent Thomas Burns to announce \$500,000 in state funding to further protect students and teachers in school districts across Central and Northern New York.*