



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elijah Reichlin-Melnick

Senator Reichlin-Melnick Delivers Funding for Environmental Education Programs with Keep Rockland Beautiful

ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK September 28, 2022

ISSUE: **FUNDING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**



ROCKLAND, NY - Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick recently announced \$20,000 in funding he secured in the state budget to help Keep Rockland Beautiful (KRB) provide two interactive environmental education programs at schools in Rockland. Earth B.E.A.T. works with elementary school students, and Rockland P.L.U.S. works with high school students.

At a recent visit to Haverstraw Elementary School, Senator Reichlin-Melnick spoke with students, as well as KRB Executive Director Sonia Cairo and North Rockland Central School District K-6 Science Specialist, STEM & Robotics Program Developer Nicole Jessie, about the value of KRB's programs for students and the community.

Senator Reichlin-Melnick said, "Programs that involve students with hands-on connections to their communities and their environment have a powerful impact. As a former teacher, I know the value of partnerships that enrich education with tangible experiences. I'm proud to deliver funding to help Keep Rockland Beautiful continue to work with schools across our county."

Sonia Cairo, KRB Executive Director said, "Not-for-profits are always operating on a thin razor's edge, so this funding is really, really helpful. This grant will have a tremendous impact, allowing us to deliver programs that teach students how they can make a difference in their own households, schools, and communities."

Nicole Jessie of the North Rockland Central School District said, "This grant is amazing because it allows the school district to sustain these programs year after year and keep our children's interest alive. Both of these programs teach kids a little bit of taking ownership of their community. This is not just a place where they live, but it's a place where they can make a difference and their voices can be heard."

Earth B.E.A.T. provides a series of eco-stations where students focus on energy and water conservation and protection, biodiversity, and climate change. Teachers and parents engage as facilitators.

Senator Reichlin-Melnick is especially familiar with the inspiring work of the Rockland P.L.U.S. program as they connect students with professional planners. The Senator, who has

his Master's degree in City and Regional Planning from Rutgers University, once served as a mentor for the program. The P.L.U.S. stands for Planning Land Use for Students.

Rockland PLUS enjoys a 17-year partnership with Columbia University Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Keep Rockland Beautiful, Rockland Conservation & Service Corps, and the Rockland County Soil & Water Conservation. About a dozen high schools participate in a series of workshops to learn about sustainable planning and work collaboratively to integrate the ideas into a plan for a site in their community.