



Assemblywoman

**Catherine  
NOLAN**

Reports to the  
Community  
Spring 2012

Dear Neighbor,

For the second year in a row, the state legislature passed an on-time budget. This year's budget increases funding to education, restores funding to the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage Program, commonly known as EPIC, and preserves many services that are important to the residents of the 37<sup>th</sup> Assembly district.

The 2012-13 budget increases state aid to education by \$805 million with approximately \$291 million going directly to New York City. This is a major investment of our tax dollars. The budget also restores \$30.6 million to the EPIC program by helping reinstate co-payment assistance for approximately 300,000 seniors. This will help many seniors who are on fixed incomes afford the cost of life-saving prescription medication.

Many of you are aware of the New York City Department of Education's plans to close a number of large comprehensive public high schools at the end of this school year. Grover Cleveland High School was originally part of the schools that DOE wanted to close. I am delighted to say that our community rallied around and showed outstanding support for our community high school; DOE recognized the strength and improvement under Principal Denise Vittor and all the excellence that the Grover Cleveland community offers so they removed our great school off the closure list! I have continued to express our opposition and concern with the proposed "turn-around" model and still urge the city to drop their quest to close all these schools, especially Long Island City High School and Bryant High School.

Sincerely,

Catherine Nolan  
Member of Assembly

## New York State Budget Report

### Restoration of EPIC Funding & Co-Payment Assistance

I am happy to report that the 2012-2013 budget provides \$30.6 million to support the restoration of co-payment assistance that was eliminated on January 1, 2012. This would allow EPIC enrollees to pay no more than \$20 as a co-pay when filling a prescription. Currently, seniors have to pay as much 25% of the cost of the drug which could result in a very large burden for many seniors on a fixed income. This new proposal will allow seniors to not have to worry about being able to afford the medication they need to survive. The budget also restores co-payment assistance for seniors who have very high prescription drug costs of more than \$6,600 a year. Currently, these seniors have to pay 5% of their drug costs which also could be a huge burden. These seniors will also see their co-payments capped at \$20. Both of these provisions will provide peace of mind to seniors who are enrolled in EPIC and ensure that they will remain active and social in the later years of their lives.



Assemblywoman Nolan with members of Zone 126.

# New York State Budget Report

## State Aid to Education

As Chair of the Assembly Education Committee, I am proud to announce that the enacted budget provides an increase of \$805 million in state aid with approximately \$291 million going to New York City. The increase is a good investment that will allow every child in New York State a full, fair and basic education and begin to fulfill the promise of the campaign for fiscal equity.

The education budget also restores \$10.2 million in teacher centers which provide additional materials and training for all teachers to help improve their techniques and methods as they teach their students in the classroom. Adult literacy education was also increased by \$1 million to help adults learn how to read and continue their education to be productive members of society.

Additionally, the enacted budget provides \$3 million in additional payments to New York City for the transportation costs of students who remain at school until 5 p.m. or later for regularly scheduled academic programs. This is very important because it provides safe, reliable transportation for the

students that have to take courses that occur into the late afternoon and evening. Many parents will feel at ease knowing that their children will have regular, safe school transportation as they make their way home in the late afternoon.

## Creating Opportunities Through Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Infrastructure Projects

We were also able to provide an appropriation of \$770 million to assist in financing the final three years of the MTA 2010-14 Capital Plan. This funding allows the Second Avenue Subway to have East Side access (LIRR into Grand Central) and for the Fulton Street Transit Center projects to proceed.

“This vital funding will allow for much-needed subway and train car replacements and track upgrades,” Nolan said. “The plan will create thousands of construction jobs and upgrade the MTA’s infrastructure, the economic lifeblood of the New York MTA Region.”

# Nolan Standing Up for Education

## NY Education Reform Commission

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo established the New NY Education Reform Commission, bringing together nationally-recognized education, community, and business leaders to recommend reforms to the state’s education system in order to improve performance in the classroom so that all of New York’s students are fully prepared for their futures. I gratefully accepted the Governor’s appointment to this important commission.

The Commission will examine the current structure of the state’s education system including teacher recruitment and

performance, student achievement, education funding and costs, parent and family engagement, problems facing high-need districts, and the best use of technology in the classroom. The Commission will also analyze the organization of school districts to ensure they are structured to meet the needs of New York’s students while also respecting the taxpayer.

## Grover Cleveland High School

Over the last several months, I have expressed my opposition to the New York City Department of Education’s (NYC DOE) plans to use the turnaround model to close 26 neighborhood schools around the city. One school, in par-

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Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Chairwoman of the Queens Delegation, recently hosted an open house in her Albany office to welcome various groups to Albany. Dr. Gail Mellow, President of LaGuardia Community College and Carol Conslato, President of the Queens Chamber of Commerce met with Assemblyman Edward Braunstein, Assemblyman Phillip Goldfeder, Assemblyman Michael DenDekker, Assemblyman Michael Simanowitz, Assemblywoman Michele Titus and Assemblywoman Vivian Cook.

## Around the District

### Women's History Month

Once again, LaGuardia Community College President Gail Mellow and I held a celebration in honor of Women's History Month. This year we had the privilege to honor the success of the LIC Business Women's Group - Sheila Lewandowski of The Chocolate Factory Theater, Raquel Salas of Big City Graph-x & Printing, Donna Drimer of Matted LIC, Leslie Nilsson of Sage General Store and Gianna Cerbone of Manducatis Rustica - who are the wonderful founding members of this great group. We also honored Nikki Jones and Zakiyah Ansari of Alliance for Quality Education for their advocacy and Debra-Ellen Glickstein, Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability, New York City Housing Authority. We were joined by Bishop Mitchell Taylor, Borough President Helen Marshall, Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas and Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer.



I was truly thankful to be honored by Congressman Crowley at his 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's History Event. It was a great privilege to stand alongside great women leaders who have had a positive impact on the community.

### Protecting Consumers from Money Scams

This session, I introduced A.8928 which would require banking institutions to properly warn consumers of fraud before a money transfer is conducted. This bill was drafted in response to a constituent's mother who was victimized out of thousands of dollars. The bill was reported from the banking committee last month and moved to the Assembly Codes Committee. This bill would help protect people of all ages in educating them about the dangers of fraud before they transfer funds.

### Grover Cleveland High School - Continued from page 2

particular, Grover Cleveland High School, is one of the schools on the list that is subjected to be closed at the end of the school year.

In my capacity, as Chair of the Assembly Education Committee, I held a public hearing on April 11th to examine the reasoning behind the NYC DOE's plans to close these schools. Chancellor Walcott was gracious enough to come and testify about these turnaround schools. Testimony from that day demonstrated to me that when it comes to implementing turnaround at these schools, there is a lot of information we still don't have. For example, the DOE has not provided the public with even an estimate of how much it will cost to place so many of these teachers in the Absent Teacher Reserve (ATR) pool and hire new teachers in their place, although it will probably be an expensive endeavor.

I will continue to express my opposition and concern with the proposed "turn-around" model and I urge the city to drop their quest to close all these schools, especially the large comprehensive Queens High Schools.

## Around the District



During a recent visit to Albany, Queens DA Richard Brown, took some time to meet with Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Assemblyman Michael DenDekker and Assemblyman Michael Miller.



Assemblywoman Nolan visiting with members, employees and volunteers at Sunnyside Community Center.



Assemblywoman Nolan testified at the PEP hearing on school closures.



Members from the Turkish Cultural Center of Queens located in Sunnyside.



Members from the Long Island City/Astoria NAACP.



Assemblywoman Nolan joined students, teachers, parents and community members in a rally to save Grover Cleveland High School.

## Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan

61-08 Linden Street • Ridgewood, NY 11385 • 718-456-9492  
41-02 Queens Boulevard, Suite 2B • Sunnyside, NY 11104 • 718-784-3194  
nolanc@assembly.state.ny.us