



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senator Young, State and Local Officials Cut Ribbon on New Traffic Signal Near Falconer Middle-High School

CATHARINE YOUNG September 21, 2018

| ISSUE: **SCHOOL SAFETY, EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES, TRANSPORTATION**



FALCONER, NY – Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – 57<sup>th</sup> District) was joined by state and local officials today to cut the ribbon on a new traffic signal at the intersection of East Avenue and Route 394 in Falconer. She initiated action to install the light in 2016 after two students were struck by a car while walking near the Falconer Middle-High School. At the event, Senator Young heralded the united effort behind the achievement as a “triumph of collaboration and commitment to the safety of our children.”

Senator Young was joined at the dedication by Assemblyman Andy Goodell (150<sup>th</sup> District); Falconer Central School District Superintendent Stephen Penhollow; Falconer Mayor James Rensel; Ellicott Town Supervisor Pat McLaughlin; Ellicott Police Chief Bill Ohnmeiss; Falconer Highway Superintendent Peter Fuller and Chautauqua County Legislator Lisa Vanstrom.

“As one of the most heavily trafficked intersections in Chautauqua County, the lack of a traffic light at this location has been a longstanding concern for our community. With Falconer Middle – High School students walking in this area daily, the situation was especially dangerous,” said Senator Young.

“Those fears crystalized in April 2016 when two students were struck by a car and seriously injured while walking near the school. Thankfully, those students injuries were non-life threatening and they have recovered,” said Senator Young. “However, it was the tipping point. While our previous efforts to secure a traffic signal in the area had not been successful, these new circumstances sparked a demand for change that could no longer be ignored. We immediately launched an effort with DOT to begin the process needed to install a signal. That effort culminated in time for the new school year. Now children can cross safely, giving their parents - and all of us - greater peace of mind.” said Senator Young.

Assemblyman Andy Goodell, 150<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, said: “This is a great example of what can happen when we all work together. I commend and thank all the people whose efforts moved this forward, especially the NYS Department of Transportation for responding to our requests, Superintendent Steve Penhollow for bringing this to our attention and seeking a solution, Senator Young for her follow-up with the NYS DOT, and the others who helped make this a reality. The safety of our students is of the utmost importance. This new traffic light signals the start of a great and safe new school year.”

Village of Falconer Mayor James Rensel said: "Following the 2016 accident, I met with Superintendent Steve Penhollow and Police Chief William Ohnmeiss to discuss traffic pattern changes, new signage, student training, and contacting Senator Young for her counsel, in that East Main Street is a state road."

"From the first time I called Senator Young she was engaged with us concerning our safety needs at this intersection and commissioned a traffic study to initiate action needed to move forward. She continuously updated us on the progress of the study, and the eventual commissioning of the traffic light. We all have a lot to learn about constituent communication from Senator Young. Our traffic light has been in operation since the beginning of the school year. We still employ a school crossing guard to ensure the safety of students in the vicinity of the intersection. We are very grateful for the Senator's hard work, and attention to detail, in helping us address our student safety concerns," Mayor Rensel said.

The three-color signal was installed at the intersection at the end of August and fully operational for the start of the school year on September 4th. It features a flashing yellow left turn arrow that signals drivers to yield to oncoming traffic, but allows them to turn left if all is clear. The New York State Department of Transportation has indicated that research shows drivers make fewer mistakes with the new signals than with traditional left turn arrows. The light also has push-button sensors at either end of the crosswalk to allow pedestrians to initiate a light change so that they can cross safely.