



# NEWS FROM **ULSTER COUNTY** *County Executive Jen Metzger*

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## **Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger Announces the Winners of the School Bus Driver of the Year Award**

**Tersa Faso and Larry Borelli Receive Recognition for their Dedication to Service and  
Safety**

**KINGSTON, NY** - On Thursday, April 27, 2023, Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger announced the Ulster County School Bus Driver of the Year Award winner, Tersa Faso of the New Paltz Central School District. The runner-up is Larry Borelli, a driver for Ulster County BOCES. The School Bus Driver of the Year Award recognizes drivers with exceptional service and safety records and is issued in conjunction with the Ulster County Traffic Safety Board and "Operation Safe Stop." Operation Safe Stop is a cooperative project in New York State that seeks to promote school bus safety through education and enforcement efforts to ensure that motorists do not pass a stopped school bus when the red lights are flashing, indicating that the bus is picking up or dropping off students.

"Congratulations to Tersa Faso and Larry Borelli for receiving these well-deserved honors, and know that we are grateful for your dedication, care, and commitment to the well-being of the children you transport every school day," **said County Executive Jen Metzger.** "Our school bus drivers fulfill a vitally important role in getting our children to and from school safely and without incident, and these two individuals exemplify the best of the profession."

The awards ceremony was held at the Ulster County Law Enforcement Center Rotunda, and was attended by County and local elected officials, school officials, and the family and friends of awardees. Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger presented awards to the following winners:

- **Tersa Faso** received the **Ulster County School Bus Driver of the Year Award**, receiving an Arthur Mulligan Award and a gift certificate to Savona's Trattoria. Ms. Faso has 13 years of experience as a school bus driver and has driven for grades K-12. Tersa has participated in the Kindergarten reception day where she introduced pre-K children to the school bus, gave them basic safety instructions, and took them for their first ride. She is well respected by her peers and has served as a leader among her fellow bus drivers and as a parent in the community. On her daily bus route, Tersa uses two phrases, "Respect" and "Be Kind." Reflecting on Tersa's service, one parent wrote, "She isn't just a bus driver, she is an extension of my child's school experience and one of her favorite people." A number of parents submitted heartfelt letters of support on Tersa's behalf, making her a clear stand-out among applicants. Mrs. Faso was nominated by Maureen Ryan, Director of Transportation for the New Paltz Central School District.

Tersa's mother, Kathy Buley, a retired school bus driver for over 30 years and a previous runner-up for this award, attended the ceremony, along with many other family members.

- **Mr. Borelli** received an **honorable mention** as well for his outstanding bus-driving performance. Mr. Borelli drives for Ulster County BOCES and has 11 years of experience and was nominated by Lawrence McCauley. He received strong support for his dedication at the transportation department; it was noted that his name is "synonymous with safety and production."

Also on Thursday, law enforcement officers around the state participated in Operation Safe Stop Day, where police officers in marked and unmarked patrol units monitor selected bus routes that have a history of illegal passing complaints, and issue tickets to drivers who pass stopped school buses.

"I want to thank the County's law enforcement community for their participation in Operation Safe Stop and their continued efforts to enforce stopped-school bus laws to keep our children and staff safe," **said County Jen Executive Metzger**. "And I want to remind motorists that passing a school bus when the red lights are flashing is dangerous and potentially deadly, and it is critical that you follow the law and stop your vehicle, whether you are approaching from the front or the rear of the school bus."

New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law states:

- It is illegal to pass a stopped school bus when the large red lights located on top of the bus are flashing. Flashing lights mean the bus is picking up or discharging students.
- You must stop whether you are approaching the school bus from the front or overtaking it from the rear.
- You must always stop for flashing red lights, even on divided and multilane highways and on school grounds.

The first-time fine for illegally passing a school bus is a \$250 to \$400 fine, 5 points on your license, and/or possibly 30 days in jail. Penalties for passing a stopped school bus include:

<b>\$\$ -- FINES -- \$\$</b>			
<b>By Conviction</b>	<b>Minimum Fine</b>	<b>Maximum Fine</b>	<b>Possible Imprisonment</b>
<b>First Conviction</b>	\$250.00	\$400.00	Up to 30 days
<b>Second Conviction (within 3 years)</b>	\$600.00	\$750.00	Up to 180 days
<b>Third or Subsequent Convictions (within 3 years)</b>	\$750.00	\$1,000.00	Up to 180 days

Operation Safe Stop is a cooperative project supported by the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, New York State Education Department, New York Association for Pupil Transportation, New York State School Bus Contractors Association, Dutchess and Ulster Traffic Safety Boards, student transportation industry and state, county, city and local law enforcement agencies.

For further information, visit <https://trafficsafety.ny.gov/operation-safe-stop>.

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