

NY State Legislators Encourage Five Towns OU Advocacy-Teach NYS Delegation to “Keep Up the Pressure”

“Keep the pressure on us” and “the personal touch makes all the difference” were the comments the OU Advocacy-Teach NYS delegation from the Five Towns heard consistently from New York State legislators during their advocacy mission to Albany for Jewish day school education this week.

OU Advocacy-Teach NYS launched its series of mini advocacy missions to Albany with the delegation from the Five Towns. The “mini-missions” provide small groups from communities throughout New York with the opportunity to meet with legislators and give them an opportunity to hear about the challenging issues—such as tuition affordability—that are affecting their constituents on a micro-level.

At the top of the 2014 legislative priorities for OU Advocacy-Teach NYS are the Education Investment Incentives Act, full funding of the Comprehensive Attendance Policy (CAP) and Mandated Services Reimbursement (MSR) programs—two state initiatives that provide funding for anti-truancy programs and mandated services required by private schools—and including non-public schools in the universal pre-K (UPK) legislation and smart schools bond initiative.

Noting that the budget approval process will be finished by the end of the month, several legislators encouraged the Five Towns delegation to continue to reach out to them during the next two to three weeks and remind them how important these funding opportunities

are for the Jewish community.

During the visit to Albany, the group—which was composed of lay leaders, day school and yeshiva leaders, as well as students—met with members of the state leadership, including

Lt. Governor Robert Duffy, Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos, Speaker of the Assembly Sheldon Silver, Assembly Majority Leader Joseph Morelle, Assistant Senate Majority Whip Martin Golden, who is the prime sponsor of the Education Investment Incentives Act, and Senate Education Chairman John Flanagan. They also met with Senators Joe Addabbo, Brad Hoylman, Joseph Robach, and Toby Stavisky as well as Assembly Members Peter Abbate, Joseph Borelli, Anthony Brindisi, Alec Brook-Krasny, Michael Cusick, Steven Cymbrowitz, Phil Goldfeder, Rhoda Jacobs, Daniel O’Donnell, Nily Rozic, Sean Ryan, Michael Simanowitz, David Weprin, and Keith Wright. The delegation was officially recognized on the floor of the Assembly by Majority Leader Joseph Morelle and welcomed by Assembly Member Jeffrion Aubry, Speaker Pro Tempore.

Cal Nathan, a parent in the Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway (HAFTR), reflected on the impact government funding for non-pub-



Some of the participants from the Five Towns delegation meeting with Speaker Sheldon Silver



Robert Duffy (center) during the OU Advocacy-Teach NYS mission to Albany.

lic schools can have on the Jewish community. “While a family with two working parents may have an income of \$200,000, between property taxes, school taxes, private school tuition, and putting food on the table, it’s very hard to make ends meet. With an average family size of three to four children, any additional government funding for programs that are constitutionally per-

missible will make a significant difference to many families’ bottom line,” he said.

OU Advocacy-Teach NYS is leading additional missions later in the month from Brooklyn and from Jewish Day schools in Manhattan, Riverdale, and Westchester.