



JAMES BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL

SPECIAL EDITION - Vandalism Alert

September 16, 2021

Parents and Guardians,

Over the last couple of weeks, we've experienced a disturbing amount of vandalism across the campus. The vandalism at Bowie is mostly in student restrooms and has included removing or bending stall doors, ripping off all of the soap, as well as both types of paper dispensers from the walls or stalls, and partially dismantling or disabling toilets and urinals. There has also been an increased amount of graffiti or stickers placed on walls and windows around campus. Some of this behavior is associated with a trend on Instagram and TikTok referred to as "devious licks" or "diabolical licks" that encourage students to steal or destroy things at school and then brag about it on social media.

The extent of this destructive behavior is distressing for our staff and students and is very costly, time-consuming, and disruptive to learning. The housekeeping staff is overstretched as they work to clean up and repair facilities while managing the routine maintenance and cleaning protocols, and students and staff are becoming increasingly frustrated as bathrooms become inaccessible because of damage. All of this of course during a pandemic when frequent handwashing and sanitation are part of our public health and safety response plan. Additionally, we have had to assign our teachers additional monitoring duties, taking them away from planning, prep, and working with their students.

We have, or will be, taking a number of steps to curb the behavior, including:

- addressing vandalism on announcements, encouraging good behavior, and applying the "see something, say something" standard
- increased staff sweeps of restrooms and teacher monitoring duty assignments
- limiting restroom use to one student at a time from a classroom with a sign-out system
- meeting with student leaders to discuss the connection between vandalism, school culture, and school pride and enlist their help by:
 - setting a good example by helping keep the building and grounds clean
 - spreading the message that our students deserve to be in a vandalism-free environment
 - leveraging their influence with their teammates and peers to help prevent and redirect negative behaviors

Students engaging in vandalism should be aware that we are continuing to increase the frequency of restroom checks and hallway monitoring cameras to identify those involved. In addition, students and families should be aware that when the individuals engaging in vandalism are caught in addition to disciplinary consequences, families will be asked to provide restitution for necessary repairs.

Families, we need your support in our efforts to eliminate the destruction of our campus. Please talk with your student about school spirit, pride, culture, and how fortunate we are to have such a fantastic school. Our kids deserve to learn in a well-kept vandalism-free building. Please emphasize the importance of treating our campus and grounds with respect, as it is the result of the dedication and sacrifice of our community members. Our message to students is this school building is a gift to the students in our community and we want everyone to have a safe, comfortable learning environment. Monitoring your child's social media and being aware of what is in their backpack or car on a regular basis is also encouraged.

Finally, we want YOU! We are seeking applicants for a campus hall monitor ("Security Guard") position that has been unfilled for several months. If you or someone you know is available to serve in this capacity, please apply [HERE](#) or reach out to Joel Espinoza (joel.espinoza@austinisd.org) for more information about the job responsibilities. We are also desperately in need of substitute teachers at Bowie as teachers are currently giving up their planning and conference time daily to cover classes for teachers who are off campus for personal or professional reasons. To learn more about becoming a substitute teacher in Austin ISD click [HERE](#).

With appreciation,

Mark Robinson, Principal