



# JAMES BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL

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December 9, 2021

Greetings, Bulldog Nation!

**REFLECTIONS ON CAMPUS SAFETY** - There is no greater burden shouldered by campus leaders than that of keeping students safe. In the wake of rumors circulating in social media earlier this week about a possible gun threat and after shenanigans of a rogue substitute teacher last Friday -- all in the context of the recent school shooting in Michigan -- I recognize that some in our community are feeling particularly anxious or on extra high-alert when it comes to the safety and security of students. I want to take this opportunity to offer some information and reassurance so you are positioned to have fruitful discussions with your child about their day-to-day safety.

While the 1980s-design of the campus does not allow for an impenetrable perimeter, there have been a number of changes taken over the last few years to inhibit access to the campus. Some of the changes include: reduction in the number of entry points, locking of exterior doors, installation of one-way film on exterior doors, installation of security cameras, and requiring identification badges for anyone on campus. Additionally, visitors must present ID and complete a Raptor background check in the main office before entering the campus. Teachers are also asked to keep their doors locked or to use a door magnet device that allows for anyone with or without a key to quickly lock the door in an emergency. While there has been some resistance among students to wear their lanyards and badges, doing so is what enables students and staff to identify someone who is not authorized to be on-campus. The effectiveness of this system was proven this week when a former student entered the campus without properly checking in, but was quickly spotted and escorted off-campus.

Our campus administrators and counselors routinely work in close collaboration, day-in and day-out, with district leadership and the Austin ISD Police Department in assessing and responding to threats of a variety of natures. These professionals are highly trained and knowledgeable about best practices. I feel that it is important to convey to you that it is not standard practice to notify parents and guardians of each and every concern reported, particularly if those concerns are based on rumors proven to be untrue or of no threat to the wider student population. To do so would potentially hinder investigations, unnecessarily contribute to angst and disrupt learning, and particularly if there is social media involved, possibly fuel the efforts of those engaging in making false claims. There can also be issues of confidentiality that would make sharing information inappropriate. If your child is ever in danger, our approach is to first prioritize securing your child's safety and then communicate information to you. Your trust in this process is what enables us to keep our resources focused on the students and the issues at hand.

Responding to heightened anxieties has become a top priority for our leadership teams over the past few months. While we believed that there would be repercussions from the Covid disruptions and on-going social and political discord, we didn't know until the return to school this fall how it would be manifested. As we saw behaviors not typical to Bowie, such as vandalism and conflicts between

students, we knew we needed to take action and we began developing a response plan. On January 4, 2022, our staff will participate in professional development to help equip students in the development of strategies to better self-regulate, relate to others in a positive way, and to reason their way through challenges. Our “Regulate, Relate, and Reason” strategies will then be incorporated into classroom practices and explicitly taught to students in a series of social and emotional learning lessons during the spring semester. Additionally, because almost every conflict on our campus involves some component of social media misuse, we will also be engaging students in digital citizenship lessons. All of these efforts are grounded in neuroscience and the understanding that until our students are mentally healthy, they are more likely to struggle emotionally, socially, and academically.

To assume responsibility for your child’s well-being is both an honor and a heavy responsibility. While I cannot offer you unconditional guarantees regarding your child’s safety, I can offer my sincerest commitment to making Bowie safe. I am grateful for your support in this work and for my staff who continue to be vigilant in safeguarding our students. I have been in conversation with many of you in recent days about these issues and always welcome your feedback.

**8TH GRADE DAWG SHOW** - On Monday, December 13, Bowie will welcome and host 8th graders who are zoned to Bowie and who currently attend Gorzycki, Bailey, Small, Covington, Kealing, or Lively middle schools. Eighth graders will spend the morning participating in campus tours, a high school student panel, team-building activities, and a Bowie pep-rally. This Dawg Show for the 8th graders in our vertical team will provide a glimpse of high school life before students start signing up for their 2022-23 high school courses in late January. It also allows our current Bowie students to show off those great leadership skills they’ve been honing! We are excited to welcome our future Bulldogs to campus!

**LEVEL CHANGE APPLICATIONS** - Students enrolled in advanced level classes may apply to change to the academic level of the course for the second semester. The Level-Change Request Google form will be made available on the BLEND Bowie Community Course on Monday, December 13, 2021 and is due at 4:00 PM on Monday, January 3, 2022.

**SEMESTER EXAMS & INCENTIVES** - Semester exams begin on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 (see the [Fall 2021 Semester Exam Schedule](#)). The exam incentives eligibility list will be available on the BLEND Bowie Community Course later today. Students with questions about incentives or who believe they were incorrectly left off of the eligibility list may seek assistance during FIT or their lunch on Friday, December 10 in room C102. Students who are eligible to use an incentive(s) must submit the Incentive Claim form by 2:00 PM on Friday, December 17. Click [HERE](#) for more information about the exam incentives procedures. Please remember that students should not be picked up earlier than 1:35 PM on exam days as calling students from class is very disruptive to other students in the classroom who are taking their exams.

**COUNSELOR NEWS** - The counselors want to remind all seniors that graduation cap and gown orders are due on December 15! Parents of seniors can use [THIS LINK](#) to order their child’s cap and gown, as well as optional graduation items such as stationery and keepsakes. The “Cap, Gown, and Tassel Unit” is \$45 and can be located on page 3 by clicking the green “continue shopping” buttons at the bottom of each page. Check out the [Bulldog Counseling News](#) for other important updates from the counseling team.

**DISTRICT ANNOUNCEMENTS:** AVID is hosting an AVID Family Night at 6:00 PM on Thursday, December 9 via [Zoom](#). All families (AVID and non-AVID) across the district are invited to participate (see the [flyers](#)). During the meeting, GEAR UP will provide information about college/university opportunities and options.

Finally, with many AISD students living in food insecure households, access to healthy food may be challenging when the district is closed. Families can use the community resources below to find free meals in their area while AISD offices and schools are closed for the winter break:

- [Central Texas Food Bank - Find Food Now](#)
- [United Way for Greater Austin - ConnectATX](#)
- [Texas Health and Human Services](#) - Call 2-1-1 or (877) 541-7905 to speak to a live operator.

Go Dawgs!

Mark Robinson  
Principal  
James Bowie High School