

Memorandum

City of Lawrence

Public Works Department

TO: David Cronin, City Engineer
CC: Charles Soules, Director of Public Works
Mark Thiel, Asst. Public Works Director
FROM: David Woosley, Transportation/Traffic Engineer
DATE: 30 June 2015
RE: School Zones

Based on recent comments from the public, it appears that there is a misunderstanding of a School Zone and a School Speed Limit. Some think that the roadway adjacent to a school should always have a reduced speed limit, and, as a result, think that the City does not have *School Zone's*. In fact, the City does post School Zone signing in advance of all elementary schools. The following provides a description of national standards and current practice in Lawrence for School Zones and School Reduced Speed Limits.

The current edition of the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)* does not require the establishment of School Zones or Reduced Speed Zones; however, it does provide criteria if School Zones and Reduced Speed Zones are established. The *MUTCD* defines a **School Zone** as, "a designated roadway segment approaching, adjacent to, and beyond school buildings or grounds, or along which school related activities occur." The sign that is used to designate a **School Zone** is the S1-1 shown here:



This sign is currently in place throughout Lawrence on each street approximately 150 feet in advance of a school and in advance of each officially designated school crosswalk.

In 1996, after collaboration with School District personnel, the City's *School Crossing Control Policy* was recommended for approval by the Traffic Safety Commission, and was approved by the City Commission. In accordance with the *Policy*, the **School Speed Limit** sign is used in conjunction with a **Flashing Beacon** at official school crosswalks where children are required to cross the street and are not protected by a Stop Sign or Traffic Signal. The sign that is used to designate a **School Speed Limit** is the S5-1 shown here:



There are currently approximately 40 Flashing Beacon/School Speed Limit assemblies throughout Lawrence.

In addition, Kansas Statutes permit cities to double the fine for speeding in a school zone; this has been the practice in Lawrence Municipal Court.

The subject of School Zones was raised at the recent Joint City/County/School Board Study Session. As a result, the School Board indicated that they would address this topic at a School Board Meeting and, depending on Board action, work with, or direct School District Staff to work with, City Staff to update the City's *School Crossing Control Policy*. City Staff is available to work with personnel from the School District at any time, and will be working to update the policy since it hasn't been updated since 2008, and there have been a number of changes that need to be reflected in the policy.