



Sarah S. Anker, Suffolk County Legislator, Sixth District
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Combating Cyberbullying in Our Schools Suffolk Launches Bullying Awareness Website



Suffolk County Legislator Sarah Anker is joined by County Executive Steve Bellone, Janene Gentile of the North Shore Youth Council and John Martin of the Suffolk County Health Department at the launch of Suffolk County's Bullying Awareness website www.suffolkstopbullying.org.

Hauppauge, NY, October 2014 –To commemorate National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month, Suffolk County Legislator Sarah Anker joined County Executive Steve Bellone in announcing the launch of Suffolk County's first bullying awareness website. Www.SuffolkStopBullying.org will provide support and guidance for children dealing with bullying issues.

The website is the result of Anker's legislation, IR-1198, which passed unanimously before the Suffolk County Legislature in March. The resolution directed the County's Department of Information Technology, Department of Health Services, and Suffolk County Police Department to develop and publish a website dedicated to bullying prevention and awareness.

As of July 1, 2012, the New York State Dignity Act requires that all schools must designate a point person, known as a Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC), to assist students who feel that they are being bullied. Concerned that many residents were unaware of the requirement, Anker was inspired to create the website to educate families about available anti-bullying resources. Www.SuffolkStopBullying.org will list information, including details pertaining to the New York State Dignity Act and the Dignity Act Coordinator for each school district in Suffolk County, in addition to resources for suicide prevention and counseling.

“According to 2010 Bullying Statistics, 160,000 U.S. children miss school each day for fear of being bullied,” said Legislator Anker, County Chairwoman of Education and Information Technology Committee. “Cyber-bullying has increased dramatically over the past several years, and this new website will allow the county to assist families by providing valuable resources to those who need support.”

“In commemoration of National Bullying Awareness Month, I am proud to stand with Legislator Anker to highlight Suffolk County’s commitment to providing anti-bullying initiatives,” said County Executive Bellone. “The effects of bullying can be devastating, ranging from damaging a person’s self-esteem, to substance abuse, to causing physical harm, up to and including suicide. We all need to be part of the solution, so today we unveil the Suffolk County Bullying Awareness website. In addition, the Suffolk County Health Department, has initiated the *Healthy Communication and Bullying Prevention Program* with the main goal of teaching students how to stand up for someone being bullied rather than standing by passively. We are proud to announce on October 15th we will be offering a train the trainer workshop which was open to all school districts in Suffolk County and is now fully subscribed.”

In addition to the website launch, Legislator Anker announced Suffolk County’s Bullying Awareness Music Video Contest for Suffolk County teens ages 13-18. One minute music videos must communicate the issue of bullying and illustrate ways that their peers can address this serious issue. Music videos should be submitted via email in the form of a YouTube link to musicvideo@suffolkcountyny.gov by January 1, 2015. The videos will be judged by Mike DelGuidice of *Big Shot*, *The Ultimate Billy Joel Tribute Band* and Anthony Mingoia, drummer of the band *Patent Pending*, and Danny “Energetic Rivera” of the anti-bullying organization Asking Myself Association. The First Place Winner will have his or her video posted on Suffolk County’s Suffolkstopbullying.org website, and will be invited to perform at Legislator Sarah Anker’s Summer Concert Series.

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