



**ONTARIO PUBLIC  
SCHOOL BOARDS'  
ASSOCIATION**

**Leading Education's Advocates**

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**Wednesday April 26, 2017**

**To:** Grant Crack, MPP (Glengarry--Prescott—Russell) and Chair of the Standing Committee on General Government  
Sylwia Przewdziecki, Clerk of the Standing Committee on General Government

**Re: OPSBA Submission for Bill 65, Safer School Zones Act, 2017**

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the proposed legislation, Bill 65, Safer School Zones Act, 2017. As a leading voice in the advocacy of public education, we wish to express our support for amendments that would increase safety measures for our students, parents, school staff and community members. Specifically, we wish to provide comment on the use of automated speed enforcement (photo radar) in two areas: school zones and community safety zones.

One of our leading multi-year priorities is *The Whole Child & Student Well Being*. We believe that improving student achievement and student engagement is directly linked to ensuring that we work collaboratively for the social, emotional, mental and physical well-being of all children and youth.

OSPBA agrees that municipalities should have more authority over setting their own speed limits and enforcement to ensure the safety of their residents. For the areas involving school zones, we strongly believe that school boards need to be involved in the discussion with their municipal counterparts as this is a neighbourhood issue. Some school boards overlap with multiple municipalities and it would be beneficial for there to be consistency in how speed enforcement is approached for all schools in nearby jurisdictions.

School boards share a real concern about the number of accidents and even deaths from motorists speeding through school zones. We want to ensure our schools and the areas around them are as safe as possible. School zones affect many people – young children in child care, school age children (elementary and secondary), parents, caregivers, grandparents, teachers, administrators, education workers and any visitor to a school. Community Zones are equally important and can be near a school or where children, seniors and families visit regularly.

Many boards have conducted or partnered with other groups to review the safety and risk factors related to pedestrians in school zones. They all point out the importance of slowing traffic down and decreasing irresponsible driver behaviour around schools.\* Decreased speed limits may also help reduce the seriousness of injuries, but we suggest a multi-pronged approach which would include interventions

and safety training. These measures will not only protect those individuals walking to and from school, but also our students who are bused and other drivers and their passengers.

Although this proposed legislation allows municipalities to enforce school and community zones, we also suggest that along with discussion with municipal counterparts, there would be value in involving transportation consortia. Some comments we received during our consultation suggested that speed limits were not the only safety issue. Increasing congestion at pick up and drop off times was also a high priority. Other suggested topics for discussion included: “Collector Stops” - stops at which numerous students and families gather to wait for the school bus; “Active Walk Zones” - areas that experience heavy pedestrian traffic during school transportation hours; and “KinderZones” - bus stops with multiple kindergarten aged students, who require more time for boarding and disembarking. These may be school or site specific, but worthy of discussion.

In addition to the above comments, we also have some questions and will follow up with the Ministry of Transportation for clarification.

Questions:

- What is the definition of a community safety zone?
- Will there be signage announcing when a driver is entering a school zone or community safety zone?
- Will school zone enforcement be 24/7 or just during school hours? (Schools are occupied longer than 9 am – 3 pm)
- How does this apply to schools in rural and remote areas that are located on provincial highways? This is not just a city/urban issue.
- How many kilometres over the speed limit would a motorist have to be to receive a ticket?
- Will this reduce the presence of crossing guards or police presence? Both significantly reduce poor driving behaviours.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide our feedback and comments. Municipalities and school boards need to work together to address the important issue of safety measures near our schools and in our communities.

Sincerely,



Laurie French  
President

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) represents public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario. Together our members serve the educational needs of almost 70% of Ontario's elementary and secondary students. The Association advocates on behalf of the best interests and needs of the public school system in Ontario. OPSBA believes that the role of public education is to provide universally accessible education opportunities for all students regardless of their ethnic, racial or cultural backgrounds, social or economic status, individual exceptionality, or religious affiliation.

*\*The attached one page summary was provided by researchers at York University, SickKids and University of Toronto Mississauga, working in conjunction with the TDSB.*