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**TAPinto Westfield**  
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## Town of Westfield, Schools Earn EZ Ride Awards for Commitment to Road Safety

The town and seven schools were honored at EZ Ride's 2024 Annual Recognition Event



Wilson School Principal Crystal Marsh, Jefferson School Principal Dr. Susie Hung, McKinley School Principal Mary McCabe and Tamaques School Principal David Duels at EZ Ride's 2024 Recognition event. Sept. 26, 2024. Photo Credit: EZ Ride



Westfield Police Officers Irene Sarris, Gregory Penn and Joseph Natale at EZ Ride's 2024 Recognition event. Sept. 26, 2024. Photo Credit: EZ Ride

### **By Colette Doudin**

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been recognized for their commitment to road safety by EZ Ride, a New Jersey community transportation service. EZ Ride honored them at its 2024 Annual Recognition Event on Sept. 26 at Galloping Hill Golf Course in Kenilworth.

EZ Ride awarded the Town of Westfield with its Bronze Award for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, recognizing the town's commitment to creating safe and accessible routes for students. The award highlights Westfield's dedication to promoting active transportation, enhancing community well-being and creating safer environments for walking and bicycling.

Awards were also presented to seven Westfield schools:

- Benjamin Franklin Elementary School - Gold Award

- Jefferson Elementary School - Gold Award
- Tamaques Elementary School - Gold Award
- McKinley Elementary School - Gold Award
- Wilson Elementary School - Gold Award
- Washington Elementary School - Gold Award
- Roosevelt Intermediate School - First Step Award

Among the events and programs that contributed to Westfield's recent three-year Gold certification by SRTS is the longstanding Walk and Bike to School in October, organized by Westfield B.R.A.K.E.S. (Bikers, Runners and Kids are Entitled to Safety) and the elementary school parent-teacher organizations.

"We are excited by this important achievement which dovetails with the district's recent recognition by the Sustainable Jersey for Schools Program," Superintendent Dr. Raymond González said in a press release last month, referencing the district's Bronze level recognition by Sustainable Jersey, which supports and rewards schools as they pursue practices that promote sustainability.

As part of the certification process, baseline data was collected to determine what modes of transportation were used by students to and from school, while the Board of Education adopted a district policy in support of walking and bicycling to promote student wellness. Pedestrian safety assemblies were also held for all second graders, with safety demonstrations of how to cross an intersection safely.

Going above and beyond the points required for SRTS certification, B.R.A.K.E.S, in partnership with the Westfield Police Department, also piloted a Bike Rodeo at Washington Elementary School in June, with fifth graders learning important bike safety tips.

González thanked all who worked together to achieve the SRTS certification, including B.R.A.K.E.S. co-chairs Meridith Bridge and Claudine Gimblette, the Westfield Police Department, EZ Ride and parent volunteers.

The Town of Westfield was a pioneer in the Garden State for bike safety thanks to the efforts of James Hely, who served as council member from 1985 to 1997 and has [just returned to the council](#) to fill the vacancy left by resigning Councilwoman Dawn Mackey. Hely is known for his sponsorship of a mandatory Westfield bicycle helmet law, which went on to become a model for New Jersey's law, and later for several other states.

For more than 40 years, EZ Ride has partnered with businesses and governments to implement transportation programs and services like carpools, vanpools, shuttles,

and biking and walking initiatives, with the goal of reducing congestion and mitigating air pollution. In response to growing concerns about climate change and the popularity of electric vehicles, EZ Ride also promotes fleet electrification and workplace charging solutions to accelerate the adoption of EVs.

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