

# SCHOOL DISTRICT SLOWS TRAFFIC IN SCHOOL ZONES AS MUCH AS EIGHTY FIVE PERCENT



Like so many other school districts throughout the country, Vail School District in Vail, Arizona, was having its share of speed-related traffic issues to solve. Drivers frequently sped through school crossings in a hurry, as much as 15 miles per hour or more over the legal speed limit, posing serious risk to students on foot and in buses, as well as pedestrians and other drivers.

On one particular street where there are three school crossings within a short stretch of road, drivers would slow down for the first crossing but by the third they often sped up again. Several years ago, tragedy struck when a child was hit and died.

Vail School District is certainly not alone. According to [SAFE KIDS Worldwide](#), each year in the United States, at least 100 children are killed in collisions while walking to or from school. “We wanted an effective way to direct drivers’ attention back to the speed limit,” said Josh Billingsley, technology coordinator for District transportation, maintenance and safety.

The District purchased four ATS Shield 12 portable web-enabled radar speed signs, which they deploy in and around school zones to calm traffic and remind drivers to slow down. “Student safety is our top priority, so being able to enforce the 15-mph speed limit in school crossings by using the radar signs has helped slow traffic by almost 85 percent!” said Billingsley. The radar signs help drivers become aware of their speed when approaching the crosswalk. “Sometimes, drivers are not aware of what’s going on around them, and the flashing speed on the radar sign helps to bring their eyes back on the road.”



“The Shield radar signs slow traffic tremendously wherever we deploy them. We program the strobes to flash when someone goes above 25 miles per hour, and they are going to get your attention, even if you’re texting while driving.”

According to the District’s safety director Jerry Brown, moving the signs around also “changes it up”—a Shield may be redeployed as traffic patterns dictate, or when a school crossing guard reports an issue at a specific location. The crossing guards appreciate seeing the signs, and when they’re moved to other roads Brown receives frequent requests to bring them back.

Along with the radar speed signs, the District relies on the real-time reporting capabilities in TraffiCloud™ to monitor trends and identify issues before they become more serious. For example, they utilize the Compliance and Risk Report to track the highest and lowest percentages of speed compliance for a particular site and share the reports with area law enforcement so they can post additional officers to problematic roads.

“Our district safety director is retired Tucson PD. He notifies the police department and within days the officers are on patrol on the road or at the crosswalk, writing speeding tickets!”

“The nice thing about these radar signs is that they are mobile and we can move them to problem areas with ease. The batteries last about a month on a single charge and it only takes about a day to fully charge them.”

Billingsley agrees. “Ease of use is a big thing for us. The Shields are not big and bulky, and the batteries are amazing. The signs are super easy to deploy and redeploy wherever we have complaints—just grab the sign and take it to the next location. When a sign is installed we don’t have to worry about it for a while.”



### Community Reaction

“Overall, the feedback has been positive,” added Billingsley. “Residents really appreciate the signs. Occasionally we hear from those without kids who don’t like the Shields because they cause radar detectors to go crazy. But bus drivers love them, and parents who post on one particular web forum post their support for the effect they’ve had on traffic calming.”

By deploying Shield 12 radar speed signs and leveraging real-time traffic data and reports in TraffiCloud, Vail School District demonstrates its commitment to safety for students and makes roads safer for drivers and pedestrians alike.