



James Bowie High School

❖ Pride In Performance ❖

Thursday, September 13, 2018

Dear Bowie High School Community,

As you may know, the JBHS attendance incentive program for reserved senior painted parking spaces has received a lot of attention to start this school year. This is our third year of this initiative, which has grown exponentially since its inception. For example, in just this year alone, the number of seniors who qualified and chose to claim a reserved parking space based on attendance their junior year has grown from 143 painted spaces in 17/18 to 271 in the 18/19 school year. We have seen an increase in average daily attendance since we started tracking attendance at JBHS in 2011/12 from 93.76% to 95.93% in the 2017/18 school year. This is significant since even at the highest rate of 96% last year, JBHS still lost over \$900,000 in funding from TEA for the 2018 fiscal year.

The Bowie High School Painted Parking Space Attendance Incentive Program allows students to earn the privilege of painting a reserved parking space their senior year, based on their average daily attendance during their junior year. This year students with less than 16 total class period absences were allowed to select a parking space of their choice and secure it by purchasing a \$50 reserved parking permit. Student designs are submitted for review. Creativity is encouraged, however, messages must be “school appropriate.” Designs are screened for imagery and references that are prohibited as lewd, vulgar, inflammatory, threatening, or reference illegal activity. Bowie High School has also held a consistent standard of “no religious imagery” as JBHS is unable to endorse or advance a religion through a school program. In hindsight, it is clear that our first mistake was not communicating this upfront. Therefore, in the future, a checklist of what is and is not allowed will be added to the guidelines for next year.

We will also be making adjustments to the approval process. In the past, assistant principals reviewed student submissions and provided individual feedback to students. We will now assemble a committee to review and archive all submissions. The committee will consist of campus staff, JBHS administration, as well as representatives from the district. The reason that any design is not approved will be identified and students will have the opportunity to re-submit a proposal.

At this time, we are in the process of conducting our beginning of the year audit to ensure that the parking spaces that were painted were the parking space designs that were approved. We have found a number of discrepancies and are in the process of addressing those by speaking to students and parents. Unfortunately, we did not communicate the process well which created confusion. In the future, this step will be clearly announced as part of the process and happen before school starts. After painting is complete, spaces will be photographed and cataloged, and any modifications will result in forfeit of the reserved space.

I apologize for the alarm that the recent reporting about the Bowie High School Painted Parking Space Attendance Incentive Program may have caused. Clearly, we have learned in hindsight that additional clear communication about the expectations and deliberate, decisive action is required in its annual implementation to avoid speculation and confusion. Bowie High School, AISD, and I respect, understand, and welcome diversity and free expression as an asset within the school community. We are open to feedback and committed to getting this right for our students.

Sincerely,

Mark Robinson
Principal
James Bowie High School

A Recognized School of Excellence

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