New York State Senator Pam Helming got an up close and personal glimpse September 26th of where some of the state aid funding for education has been put to great use in one of her rural constituent school districts in Newark.

Helming, (R,C, IP) who represents the 54th Senate District that includes all of Seneca and Wayne counties and portions of Cayuga, Monroe, Ontario and Tompkins counties visited:
Special Education teachers Matt Groot and Sarah Kiley’s Functional Skills Development Class at Newark High School where the popular Reds Wagon Catering emanates from.

“We had a few kids preparing pumpkin chocolate chip cookies for a snack cart that goes out to staff every other day,” Groot said later. “We had another group of kids preparing a zesty cold chicken pasta salad for a pay day lunch available to staff every other Friday. We had a few students boiling noodle and a few other students chopping up celery for the salad. Another group of students were preparing popcorn bags for the senior lounge.”

The class gave Helming a tray of its delicious chocolate chip and sugar cookies and an attractive, fall-themed mason jar centerpiece made by students in its morning technology program.

“All of the students signed a card, as well, that thanked Senator Helming for everything she does,” Groot said.

The WNHS Television Production Studio at NHS and spoke briefly with Kyle Bliik, NCSD Audiovisual and Social Media Coordinator.
NHS art teacher Renee Bailey’s Drawing and Painting 2 class, an elective class that will lead into the Advanced Placement college-level Drawing Class, where some students were involved in the creative process on their new 1:1 laptops.

Laptops for NHS and Newark Middle School students as well as iPads for Kelley School, Lincoln and Perkins School students have recently been purchased with NYS Smart School Bond funds.

Helming was intrigued when Bailey explained about the growing integration of technology with art. Sophomore Paris Morris explained how she is able to create her composition on her laptop using Adobe Photoshop software. Students will complete their composition using either acrylic paints or colored pencils.

They had the option to create their compositions in the “Who Am I” unit _ using traditional ways or technology. Bailey noted, however, they understand that strong foundational drawing skills are important and make using the technology that much easier.

“We strive to make sure the kids understand this and know that it will make them more marketable,” she said. “It’s important to our program that our kids are meeting, if not exceeding, that next level expectation.”
• The NHS athletic complex and saw the new track and fields that were part of the nearly complete district capital project.
The current six grade students involved in the My Brothers Keeper (MBK) Rites Of Passage program at Newark Middle School that is funded by a state Education Department grant. They were joined by seventh graders who participated last year.

The young men of color advocacy program is intended to help these students make a meaningful social, emotional and learning transition into a new school is in place at Kelley School for third graders; NMS for sixth graders and at NHS for ninth graders.

The students also participate in after school activities in the community and field trips which are overseen by the Wayne County Youth Advocacy Program (YAP) of which Michael Crespo is director.

James Schuler, assistant director of the Wayne County YAP developed the MBK Rites of Passage program in Newark and acts as a consultant for it, told Helming the program is making an important difference in the lives of those participating.

Jesse Cruz, who is program coordinator for the Wayne County YAP, works with and provides support for each of the three MBK Rites of Passage groups in their schools each day.

Delighted to hear about the success of the program, Helming expressed gratitude the MBK program has received state funding for both Newark and the Lyons Central School district, noting that much of the monies for such programs typically go to big cities in the state.

She invited Schuler to provide her more information about the program and funding needs and also invited the MBK students and others she spoke with September 26th to visit her office in either Geneva or Albany.

“We need folks like you _ you are our future,” Helming said.

“It was so good of Senator Helming to come tour the Newark Central School District,” Superintendent Matt Cook said later. “Knowing we have such a great partner and supporter of public education in Albany is a huge relief. Several times during our tour, the Senator urged our students to consider a career in public service. She really believes that helping children become active in civic life is vital for a successful society. Later that day, I ran into Assemblyman Brian Manktelow and Senator Helming at the WFL BOCES P-Tech ribbon cutting ceremony and we will be setting up a similar opportunity for the Assemblyman to get to know our school district better. I’m blessed to work with such caring legislators.”