

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
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Outdoor spaces that do more!



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BLUE LINE SOLUTIONS

By Mark Hutchinson

Technology in service to public safety

AT THE MORE than 70,000 public and private k-12 schools across the United States, school administrators and school boards are responsible for fostering a safe learning environment – from the crosswalk to the desk – for millions of students. These administrators and board members are increasingly leveraging technology to reduce the risks of accidents, protect students, and reassure the community. In fact, schools have more security technology available to them than ever before.

From rural to urban school environments, Automated Speed Enforcement Cameras (ASE) and Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) have become essential security tools that serve three purposes: speed enforcement, area surveillance, and analytics sharing. ASE technology has proven to slow speeding vehicles through school zones by as much as 94% while ALPR helps security by capturing events through video management and analytics. The combination of these two technologies not only creates a safer place for children to walk to and from school



by reducing traffic speed, but it will also notify law enforcement if a registered child sex predator enters school property.

Benefits beyond the school zone

At Blue Line Solutions we have seen first-hand how technology can help to save lives. That’s why we “Strive for Zero” – Zero crashes. Zero injuries. Zero fatalities. While there are many obvious benefits to using ASE and ALPR near schools, we have identified five important ways this technology has unexpected benefits for wider community.

- 1. Create an overall safer environment:** By deploying intelligent sensors, cameras, and warning systems, authorities can create a safer environment for pedestrians. These technologies detect speeding vehicles and prompt changes in driving behaviors that lead to slower speeds and reduced traffic flow. Moreover, speed enforcement and automated license plate recognition cameras in school crosswalks deter not only speeding but also criminal activity. This increases both student and resident safety. When incidents do occur, the cameras can provide crucial evidence for law enforcement.
- 2. Leverage data for municipal improvements and planning:** Intelligent traffic control systems can be integrated into



crosswalks to monitor traffic patterns and pedestrian volume during peak hours. This data enables city planners and law enforcement to make informed decisions about issues such as signal timings or traffic diversion measures during peak school hours. By efficiently managing traffic flow, local leaders can reduce congestion and create safer communities for residents. Moreover, this data-driven approach ensures that future infrastructure development aligns with the specific needs of the community, leading to more sustainable and resilient neighborhoods.

3. Increase community engagement: A data-driven Public Information and Education (PI&E) approach is the most important component of a traffic safety program, but it is the most often overlooked. A PI&E component includes presentations at meetings of the local PTA, Chamber of Commerce, and businesses as well as information provided at community events. These efforts should be supplemented by disseminating data and information through schools' email portals and press releases. By making data about problems (i.e., the number of speeding vehicles over a given period) available to the community law enforcement and local leaders can garner "political permission" to address the problems. Furthermore, At Blue Line Solutions we have seen that when localities implement ASE and ALPR technology more people volunteer as crossing guards and participate in local road safety initiatives.

4. Foster stakeholder partnerships: An effective traffic safety program must include all the stakeholders in the community. Entities such as law enforcement, schools, civic and community organizations, and political leaders are all necessary to implement an effective program. Success is more certain when everyone works together on both the enforcement and education components to achieve the shared goal of changing driver behavior. This work not only has the immediate effect increasing safety, but it also creates important connections among the stakeholders that often prove helpful in other projects.

Measurable, positive changes in driver behavior

ASE and ALPR technology combined with public education campaigns and new signage at schools and construction zones, makes drivers aware of their behavior. At Blue Line Solutions we work in collaboration with law enforcement, state and city government, and citizens to bring the technology to the community and raise awareness before, during, and after it is deployed. Our program averages the following results:

Speed Reductions Achieved in School Zones

Reduction during PI&E phase	71.6%
Reduction during Warning phase	14.1%
Reduction during weeks 1- 4 of enforcement	8.3%
Total Reduction	94.0%

Traffic Flow Reduction

Reduction during PI&E phase	-19.9%
Traffic flow increase during warning phase	+2.3%
Reduction during weeks 1-4 of enforcement	-3.7%
Total Reduction in School Zone Traffic Flow	21.3%

(Data Source: Blue Line Solutions as of 07/25/23 measuring program in 16 cities)

As seen in the above charts, the greatest reductions in speeding vehicles traveling through school zones are achieved during the PI&E and warning phases, when NO citations are issued. This data proves that the combination of PI&E and enforcement yields the desired changes in driver behavior. A related benefit is that drivers often choose to take alternate routes, thus reducing traffic flow in school zone areas.

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Overcome initial concerns through public awareness

When implementing speed enforcement solutions, stakeholders often find the greatest reluctance in the political arena. Elected officials are often hesitant to embrace public safety solutions that have the potential to result in more speeding tickets for residents or to be perceived as overreach. Thus, the initial challenge is often in getting all stakeholders to communicate during the planning stages of a program to ensure it includes all the necessary components for success outlined above. Stakeholders can provide valuable support to elected officials by sharing the problem and proposed solution with the community in a data-driven approach.

When everyone plays a part in public safety, everyone wins!

From the mayor to the school superintendent, to the community – everyone has a part to play in securing school zones or any area where speeds need to be reduced to keep people safe. Blue Line Solutions is proud to provide vital tools in the work of creating safer and more livable neighborhoods. Our technology has a proven track record of providing valuable speed detection, criminal detection, real-time monitoring, and data analysis. With these benefits, local leaders can do great things for their citizens.

“Our number of accidents has decreased now that people are more cautious of their speed. Blue Line is always just a phone call or email away, and I highly recommend this program to other cities.”

- Police Chief John Norman (Girard, OH)



For more information on how Blue Line Solutions can help, visit www.truebluesafer.com.

About the author: Mark Hutchinson is the CEO and founder of Blue Line Solutions.