



# JAMES BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL

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January 11, 2023

Greetings, Bulldog Nation!

Here we are at the beginning of a new semester, another under more “normal” circumstances than the recent pandemic years allowed. As I welcomed staff back on Monday and students back yesterday, I saw lots of smiling faces and reveled in the optimism I sensed about this school year and the semester ahead.

As we start the new semester, I want to share with you how we are working to ensure that these good vibes are not temporary or fleeting, but rather, the norm, because I know that sustaining a positive, safe, and inclusive campus culture is profoundly important to your child’s overall well-being and impacts their academic success. I’ve highlighted some of our efforts below, but **please check out the [Spring 2023 Student Updates video](#) we shared with students this morning for additional insight.**

**SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL):** SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. Bowie sees social and emotional learning (SEL) as an integral part of your child’s education and development. Teachers are increasingly embedding SEL strategies into their lessons, but this year Bowie is continuing its commitment to two campus-wide SEL initiatives.

- **Regulate, Relate, and Reason**

- Dr. Bruce Perry’s Neurosequential Model of Education (NME) aims to educate staff and students about brain development and developmental trauma and then to further teach them how to apply that knowledge to their work in the classroom. A fundamental understanding of Perry’s work is that while stress and trauma can hinder learning and negatively affect behavior there are explicit strategies that students and teachers can employ to help regulate emotions which in turn allows them to achieve relational safety. Once our bodies feel physical and relational safety, only then can we effectively “reason,” or engage in more complex thought through the brain’s cortex.
- Our wonderful English teachers are facilitating lessons about NME in their classes, so that students understand how they are impacted by stress and trauma and appreciate the value of regulating their emotions. They and the rest of the faculty continue to receive NME training during professional development days. We are also planning a parent and staff book study this semester of [What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing](#). The book is formatted as a conversation between Dr. Bruce Perry and Oprah Winfrey as they discuss the neuroscience of trauma and stress, its impact on individuals, and its connection to the larger societal challenges such as poverty and racism. There are a few spots left, so reach out to

Bowie's School Improvement Facilitator RuthAnn Widner ([ruth.widner@austinisd.org](mailto:ruth.widner@austinisd.org)) if you would like to join the conversation!

- **Speak Up** - The second area of SEL focus this year continues to be Speak Up. Our social studies teachers have taught their students [four Speak Up strategies](#), so that students are prepared to respond when others demonstrate prejudice, bias, or discrimination within our community. A fundamental understanding of this approach is that hurtful words and actions will likely escalate if not quickly quelled. As part of this conversation, we share the district's harassment policy so it's clear to students that sustained efforts to target anyone on the basis of their race, religion, skin color, accent, gender, gender identity, disability, and other factors will not be tolerated and should always be reported to an administrator or another trusted adult.

**COURSE SELECTION FOR THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR:** Over the next few weeks, current Bowie students will be meeting with the counseling team and hearing from their teachers about choosing classes for the 2023-24 school year. You will be receiving additional information about course selection. For now, there are three things we suggest you and your student do together before deciding on next year's classes.

- (1) Preview the [List of Bowie Courses](#)
- (2) Explore the [course videos available on Bowie.austinisd.org](#)
- (3) Complete the [Time Management Form](#) using the [Estimated Homework Commitment](#)

**INCOMING 9TH GRADE SHOWCASE:** From 5:30-7:30 pm on Wednesday, January 18, Bowie will host the Incoming 9th Grade Showcase. Current 8th graders and their parents who are in Bowie's attendance zone are invited to explore the Bowie campus and visit with teachers and students about various required and elective courses, special programs, and extracurricular activities.

**ARRIVING ON TIME TO CLASS:** Being on time to class isn't always easy for students. Socializing is a natural and important part of development and having only six minutes to get from class to class means that sometimes students have to forgo time with friends between classes. However, research indicates that when students miss out on important directions or concepts at the beginning of class, their learning suffers. Plus, late arriving students are disruptive to the learning environment and cause teachers to waste time repeating instructions or correcting the attendance record. While most students are punctual, we are working to reduce tardiness overall. Thank you for checking your child's attendance in Parent Self-Serve from time to time for any patterns of tardiness and letting your child know that you expect them to arrive to class on time.

Go Dawgs!

Mark Robinson  
Principal  
James Bowie High School