

ARGYLE ISD POLICE DEPARTMENT

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JRE Arrival and Dismissal Safety Solutions

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Objective:

To present proposed solutions to improve the safety and efficiency of arrival and dismissal procedures at Jane Ruestmann Elementary (JRE) for students, staff, guardians, and motorists. The goal is to address current concerns and mitigate risks through a collaborative approach involving Argyle ISD PD, Belmont FWSD1, Northlake PD, Denton County, and other stakeholders.

I. Introduction

- **Purpose of Presentation:**
To identify the legal responsibilities for all affected entities and provide an overview of potential safety solutions for arrival and dismissal processes at JRE, with the aim of fostering a safe environment for all involved parties.
 - **Overview of Safety Concerns:**
Outline the specific risks and challenges observed during arrival and dismissal, including congestion, inadequate crossing guard coverage, and insufficient traffic control on both public and school property.
 - **Goal:**
Identify and propose solutions that can be implemented collaboratively among Belmont FWSD1, Argyle ISD, Denton County, and other stakeholders to enhance safety.
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To all stakeholders,

As we work collaboratively to improve the safety and efficiency of arrival and dismissal processes for Jane Ruestmann Elementary (JRE), it's important to address the scope of responsibility regarding the management and safety of both public roadways and school property. This is an area of significant concern for all involved, but there are legal frameworks in place that clarify which entities are accountable for public safety at both locations. Addressing this division ensures an effective plan can be developed to tackle these concerns.

Legal Responsibility for Public Roadways

According to Texas law, public roadway maintenance, police services, traffic control, and the provision of crossing guards fall under the responsibility of the entity that owns or manages the roadway. In this case, the roadways adjacent to JRE are managed and maintained by Belmont Fresh Water Supply District No. 1 (Belmont FWSD1). As such, it is Belmont FWSD1's responsibility to ensure that public safety services are provided on these roadways.

Supporting Legal Statutes

Texas Transportation Code:

- **Section 251.151:** Local governments, including water districts that own and maintain roadways, are legally obligated to oversee the management, maintenance, and control of these roads. This includes ensuring that necessary safety measures are in place.
- **Section 542.202:** Outlines that the governing body responsible for the road must authorize and manage traffic control efforts, including the provision of crossing guards, enforcement of traffic laws, and ensuring safe passage for pedestrians.

Legal Responsibility for District Staff and AISD PD

The role of Argyle ISD staff and Argyle ISD Police is limited to school property. While our staff and officers play an essential role in managing on-campus safety, our legal responsibilities do not extend to public roads. Argyle ISD Police and school staff are committed to doing everything possible within school property to ensure a safe arrival and dismissal process. However, public roadway safety falls solely under the jurisdiction and authority of the entity that owns and manages the roadway.

Supporting Legal Statutes

Texas Education Code:

- **Section 37.081:** The jurisdiction of a School District Peace Officer may include all territory in the boundaries of the school district and all property outside the boundaries of the district that is owned, leased, or rented by or otherwise under the control of the school district.
- **Section 37.102:** school district boards of trustees are authorized to establish rules and regulations for the safety and order on school property. The jurisdiction of these rules is clearly limited to district-owned property and does not extend to adjacent or nearby public streets or intersections. While districts have authority to manage traffic flow within their parking lots or drop-off/pick-up areas on school grounds, the code does not provide school districts or their employees with authority to direct or control traffic beyond school property.

These statutes clarify that Argyle ISD and its staff are not liable or mandated to oversee traffic control or police services on roads that are outside of district-owned/leased property.

Summary

Belmont FWSD1 is the governing body of the roadways around JRE.

Under the code, the governing body has the explicit power to regulate traffic using officers or traffic control devices, manage vehicle stopping and parking, designate school crossing zones, and employ school crossing guards. Since these roadways are not owned or managed by Argyle ISD, the responsibility for ensuring safe traffic operations and pedestrian crossings does not fall on school staff or the Argyle ISD Police Department. Instead, it is Belmont FWSD1's role to handle these aspects, including funding and organizing the necessary public safety measures, such as crossing guards and traffic enforcement officers, to maintain a safe environment around JRE.

While Belmont FWSD1 is responsible for managing the safety and operations of public roadways around JRE, Argyle ISD and the Argyle ISD Police Department hold the responsibility for ensuring safety and order on school property. The school district's jurisdiction includes establishing rules and managing traffic flow within its parking lots, driveways, and other areas within district-owned property. This encompasses organizing drop-off and pick-up procedures, ensuring proper parking enforcement, and maintaining pedestrian safety on school grounds.

Next Steps

Now that responsibilities have been defined, it should be the stakeholders mission to collaborate and leverage resources to achieve the shared goal. To initiate discussion, In partnership with Northlake PD, we've created a detailed action plan that outlines specific tasks based on each entity's areas of oversight. This coordinated effort aims to deliver a seamless and comprehensive approach to enhancing safety.

II. Proposed Solutions for Public Roadways (Belmont FWSD1)

A. Increase in Law Enforcement Presence and Traffic Control

1. Funding for Additional Officers on Public Roadways

- Belmont to fund additional NPD officers specifically assigned to arrival and dismissal times.
- Belmont to fund and oversee a program for hiring off-duty officers to manage traffic flow on public roads during arrival and dismissal.
- Purpose: Enhance public safety and traffic management on surrounding roadways during peak times.

2. Funding for Trained Crossing Guards

- Belmont to fund crossing guards for critical crosswalks on public roadways.
- Purpose: Ensure safe crossings for students and guardians, reduce the burden on school staff.

B. Collaboration and Agreements between Argyle ISD PD and Belmont FWSD1

3. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Belmont for Public Safety Service Provision

- Argyle ISD PD to enter an MOU with Belmont to serve as the primary public safety provider for roadways near JRE during arrival and dismissal.
- Belmont to fund the additional resources necessary to fulfill this role.

4. Agreement for AISD Staff to Maintain Crossing Guard Duties

- Belmont to enter an agreement with Argyle ISD to retain school staff in crossing guard roles.
- **Key Consideration:** Negotiation of compensation and management responsibilities for these duties.

C. Enhanced Traffic Flow Management

5. **Strategic Road Closures for Improved Traffic Flow**
 - Belmont to fund, set up, and tear down temporary road closures to streamline traffic flow around JRE.
 - Additional personnel may be needed to monitor and manage these closures effectively.

D. Traffic Reduction Initiatives (AISD)

7. **Staggered Arrival and Dismissal Schedule**
 - School to implement staggered timing to decrease the volume of traffic on public roads during peak hours.
 8. **Introduction of Bus Transportation Services**
 - Provide bus transportation for JRE students to decrease the number of vehicles on the road.
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III. Proposed Solutions for JRE Property (AISD)

A. Restoring Previous Traffic Management Plans

1. **Double Stacking on School Property as per Initial Denton County Plan**
 - Request Denton County to honor the previously approved double stacking plan on campus.
 - **Justification:** Public safety risks have increased as a result of the current changes, and the original plan may provide a better solution.
 - **Note:** Additional discussions may be required to finalize this option.

B. Infrastructure Modifications

2. **Expansion of Internal Roadways to Allow Double Stacking**
 - Expand internal roadways on JRE campus to support a double-stack traffic configuration, allowing more vehicles to queue within school property and reducing overflow onto public roads.

C. Ongoing Process Improvements

3. **Continuous Internal Adjustments to the Arrival and Dismissal Process**
 - Regular evaluation and adjustment of internal procedures to improve the safety and efficiency of arrival and dismissal.

- Use insights from daily observations and stakeholder feedback to identify and implement improvements.
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IV. Future Considerations

- **Reassessment upon the Opening of Cleveland Gibbs:**
All proposed solutions will be revisited and reassessed when Cleveland Gibbs opens, as this may impact traffic patterns and public safety needs in the area surrounding JRE.
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V. Next Steps

- **Initial Review and Feedback:**
Share this document with all involved stakeholders (Belmont FWSD1, Argyle ISD, Denton County, local law enforcement agencies, etc.) for review and input.
 - **Collaborative Decision-Making:**
Facilitate a collaborative meeting to discuss the feasibility of each proposed solution and establish a timeline for implementation where applicable.
 - **Implementation Plan:**
Develop a clear, actionable plan for implementing selected solutions, with designated roles, responsibilities, and funding sources.
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VI. Conclusion

We are in this TOGETHER:

Achieving a safer and more efficient arrival and dismissal process at JRE requires the continued collaboration of Belmont FWSD1, Argyle ISD, Denton County, and other key stakeholders. By working together, each entity can leverage its unique responsibilities and resources to address safety concerns effectively. This unified effort ensures a positive and lasting impact on the well-being of students, staff, and the surrounding community.