

## **Anti Bullying Parent Meeting**

West New York School District has taken additional steps in addressing the New Bullying Law. PL2010c122. Assemblywoman Valerie Vanieri Huttie from Assembly District 37 addressed a crowd of 200 parents and teachers at the West New York Middle School Auditorium on Tuesday, April 5, 2011.

Superintendent John Fauta addressed the parents on the importance of the new law. He stressed how the school community needs to work together to make our schools a place where students want to come to feel safe and to be able to learn in an atmosphere conducive to achievement. Mr. Fauta then introduced Assemblywoman Huttie.

In speaking to the gathering, Assemblywoman Huttie explained "my mother always told me that sticks and stones may break your bones, but names will never hurt me," does not hold true any more. She explained the key components of the new law and the responsibility of the schools, administrators and other staff members in identifying what is bullying and how it is affecting the child's education. She noted intimidation and harassment also come into play here. Assemblywoman Huttie used the Clementi suicide as an example of how harassment can lead to extreme situations and tragic consequences. With this new policy, which takes effect on 9/1/2011, each school is required to have a bullying committee (no cost to districts) in place to investigate the accusations and prepare reports. The law also allows school district to suspend or expel students if necessary. Districts will now be required to hold public meetings twice a year to report on all acts of violence, vandalism, intimidation, harassment and bullying. Each school is required to have anti bullying training for teachers and students and school districts will be graded by the State.

Mrs. Huttie announced the law has established that the first week after the first Monday in October shall be designated as a "Week of Respect". The West New York School District is already making plans for activities and trainings for that week.

Mrs. Huttie fielded many questions from parents and the school district received many emails asking for another session to continue to inform them of the new law.