



## School Administrators Association of New York State

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### SAANYS SUPPORTS

#### **A.2856 (Gottfried) / S.1342 (Winner)**

##### *The Healthy Teens Act*

*AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to establishing the age-appropriate sex education grant program, to be referred to as the healthy teens act*

This bill seeks to establish an age-appropriate sex education grant program within the Department of Health to support effective pregnancy prevention programs and programs that thwart sexually transmitted diseases. The bill would provide an annual appropriation to DOH for the distribution of grants to local school districts, BOCES, community based agencies and school based health services to assist them in conducting awareness programs and comprehensive education curriculum geared towards youth.

According to the New York State Department of Health, there were approximately 40,000 adolescent pregnancies in 2003 among 15 – 19 year olds - *New York State ranks among the highest in the country in relation to teenage pregnancies.* Further, the same age group has the highest rates of gonorrhea in the state. With approximately 40% of adolescents reported to be sexually active, the statistics will only continue to rise at an alarming rate if prevention programs are not made available in communities across the state.

Schools are not equipped to take on these challenges alone. The Healthy Teens Act would provide for a collaborative approach to deal with this public epidemic. Without a dedicated funding stream to ensure effective strategies are in place, a large number of teens will continue to be susceptible to various forms of peer pressure and other social persuasions. If not addressed through open and honest age appropriate education, these teens will be left unable to make informed decisions about their health and sexual activities, thus increasing the rate of unintended pregnancies and the spread of STDs.

The above said, SAANYS supports A.2856 (Gottfried) / S.1342 (Winner) and urges its enactment.

SAANYS is a professional association of more than 6,700 administrators and supervisors working in New York State's schools. As the largest professional administrators' association in the State, SAANYS provides its members with complete state and federal legislative representation, professional development support, legal support, and negotiations assistance. SAANYS is chartered as a professional association by the New York State Department of Education and is affiliated with the National Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals.

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