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SPONSOR STATEMENT

HOUSE BILL 387

"AN ACT RELATING TO FINES FOR OFFENSES COMMITTED WITHIN SCHOOL ZONES."

HB 387 doubles the fine assessed for motor vehicle or traffic offenses committed in a school zone. This bill mirrors a law passed by the Alaska State Legislature in 1998, which doubled the fine for violations committed in a highway work zone.

Doubling fines in school zones serves several purposes; it increases public awareness of the need for increased school zone safety, confirms our commitment to student safety, and serves as a further deterrent to motor vehicle violations in school zones.

Due to the particular difficulties presented by Alaska's climate walking to school and in school zones can be dangerous for students. This bill attempts to mitigate this risk to students through the deterrent effect of increased fines.

Please join me in protecting our children by endorsing and passing House Bill 387.

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FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
520 Fifth Avenue Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-4756 (907) 452-2000
www.northstar.k12.ak.us

January 23, 2004

The Honorable Gary Wilken
Alaskan Senate
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Senator Wilken:

It has been brought to my attention that you are sponsoring legislation that would address fines for offenses committed within school zones through SB244, specifically a fine or bail would in essence double if committed within a school zone.

As superintendent of an urban school system, I wholeheartedly support this concept. Approximately two-thirds of our 15,000 students walk to school each day. The majority of our school year these children walk in dark conditions, oftentimes without the advantage of streetlights or sidewalks while their visibility may be hindered because of being dressed in winter gear. As you can imagine, our younger students may forget traffic safety when they get excited as they see their friends close to the school grounds. We do what we can for safety by hiring crossing guards, teaching traffic safety, sewing reflective tape on outer wear, etc., but alerting drivers about higher traffic fines in school zones cannot hurt and would be one more measure of safety.

I believe it is a good idea to bring to the forefront that drivers need to obey the traffic speeds in school zones or pay double the consequence. This has been the case in other states and I am proud that Alaska is willing to make this worthwhile step in the protection of our youngsters.

Please count me as a supporter of SB244.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann E. Shortt, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools
/plh

NewsBank InfoWeb

Anchorage Daily News (AK)

Anchorage Daily News (AK)

October 24, 2003

Street safety gets closer look

LAKE OTIS: Officials seek long-term solutions to keep kids and cars apart.

Author: TATABOLINE BRANT
Anchorage Daily News
Staff

Edition: Final
Section: Alaska
Page: B1

Estimated printed pages: 3

Article Text:

Steps have been taken to make things safer for kids who need to get across Lake Otis Parkway to school, but city and Anchorage School District officials said Thursday they are still investigating longer-term safety measures.

Getting kids across the street safely has long been a concern at Hanshew Middle School and Spring Hill Elementary, which sit side by side on Lake Otis, a busy four-lane road with a posted speed limit of 45 mph.

Those concerns were pushed to the forefront of public discussion earlier this month when a 13-year-old Hanshew girl was hit by a van while trying to cross Lake Otis on her way to school. Kimberly Osborn died from her injuries a few days after the accident.

Since Osborn's death, city officials have erected more than a dozen no-pedestrian-crossing signs along Lake Otis between O'Malley and Abbott roads, where the two schools are. The signs direct pedestrians to an under-road tunnel between the schools.

School officials have long encouraged students to take the tunnel to school or ride the bus, even if they live just across the street. But since Osborn's death, several parents have said they don't think the tunnel is safe for kids either.

Siegfried Kirchner, whose son used to attend Hanshew, recently wrote to Mayor Mark Begich that the tunnel "is a filthy, dimly lit invitation for encounters of the worst kind. It is precisely the kind of place that women and children should avoid."

City traffic engineer Glenda Radvansky and district transportation director Steve Kalmes said Thursday that steps are being taken to make the tunnel safer. Cages have been put over the lights to protect them

from vandals, Radvansky said, and the lights are now on 24 hours a day. In addition, two streetlights are going to be erected at each end of the tunnel, she said.

"It's definitely not going to be dark in there."

The city also is going to look at drainage issues in the tunnel, Radvansky said. The tunnel gets filled with water in spring and snow in winter.

The district also has temporarily stationed adults along Lake Otis before and after school hours to watch for jaywalkers and encourage kids to take the tunnel.

Several parents are clamoring for crosswalks, stoplights and a speed reduction along Lake Otis, but a group of city, district and state transportation officials that met Thursday said they do not favor the idea.

The Hazardous Transportation Committee did not rule out the idea of crosswalks and lights but strongly favored keeping the kids off the street altogether -- the district's approach thus far.

The stretch of Lake Otis in which some people want the changes is more than a mile long, officials said. Getting every driver to slow to 25 mph for that long of a stretch, on a road that's built for higher speeds, is going to be next to impossible, they said

"As comforting as a school zone sounds, it's not going to give you the amount of protection you think it is," said Gary Apperson, a recently retired police sergeant. All it will take is one driver on a cell phone in a pickup and you could have another dead child, he said.

About 460 drivers were cited for speeding in school zones in 2002, according to the Anchorage Police Department's Annual Statistical Report. But police officials said Thursday they can't catch or deter all the speeders, even when they do stings for days at a time.

"The size of the problem is huge," said Mark Mew, the district's security director and a former deputy police chief at APD.

The other problem with crosswalks on Lake Otis is that the road is neither straight nor flat, which could leave even the best drivers with little time to respond.

Still, the committee seemed to agree that more needs to be done to prevent kids from darting across Lake Otis -- a growing problem since two new subdivisions went up on Lake Otis near O'Malley, some distance away from the under-road tunnel.

Radvansky said she was going to look into the feasibility of an overpass, the most expensive idea so far. Other ideas discussed at the meeting included erecting fences to keep kids off the street, increasing lighting on the streets, putting up speed reader boxes and hiring attendants to watch students during the beginning and end of the school day.

"There's not going to be a magic bullet," Apperson said. "It's going to be a combination of things, including having parents work with their kids."

The district plans to discuss the ideas with parents at a meeting at Hanshew at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Kalmes said. That feedback will be relayed to the Hazardous Transportation Committee, which plans to meet again in November to further discuss the options.

Daily News reporter Tataboline Brant can be reached at tbrant@adn.com or 257-4321.

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Article Bookmark(OpenURL Compliant):Anchorage Daily News (AK) : Street safety gets closer look
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NewsBank InfoWeb

Anchorage Daily News (AK)

Anchorage Daily News (AK)

October 14, 2003

District looks for safer crossing
Girl's death, complaints spur new look at old policy
STUDENTS BRAVE LAKE OTIS TRAFFIC

Author: TATABOLINE BRANT
Anchorage Daily News
Staff

Edition: Final
Section: Main
Page: A1

Estimated printed pages: 4

Article Text:

The death of a 13-year-old student who was hit by a van, and complaints about other kids darting into traffic have city and School District officials trying to find safer ways for students to get to two schools on Lake Otis Parkway.

Traffic has long been a thorny issue for Spring Hill Elementary and Hanshew Middle School, which sit side by side on Lake Otis, a busy arterial road with four lanes of traffic in two directions and a posted speed limit of 45 mph.

Last Monday, Kimberly Osborn tried to cross Lake Otis to get to Hanshew and was hit by a van whose driver didn't see her until it was too late. She died two days later.

As school officials try to figure out what they can do to prevent a similar accident, some parents are questioning why the officials didn't act sooner.

"The speed limit is way too high," said Baron Davis, whose 6-year-old daughter attends Spring Hill. "Cars go faster than 50 miles per hour down that road. I've caught a school bus going 50 miles per hour."

The district says it has tried numerous approaches to get kids safely from one side of Lake Otis to the other, including encouraging them to take a pedestrian tunnel and authorizing bus stops for students who live right across the street. The district has been reluctant to put in school crossing signs and crosswalks because officials don't want to encourage students to cross Lake Otis, said Steve Kalmes, the district's director of transportation services.

"It's a very sticky question," Kalmes said. "The problem with school zones is that people in this community don't pay any attention to them. It's criminal the disregard for school zones in this

community. ... Our position has been let's do whatever we can to protect the students."

But new housing developments along Lake Otis have led to more kids trying to cross the road, and Superintendent Carol Comeau said Monday that the district may now have to rethink that long-held stance.

"That's the big challenge for us," Comeau said. "We do not want kids to cross Lake Otis. But on the same token, I think we need to recognize that there are two schools across the street from these subdivisions."

The area in front of Hanshew Middle School and Spring Hill Elementary does not look like a school zone. The schools are set back from the road, and there are few signs to let drivers know there could be children nearby. The speed limit is 45 mph, and there are no crosswalks to break up the mile-long stretch of Lake Otis between O'Malley and Abbott roads.

According to Kalmes, a pedestrian tunnel was built under Lake Otis in the early 1990s. But from the beginning it was a struggle to get kids to use the tunnel, said Comeau, who used to be principal at Spring Hill.

"It was a constant battle," she said. Vandals often knocked out lights in the tunnel, and the passage would fill up with water in spring and snow in winter, she said.

The effort to get kids to use the tunnel was compounded in recent years when new subdivisions went in on Lake Otis near O'Malley. The tunnel is closer to Abbott, and students in the new subdivisions took to darting across Lake Otis instead of making the longer walk to school via the tunnel.

The district received several complaints about this about two years ago, Kalmes said, and after observing the jaywalking, they authorized bus stops for the students.

But the bus rides sometimes last 15 to 20 minutes, said Comeau and K.P. Targe, president of the Hanshew Parent Teacher Student Association. "A lot of the kids don't want to ride the bus," Comeau said.

Parents and drivers have voiced concerns about traffic near the schools for years.

Davis, the father of the 6-year-old Spring Hill student, said he wrote to Anchorage Assembly members about a month before Osborn was killed, suggesting that the speed limit in front of the schools be reduced. He said he got a cool response. They said, "Well, we've got this tunnel," Davis said in a telephone interview Monday.

"It seems like everybody is pointing at the kids," he said. "It's the adults that are creating the environment."

Davis thinks it's a lot to ask of kids to walk out of their way and through a dark tunnel to get to school. He suggested a crosswalk. "I'll paint it myself if they want," he said.

Statistics on how many accidents have occurred in front of the two schools were not immediately available Monday.

"I've heard there've been some pretty close calls," Comeau said.

Since Osborn's death, the district is rethinking its approach. Comeau said she and other district officials met with police and city traffic engineers Monday to talk about how to get kids safely across Lake Otis.

Assemblywoman Janice Shamberg has suggested an on-demand pedestrian stop light and crosswalk, similar to the one on Northern Lights Boulevard near East High. Kids think they're invulnerable, Shamberg said, and if they're running too late for school to take the tunnel or the bus, "they could easily decide to just cross the street."

Comeau said city officials are considering Shamberg's suggestion, and a number of others, including slowing traffic down to 20 to 25 mph with blinking lights when the school day begins and ends. Comeau said she's also looking into installing vandal-proof lights in the tunnel and trying to make bus rides shorter for kids who live nearby, among other things.

"I personally believe we need to slow the traffic down," she said.

Daily News reporter Tataboline Brant can be reached at tbrant@adn.com or 257-4321.

Caption:
Illustrated by Ron Engstrom
ILLUSTRATION SHOWS MAP OF SCHOOL CROSSING ON LAKE OTIS AND PHOTO OF KIMBERLY OSBORN
Photos by BILL ROTH / Anchorage Daily News
Hanshew Middle School students who crossed Lake Otis Parkway near the O'Malley Road intersection walk back toward the subdivision across from the school.
Baron Davis, whose daughter attends Spring Hill Elementary School, thinks it's a lot to ask of kids to walk out of their way and through a dark tunnel to get to school. He suggests a crosswalk. "I'll paint it myself if they want," he said. Vandals have knocked out lights in the tunnel, and the passage can fill up with water in spring and snow in winter.
Hanshew Middle School students walk toward the O'Malley Road intersection to avoid crossing near a guard.

Photo 1: schoolcrossing_101403.tif
Photo 3: schoolcrossing5_101403.jpg
Photo 4: 14 Hanshew_Spring Hill__101403.jpg

Graphic 2: schoolcrossing3_101403.eps

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Article Bookmark(OpenURL Compliant):Anchorage Daily News (AK) : District looks for safer crossing
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Anchorage Daily News (AK)

Anchorage Daily News (AK)

October 11, 2003

Student hit by car on way to bus stop
NOT IN CROSSWALK: Teen wasn't supposed to ride bus after his family moved.

Author: KATIE PESZNECKER
Anchorage Daily News
Staff

Edition: Final
Section: Alaska
Page: B1

Estimated printed pages: 3

Article Text:

A Wendler Middle School student was hit by a car as he crossed Bragaw Street on Friday morning to catch a school bus, becoming the second Anchorage School District student to be struck this week.

Police said Pupualii Uele, 13, was hit by a Subaru SUV about 7:44 a.m. Friday. Pupualii was taken to Alaska Regional Hospital with a broken right leg and abrasions to his left elbow, said his mother, Mary Uele.

"It's broken really bad," Uele said.

On Monday morning, Hanshew Middle School student Kimberly Osborn, 13, was hit by a van while crossing Lake Otis Parkway between O'Malley and Abbott Loop roads on her way to school. She suffered broken bones and massive head injuries and died Wednesday.

Uele said she learned her son was hurt when a police officer called her house. "I thought that (Pupualii) had been suspended. But no, when the police officer said there had been an accident, it was shocking. And then I'm looking at the time, thinking he just left the house."

District officials and police on Friday again said students and drivers need to pay extra attention to their surroundings with the increasingly dark mornings. Principals and teachers were reminding their students to use safe routes when walking to school, said Roger Fiedler, district spokesman.

Pupualii on Friday walked from his home on Reka Drive to a bus stop on the west side of DeBarr, said Steve Kalmes, district transportation director. But that isn't actually Pupualii's bus stop, Kalmes said.

"We would never have a child cross a four-lane road to catch a school bus," Kalmes said. "We just don't do that. He shouldn't have been going across."

Pupualii lives on Reka Drive, in the Clark Middle School attendance area, and attends Wendler on a zone exemption, Kalmes said.

District policy says parents are responsible for transporting zone-exempted students to their chosen school. Those students are not supposed to ride school buses, Kalmes said.

But, Uele said, when the school year started, the family lived on the west side of Bragaw, in the Wendler attendance area. They have since moved to their home on Reka and with the bus stop just down the street, it just made sense for Pupualii to continue riding the bus, Uele said.

Wendler students this year have a much longer ride to school because they're using the old Dimond High School building in South Anchorage while their school, at Lake Otis and Northern Lights Boulevard, is remodeled.

Police said Pupualii was walking west across Bragaw Street at an angle, near Reka Drive.

"I guess he was rushing and thought he was going to miss (the bus)," Uele said.

Pupualii was struck by a Subaru that was southbound on Bragaw, driven by Thomas J. Snell, 40. Witnesses told police that Snell had the green light to proceed along Bragaw when Pupualii stepped in front of his car. Snell was not cited.

Daily News reporter Katie Pesznecker can be reached at kpesznecker@adn.com.

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Police Emphasize School-Zone Safety Following Cary Hit-And-Run

Authorities Search For Suspect, Truck As Students Seek Safe Way To Cross Street

POSTED: 5:26 p.m. EDT October 23, 2003
UPDATED: 12:56 a.m. EDT October 24, 2003

RALEIGH, N.C. -- A Cary High School student is still recovering from a hit-and-run accident that occurred near campus Monday. The accident raised concerns not only about crosswalk confusion, but school-zone safety.

can prove dangerous for students on their way to school.

The accident has police trying to crack down on safety at many schools.

Dodging traffic is part of the daily routine for students at Broughton High School. Drivers are supposed to slow down and give students the right of way at crosswalks. School-zone signs are posted everywhere as reminders. But students say too many drivers ignore them.

"I think it's ridiculous," student Caroline Griffin said. "They drive like they're crazy. It's not safe for people who cross the street at school."

Said Broughton student Katie Banner: "I think it's unsafe. Last year, somebody was hit."

Cary High School senior Kristina Grahn, 18, was hit by a car Monday morning as she crossed the street to campus. Police said a driver made an illegal right turn in the school zone before hitting the girl.

The authorities are still looking for the truck and driver.

Police said the Cary accident proves that people can not be too careful with cars and kids.

"We are always in fear of something like that happening," said Capt. D.S. Overman, of the Raleigh Police Department.

Overman said Raleigh police put a lot of manpower into keeping school zones safe. He said drivers need to slow down, read the signs -- or pay the price.

He said drivers need to remember that the penalties are tougher for speeding in a school zone.

"We want people to see us out here," Overman said, "to know that if they blatantly disregard the laws, there's a penalty for that."

Slowing down not only can save drivers some cash, but possibly a life, as well.

Previous Stories:

- October 23, 2003: Authorities Identify Vehicle Type Involved In Cary Hit-And-Run
- October 21, 2003: Police Continue Search For Green Truck In Cary Hit-And-Run

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Children First: School Zone Safety

Danielle Banks

Local law enforcement gathered recently in an effort to keep children safe. Officers and other city officials want to get the word out about school zone safety.

While the officials didn't reveal any new laws, they did stress the importance of obeying the current ones. They simply want to remind you to use extra caution on the roads when school buses are around and put children first.

"Law enforcement has set a goal for zero traffic related crashes or injuries in the 2002-2003 school year and we need your help while on the roadways," said Harrisonburg police officer Greg Deeds.

So what can you do?

"You must stop anytime you approach a stopped bus on the roadway or at any intersection when the red lights are flashing unless there is an actual physical barrier between you and the bus," said Harrisonburg police officer D.J. Albertson.

A $250 fine will go to the registered owner of any vehicle reported owner of any vehicle reported passing a stopped school bus.

"If you're the owner of the car, you have to come into court and explain to us or give us a reason to believe that you weren't driving or you could be penalized for a violation involving your vehicle," Albertson said.

Officials said the matter won't taken lightly in court either.

"We prosecute to the fullest extent of the law on these cases because we do believe that children have the right to be safe in their transport to and from school," said commonwealth attorney Marsha Garst.

Speeding in a school zone or failing to yield to a pedestrian crossing the road are other important issues.

"Even if the vehicle has a green traffic light, they must be cautious to all pedestrians either crossing at intersections or on crosswalks. A pedestrian should remember they cannot enter a roadway against a walk light," Albertson said.

Officials said your best bet is easier than you may think.

"Slow down, leave more time to get to your destinations especially during the mornings and afternoons when children are on or near the roadways and we want to ensure the safety of our children in the communities," Deeds said.

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National Bus Safety Week is the third week in October.

whsv.com Extended Web Coverage

Safety Tips For Children:

- When you get off, take five giant steps away from the bus, out of the danger zone.
- Cross in front of the bus, and make sure you maintain eye contact with the driver.
- Never go back for anything and never bend down near or under the bus.

Safety Tips For Parents:

- Assure your children you won't get mad if they don't go back for a jacket they've left on the bus, or school work they've dropped under a wheel.
- Encourage them to sit quietly in their seat and follow the driver's instructions on bus safety.

Safety Tips For Motorists:

- Stop when the bus's warning lights are flashing, or the stop arm comes out.
- Share the road with the yellow bus.

General Facts

- School buses are one of the safest forms of transportation in the nation - nearly 2,000 times safer than the family car.
- The reality of school bus safety is that more children are hurt outside a bus than inside one.
- The child who bends over to retrieve a dropped school paper, or who walks too close to the bus while crossing the street, needs to be aware that every yellow school bus is surrounded by a danger zone.

Source: www.nhtsa.dot.gov (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Web site) contributed to this report.

More Stories

Children First: Report Cards

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Children First: EMU Tuition Plan

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Children First: Talking to Kids About

Annual Statistical Report

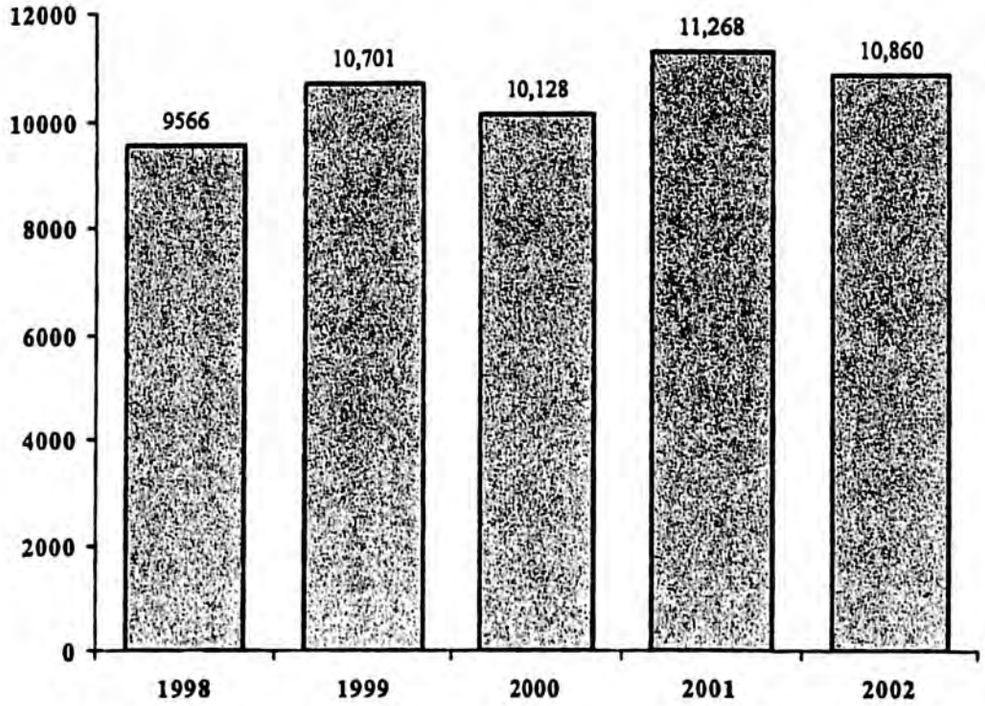
Traffic

2002

Anchorage Police Department

Traffic Section

Traffic Accidents
1998-2002



	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total Vehicle Accidents	**9,566**	**10,701**	**10,128**	**11,268**	**10,860**
with Fatalities involved [1]	17	19	28	27	34
with DUI involved[2]	293	340	350	371	391
with Injuries	2,143	2,496	3,329	3,757	3,958
with Non-Injury Property Damage	7,022	8,151	7,674	8,597	8,152
with Hit & Run involved	2,051	2,345	2,390	2,751	2,696
Bicycle Accidents	138	134	122	121	149
Pedestrian Accidents	108	83	95	113	146
Motorcycle Accidents	23	52	52	62	71

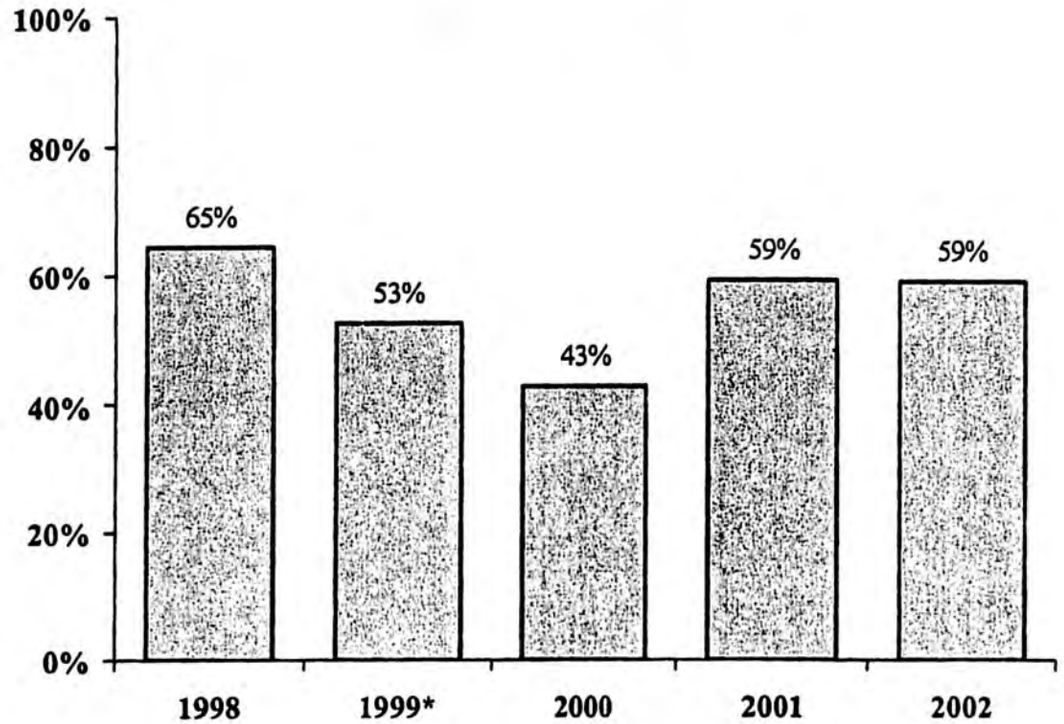
A single accident can be in multiple totals.

[1] Number of accidents with fatalities, not number of victims.

[2] Driving Under the Influence. Replaced DWI and adds drugs as a cause of imparment in addition to alcohol.

Fatal Accident Summary

Alcohol and Drug Involvement known to Police

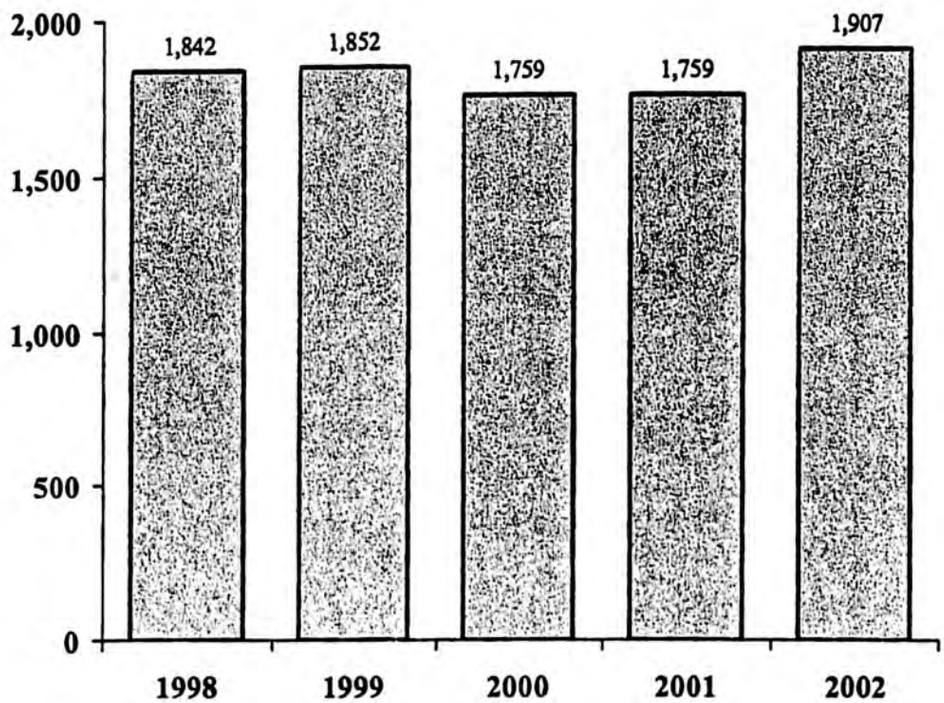


	1998	1999*	2000	2001	2002
Number of Fatality Accidents	17	19	28	27	34
with Alcohol or Drugs Involved	11	10	12	16	20
Percentage	65%	53%	43%	59%	59%

Note that 2002 data shows 728 out of all 10,860 traffic accidents involved alcohol and/or drugs (7%).

**One additional fatal accident was reported to Department of Motor Vehicles. This case was classified as a murder and is not reflected here as an accident.*

DUI Arrest*
1998-2002



Yearly Totals

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
1,842	1,852	1,759	1,759	1,907

*Driving Under the Influence. Replaced DWI and adds drugs as a cause of imparment in addition to alcohol. DUI Arrests represent all charges brought against individuals.

Traffic Violations

While the number of fatality accidents within the municipality remains relatively low, injuries occurred in nearly one-fourth of all accidents. Many of the 10,860 motor vehicle accident reports written by the Department last year can be attributed to some of the more serious violations listed below. Officers will continue to focus their attention on violations that are most likely to cause accidents.

	1999	2000	2001	2002
RED LIGHT VIOLATIONS	3,605	3,282	2,025	1,769
STOP SIGN VIOLATIONS	1,189	1,079	910	993
CARELESS DRIVING	659	660	737	813
FAILURE TO YIELD	835	753	816	800
TURNING VIOLATIONS	741	637	559	487
SCHOOL ZONE SPEEDING*	357	2,259	436	460
OTHER SPEEDING VIOLATIONS	8,204	9,816	7,904	8,124
UNSAFE BACKING	526	474	484	554
DRIVER'S LICENSE VIOLATIONS	4,266	5,062	4,042	3,210
VEHICLE REGISTRATION AND LICENSING VIOLATIONS	2,632	3,058	2,360	2,574
VEHICLE EQUIPMENT VIOLATIONS	1,767	2,222	1,001	984
ALL OTHER TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS	5,146	6,656	7,776	6,448
TOTAL CITATIONS ISSUED	**29,927**	**33,736**	**29,068**	**27,216**

Nonmoving (Parking) Citations

1999	2000	2001	2002
37,680	55,948	30,981	37,729

* Source: State of Alaska

Washington's Safer School Zones

In 1996, a number of concerned parents and children from Yakima, Washington appeared before the Washington state legislature, and asked their elected officials to do something about school zone safety. The legislature responded, and the State of Washington adopted RCW 46.61.400, which, among other things, doubles the fine for speeding in a school zone ($157, now $177), directs half of the new fine total be earmarked for improving school zone safety, and stipulates that the fine cannot not be waived, reduced, or suspended. This act went into effect on March 20, 1996.

Characterizing the program as a success would be an understatement. Within the first four months of the School Zone Safety program, 3,000 citations were issued for violations of school zone laws—double the previous year's total! Since its inception, $6.2 million has been raised and expended by the State of Washington to improve safety around schools.

The Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) is responsible for running the program. Their accomplishments are numerous:

- They have trained school bus drivers on driving in inclement weather.
- They have provided a highly requested training on enforcing school safety zone to police departments around the state.
- All school zone speed limit signs have been updated to warn drivers "Speeding Fines Doubled in School Zones."
- They have distributed a School Safety Curriculum Kit and Resource Guide to every public and private elementary school in the state.
- Every school in the state has received two sets of new crossing guard flags, and vests.
- Additional matching grants are available to schools wishing to make other improvements.

All of these activities were paid for by the School Zone Safety Account.

The law enforcement community in Washington has been enthusiastic in its support of this project, and their enforcement efforts have contributed greatly to its success. The fact that the School Zone Safety Account allows police departments to purchase safety-related equipment doesn't hurt either. The Safety Account has given departments the resources needed to provide overtime pay for officers, extra vehicles, radios, radar guns, and additional training related to school zone safety.

Currently, the WTSC is set to launch a new school zone safety pilot project, which will begin in early 2004. The pilot project will be a partnership between the State of Washington, and the government of British Columbia, Canada.

For more information on the WTSC's School Zone Safety program contact Lynn Drake, Program Manager <ldrake@wtsc.wa.gov>

School Zone Safety Improvement Project

WASHINGTON

PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS
Targets hard-to-reach/at risk population

PROGRAM AREA(S)
Police Traffic Services

TYPE OF JURISDICTION
State

TARGETED POPULATION(S)
General Population

JURISDICTION SIZE
5,430,000

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Surveys conducted by the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) in Yakima, Washington, showed significant violations of speed limits in school crosswalk and playground areas. In response to these serious safety concerns, legislation was enacted doubling fines for speeding in a school zone. The legislation provided that half of the new fine total would be earmarked for improving school zone safety.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the School Zone Safety Improvement Project was to improve compliance of existing speed limit laws in school zones. In order to achieve this goal, WTSC established the following objectives:

- Provide law enforcement agencies with the motivation and tools to aggressively enforce school speed limits
- Supply funding for school zone improvement projects
- Develop a public education campaign informing motorists of the school zone laws
- Provide increased signage at school zones

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The WTSC teamed with other organizations having a vested interested in traffic safety, including local law enforcement and Safe Communities coalitions, to plan a series of strategies and activities designed to meet the WTSC goal and objectives for the project. The activities included the following:

- Law enforcement agencies were invited to apply for state grant funds to purchase speed measuring devices or other equipment that would enhance school zone enforcement. Among the criteria for receiving a grant award was a requirement for demonstrating the extent of the agency's commitment to enforcement by submitting a plan for performance
- A public information campaign was developed featuring articles in the local newspapers and public service announcements (PSAs) that aired on local radio and television. Several feature stories were also aired on local television
- Informational signs were developed in cooperation with the State Department of Transportation and placed in school crossing zones. These signs carried school zone safety messages such as "Speeding Fines Doubled in School Zones"

RESULTS

Since the School Safety Zone Improvement Project was initiated in September 1996, it has supported funding for more than 100 local, county, and state agencies and Indian tribes applying for enforcement grants. The campaign has seen a marked increase in the number of citations issued to violators of the school zone laws, rising from 1,500 citations issued in the year 1995 to more than 3,000 issued in the first four months of the program.

The grant funds awarded were used for activities other than for enforcement, including outfitting of school crossing guards, publicity for "red ribbon" ceremonies for sign installation, purchase and installation of "Double Fine" signs, enhanced community policing efforts and increased police presence near schools. Preliminary data from effectiveness studies indicate that there are no long-term effects of signage without enforcement.

Based on the success of the project, the Washington State Legislature enacted legislation in 1997 that doubled the penalty for passing a stopped school bus, with the expectation that the School Zone Safety Improvement Project be replicated to improve compliance with laws regarding stopped school busses. Half the fines collected from enforcement of the new law will be dedicated to this effort.

FUNDING

State: $300,000

CONTACT

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WASHINGTON
School Zone Safety Curriculum

PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS
Aimed at Youth
Formalization of Safety Procedures

PROGRAM AREA(S)
Youth Programs
Public Information & Education

TYPE OF JURISDICTION
State

TARGETED POPULATION
Elementary Schools

JURISDICTION SIZE
5,894,121 (2000 Census)

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

With more and more children walking to school than ever before because of budget cuts in local school districts, there is a greater need for motorists and pedestrians to look out for each other. Unfortunately, when drivers ignore school zones and exceed the speed limits, children are at risk for being injured by a motor vehicle.

The Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) has aggressively targeted school zones in an effort to make them *safety* zones for students. An annual, statewide public information campaign reminds motorists to slow down in school zones, and watch for children riding bikes and walking to and from school. This campaign is coupled with enforcement activity where officers pay close attention to motorists driving through school zones. With a posted speed limit of 20 mph, the minimum fine for speeding in a school zone is $157, half of which goes to the School Zone Safety Account. This money is dedicated to the promotion of school zone safety. The fine cannot be waived, suspended, or reduced.

During the 2000-2001 academic year, WTSC distributed two sets of new crossing guard flags and vests to every elementary school in the state. The cost for this project was $75,000, paid by the School Zone Safety Account. Following distribution of the flags and vests, WTSC received an overwhelming number of requests from schools and local law enforcement agencies for formalized school zone training.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The WTSC aimed to create and distribute a School Safety Patrol Curriculum designed to assist the student crossing guards in their duties. The curriculum, which would serve as a clear and standardized educational tool, would also address the responsibilities of running a successful program.

A committee of law enforcement, educators, engineers, traffic safety, and insurance representatives was formed to develop the curriculum. Their goal was to:

- **provide a user-friendly toolkit for schools on school zone safety;**
- **outline and explain the state's school zone laws;**
- **suggest solutions to common problems in school zones;**
- **develop a video that outlined the responsibilities and importance of a crossing guard;**
- **educate parents on traffic safety in and around the school;**
- **provide portions of the toolkit in multiple languages; and**
- **encourage local law enforcement to become involved in individual school programs.**

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

WTSC arranged for a signed letter from the Governor to accompany the School Safety Curriculum Kit and Resource Guide; both items were sent to every elementary school (public and private) and all law enforcement agencies in the state. The kit includes a videotape; attractively printed inserts for supervisors, principals, and crossing guards; and an evaluation form. Parent safety tips are also provided in six different languages.

RESULTS

At this writing, the curriculum is being distributed and kits will be updated every two or three years to reflect changes in the law or other safety factors or concerns.

Plans are in the works for training that will be offered at pre-determined sites for school personnel, law enforcement, and traffic safety advocates to ensure the goal and guidelines of this curriculum are met.

A School Zone Safety Account funded the project. The funds were spent on design, video production, printing, and assembling 3,000 kits. This is enough for 1,135

FUNDING

Other: $33,000 (School Zone Safety Account)

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elementary schools, 350 law enforcement agencies, and traffic safety advocates in the state.

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

WINTER 2002

HOME NEXT

State Information

Home

Main

Laws
- Safety Belt Laws
- Graduated Licensing Laws
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- State Speed Limit Laws
- Sanctions for School and Construction Zones.
- Cell Phone Laws
- Checkpoint Laws
- Automatic Enforcement Laws
- Low Speed Vehicle Laws
- Segway Laws
- Drug Impaired Driving Laws
- Older Driver Laws

Funding

Grants

Information by State

Sanctions for Exceeding the Speed Limit in Either a Construction or School Zone

State	Sanctions for Speeding in a Construction Zone	Sanctions for Speeding in a School Zone
Alaska		Six points are assessed on the driving record.
Arkansas	An additional fine, equal to all other fines, is imposed for exceeding the posted limit when construction personnel are present.	First offense is 1-10 days in jail and $25-50 fine; second offense within one year is 5-25 days in jail and $50-$250 fine and license suspension for 6 months (subsequent offense within 1 year is 25 days, 6 months in jail and $250-$1000 fine; 3rd offense within one year is license suspension for one year.
Colorado	If a speeding offense occurs in a construction zone, fines and surcharges are double the usual amount.	If a speeding offense occurs in a school zone, fines and surcharges are double the usual amount.
Connecticut	The fine is double the usual amount.	
Florida	For exceeding the speed limit in a construction zone (except for speeds less than 5 MPH over the posted limit where only a warning is issued), the fine is double the amount in the fine schedule. Note: if a person decides to adjudicate the speeding offense in a construction zone, the fine is not more than $1000.	For exceeding the speed limit in a sxhool zone, the fine in the schedule is $50, if the speed limit was exceeded by less than 5 MPH. Otherwise the fine is double. If a person decides to adjudicate the speeding offense, the fine is not more than $1000.
Georgia	Jail of not more than 12 months and a fine of $100-$2000.	
Illinois	A fine of $150 (mandatory) to $1000, and additional fine of $50 which is used for school safety.	A fine of $150 (mandatory) to $1000, and additional fine of $50 which is used for school safety
Indiana	The court may order a person to pay a fee of $25 for	

	exceeding a worksite speed limit.	
Iowa	The fine is double the amount in the fine schedule.	
Kansas	The fine is double the usual amount.	
Kentucky	If a speeding offense occurs in a construction zone, the fine is double the usual amount.	
Maine		The fine is double the amount in the fine schedule.
Maryland		A fine of not more than $1000.
Michigan	The fine is double that prescribed by law.	Imprisonment for not more than 90 days and a fine that is double that prescribed by law, but not more than $200.
Minnesota	A surcharge is assessed that equals the fine, except the surcharge cannot be less than $25.	A surcharge is assessed which equals the fine, except the surcharge cannot be less than $25.
Mississippi	For exceeding the posted limit in a "highway work zone" a fine of not more than $250 is assessed.	
Missouri	For speeding in a construction zone, an additional fine of $35 is assessed.	
Montana	If a speeding offinse occurs in a work zone, the fine is double the usual amount.	
Nebraska	If a speeding offense occurs in a construction zone, the fine is double the usual amount.	If a speeding offense occurs in a school crossing zone, the fine is double the usual amount.
Nevada	There is an additinal sanction which is equal to the original sanctions imposed for exceeding such a limit. Imprisonment sacntions for the original and additional sanctions must run consecutively. However, the combined sanctions cannot exceed 6 months of imprisonment, $1000 or 120 hours of community service.	
New Jersey	The fine is double the usual amount.	
New York	Exceeding the speed limit less than 10 MPH, a fine of $60-$100; exceeding the speed limit more than 10 MPH but less than 30 MPH, not more than 30 days in jail	Exceeding the speed limit less than 10 MPH, a fine of $60-$200; exceeding the speed limit more than 10 MPH but less than 30 MPH, not

	and a fine of $120-$200; exceeding the speed limit more than 30 MPH, not more than 30 days in jail and a fine of $240-$400. For a second offense within 18 months for any of the previous offenses, the fine is increased by $100. For a subsequent offense within 18 months for any of the previous offenses, the fine is increased by $250.	more than 15 days in jail and a fine of $120-$400; exceeding the speed limit more than 30 MPH, not more than 30 days in jail and a fine of $240-$800. For a second offense within 18 months for any of the previous offenses, the fine is increased by $100. For a subsequent offense within 18 months for any of the previous offenses, the fine is increased by $250.
North Carolina	There is a mandatory $250 fine.	There is a mandatory $25 fine and 3 points are assessed against the driving record.
North Dakota	Fee schedule for exceeding the speed limit by 1-10 MPH is $40; fee schedule for exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 MPH is $40 plus $1 fir each MPH over 10 MPH.	
Ohio	The fine is double the usual amount.	
Oregon	The fine is %80 of the maximum fine established for the violation.	The fine is 80% of the maximum fine extablished for the violation.
Pennsylvania	The fine is double the usual amount.	The fine is $35 plus $2 for every mile in excess of 5 MPH.
South Carolina	Jail of not more than 30 days and/or a fine of $75-$200.	
South Dakota	Fine is double the usual amount.	
Tennessee	Fine of $250 (mandatory) to $500. Speeding violations where the vehicle's speed was not noted on the citation, 3 points; exceeding the speed limit 1-5 MPH, 2 points; exceeding the speed limit 6-15 MPH, 6 points; exceeding the speed limit 16-35 MPH, 7 points; exceeding the speed limit by 36 or more MPH, 8 points. For commercial vehicles, speeding where the vehicle's speed was not noted on the citation, 4 points; exceeding the speed limit through 5 MPH, 2 points; exceeding the speed limit 6-14 MPH, 5 points.	
Texas	Minimum and maximum fines are doubled.	
Utah	If convicted of speeding in a construction zone when	

	workers are present, fine is double the amount listed in the fine schedule.	
Virginia	Fine is not more than $250.	For speeding in a school crossing zone is not more than $250.
Washington	Mandatory fine of double the normal amount for exceeding the speed limit in a roadway construction zone.	Mandatory fine of double the normal amount for exceeding the speed limit in a school or playground crosswalk.
West Virginia	A fine of not more than $200. Jail of not more than 20 days for exceeding the speed limit by 15 or more MPH.	A fine of $100-$500. Jail of not more than 6 months for exceeding the school zone limit by 15 or more MPH when one or more children are in the zone.
Wisconsin	Maximum and minimum fines are doubled.	Maximum and minimum fines are doubled.
Wyoming	Fine of $100 when operating a motor vehicle with a gross vehicle weight greater than 26,000 pounds and speeding more than 6 MPH (fine appears to be mandatory.)	

Source: NHTSA "Summary of Special Sanctions for Exceeding the Speed Limit in Either a Construction or School Zone." Current as of January 2001.

State of Alaska
Department of Public Safety
School Zone Violations
FY 2003

School Zone Citations				
Agency	S50	S91	S99	Total
Alaska State Troopers	1	2	23	26
Anchorage Police Department	2	32	376	410
Fairbanks Police Department	0	0	10	10
Juneau Police Department	0	0	14	14
Ketchikan Police Department	0	0	2	2
Palmer Police Department	0	0	3	3
Sitka Police Department	0	0	7	7
Skagway Police Department	0	0	2	2
Wasilla Police Department	0	0	7	7
				0
All Agencies Total	3	34	444	481

Citation Descriptions
S50 - Speed-School Zone ____ (allows recording of exact speed)
S91 - Speed 41 mph over or more (School Zone) *
S99 - Speed School Zone

*Note: Per DMV the S91 code is intended to be used for School Zone speeding violations.
It appears it has been used to record non-School zone speeding violations in some cases

23-LS1521\A.1
Luckhaupt
1/29/04

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE BY REPRESENTATIVE GATTO

TO: HB 387

Page 1, line 1:

Delete "**offenses committed within school zones**"

Insert "**moving motor vehicle or traffic offenses committed within highway work or school zones**"

Page 1, line 6, following "for a":

Insert "**moving**"

Page 1, line 12, following "violates a":

Insert "**moving motor vehicle or traffic**"