

# Supervisor Romaine and Councilmembers Panico, Kepert, and Bonner attend Longwood School District's Operation Safe Stop Event

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**Students from Ms. Marcella and Ms. Andrew's class join with Longwood School officials, elected officials, and officers from the Suffolk County Police and Sheriff's Department**



**Councilwoman Kepert presents at the launch of the Annual Operation Safe Stop event at Longwood High School**

**Farmingville, NY** - On April 16, Supervisor Ed Romaine, Councilman Dan Panico, Councilwoman Connie Kepert, and Councilwoman Jane Bonner joined Longwood School District at the launch of their annual Operation Safe Stop event. Operation Safe Stop is a statewide initiative to stop drivers from passing stopped school buses through education and enforcement efforts.

Every day, motorists pass stopped school buses more than 50,000 times in New York State alone. This puts the approximately 2.3 million children who ride school buses every day at great risk. Operation Safe Stop is a coordinated effort to bring awareness to the illegality and dangers of passing a stopped school bus when the large red lights are flashing, which indicates that the bus is picking up or dropping off students.

Members of the Town Board were joined by Suffolk County Legislators, the Suffolk County Police and Sheriff's Department, and Longwood Central School District Superintendent Dr. Lonergan. At the kickoff event, students from Ms. Marcella and Ms. Andrew's class performed a short skit which demonstrated the importance of stopping for school buses.

"There is no excuse for anyone to pass a stopped school bus," said Supervisor Ed Romaine. "People need to be cautious while driving because in the blink of an eye, a child could dart out into the road. I strongly support Operation Safe Stop and urge drivers to be vigilant at all times."

"As a former teacher at Longwood and a former bus driver, I am acutely aware of the frequency at which motorists disobey New York State Laws by passing stopped school buses. It is of the utmost importance to educate drivers on the dangers of violating these laws and increase enforcement of those who break them," stated Councilwoman Connie Kepert. "I would like to extend my thanks to the Suffolk County Police and Sheriff's Departments for their enforcement efforts and the hosts of the event, Longwood Central School District, particularly Transportation Director Gale Winsper who organizes this wonderful event every year."

Councilman Panico said, "Unfortunately, some people don't pay attention or just don't care when they see a bus come to a stop. Children take it for granted that it's safe when they get off the bus and it's up to all of us to make sure they are. Thanks to Operation Safe Stop, injuries and fatalities can be prevented."

Councilwoman Bonner said, "The frequency at which people pass stopped school buses is shocking. Driver education and monitoring illegal passing will help to significantly reduce the risk of injury to our children. I urge everyone to be extra careful when they see a stopped school bus and be aware of children crossing the street."

**Division of Public Information \* Office of the Supervisor**

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