From the Desk of Don Diglia

Superintendent, Shawnee Local Schools

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Dear Shawnee Families,

I would like to thank The Lima News for its coverage of our pedestrian safety efforts in the Saturday, November 7, 2026 article, “Crosswalk signals coming to Shawnee schools for pedestrian safety.” I would also like to share some additional information and recognize the people who have been the driving force behind this initiative.

We began this process about a year ago with an idea from Shawnee Township Trustee Joe Recker, Shawnee Township Police Chief Kohli, and former Shawnee Township Zoning Inspector Todd Lause. This partnership quickly grew, with Rebecca Phillips, Colleen Barry, and Megan Kinnear of the Allen County Regional Planning Committee leading the steering committee’s work on a School Travel Plan and Safe Routes to School grant application. I would also like to thank Shawnee Schools employees Leigh Ditto and Mike Bosh, along with our building principals, James Morris and Heather Patterson for their contributions. This group has been meeting monthly to move these efforts forward.

After a student was struck by a car while crossing the street on his way to school, the group’s long-term vision became especially important: improving student safety through sidewalks, crosswalks, and connections to nearby subdivisions.

As we develop the School Travel Plan, we are also preparing a Safe Routes to School grant application. This grant could provide up to $1 million for infrastructure improvements and $120,000 for non-infrastructure activities that support safe travel to school.

Thanks to the assistance of Hailey Robey from ODOT and Allen County Engineer Bryon Rhodes, Shawnee Township and Shawnee Schools secured funding through an Abbreviated Safety Grant recently approved by the Allen County Commissioners.

This $153,000 project will fund two rectangular rapid-flashing beacons at planned crosswalks on Zurmehly Road at Pro Drive and Seneca Drive, across from Shawnee High School and Shawnee Middle School. Federal funding will cover 90% of the project, with the remaining 10% shared by Shawnee Schools and Shawnee Township. We are hopeful the crosswalks will be completed during the spring or summer of 2027, before the new school year begins. Thank you to everyone who has contributed time, expertise, and support to this effort. These improvements are an important step toward making travel to and from school safer for our students.

Sincerely

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