

Resolution on Traffic Safety & School Safe Zones

Introduced by: Lawrence Scott, Member-at-Large

Sponsored by: Vice President of Executive Affairs Jennifer Mecozzi, West District

Kathy Evans-Brown, East District

May 20, 2020

Whereas, the safety of our children is of paramount concern to the Buffalo Board of Education, administration, teachers, and families;

Whereas, New York State approved legislation (S.231/A.951) establishing speed zones in the City of Buffalo using cameras to record speeding violations;

Whereas, the current design and condition of the streets, sidewalks and lack of bicycle facilities in many of our schools zones and surrounding communities places our children at risk;

Whereas, from 2008 to 2018, 44 people were killed by vehicles while walking or bicycling on Buffalo streets;

Whereas, from a report produced by the University at Buffalo, from 2010 – 2011, children under the age of 18 were disproportionately hit by people driving cars, having been involved in over one-fourth (26.5%) of all pedestrian and bicycle crashes with motor vehicles while only accounting for 22.5% of the total population;

Whereas, neighborhoods that have faced systemic disinvestment – namely large portions of communities on the east and west sides of the city – disproportionately face challenges of income and access, to the effect that neighborhoods on the east side of Buffalo are home to 17,000 (49%) school aged children, and west side communities are home to 10,600 (45%) school aged children that live in families being paid less than poverty level wages, placing them at statistically greater risk of being hit by a car while walking or riding a bicycle;

Whereas, the Buffalo Public Schools with the highest rates of automobiles hitting people walking or cycling within a quarter mile of the school building include Emerson School of Hospitality PS302 (20 crashes), Academy School at 18A PS131 (19 crashes), Dr. Antonia Pantoja Community School of Excellence PS18 (17 crashes), The International Preparatory School PS198 (16 crashes), and Hutchinson Central Technical High School PS304 (15 crashes);

Whereas, the City of Buffalo has implemented 15 MPH school zones around all city schools and has documented, in just a small portion of these zones, over 10,000 vehicles daily speeding, thus putting our students' safety at risk;

Therefore, Let it Be Resolved; the Buffalo Board of Education requests the Buffalo Common Council to:

1. Maintain school safe zones and their enforcement at the current 15mph speed limit throughout the entire school day;
2. Form a joint working group between the Buffalo Public Schools and the City of Buffalo, in order to:
 - a. Establish a traffic safety plan to address the health and safety caused by current infrastructure surrounding all of our schools and present to the Board of Education before the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year to ensure that every student, regardless of circumstance, will be safe walking or bicycling to school;
 - b. Establish a financial plan to share revenue derived from the enforcement of school safe zones; and
 - c. Designate financial resources derived from the enforcement of school speed zones to the implementation of these plans to ensure every school has, at a minimum, high visibility crosswalks, safe bicycle facilities, well-maintained sidewalks and streets with design speeds that reflect the 15 MPH speed limit.