

August 23, 2022

Gateway College Prep Families,

I wanted to take a minute to address an issue that has gained momentum with each passing day and is affecting our school community. The concerns over our arrival and dismissal procedures have caused some distress, and I wanted to take a moment to explain the reasons we have these procedures in place and help explain why things feel “different” from years past. Almost every school in the state is changing the way they conduct their drop off and pick up procedures as a state reaction to the devastating events that occurred in the Uvalde school shooting. Some neighboring districts have had surprise security audits from day one of this school year, all in an attempt to improve security and to provide a safe and secure school environment. We have also had a district safety audit and have sat in countless meetings with local law enforcement, our administration team, as well as traffic engineers in an attempt to craft the most feasible plan for our school.

In the mornings, our line runs pretty swiftly once we begin unloading cars at 7:15am when our elementary staff duties begin. The line does back-up prior to that, so your assistance in pre-planning your home departure time in correlation to your school arrival time is greatly appreciated. We are unloading all students quicker than we have in the past, so we know there is benefit to our current arrival system even if it might not feel that way to some. We have incorporated the parent drop off option at Westinghouse Sports Plex (WSP) to help our families out as well. Our handbook has always stated the expectation that students need to be picked up by 4:30 pm, that is nothing new. However, in years past despite that expectation, parents were still picking students up beyond that time into the late evening; which is a huge safety concern, as those students were on our campus, unsupervised and free to wander about the school. In an attempt to provide a secure campus, we are asking for your help in assisting us with meeting that expectation. In doing so, this creates more traffic/vehicles in our dismissal traffic line. We have had many of you reach out to either express your concerns or offer suggestions—which we appreciate as we collaborate about what’s best for our school. We have discussed many options in order to keep your children safe and accounted for. It has been suggested to bring back last year’s plan to allow students to be picked up past 4:30 pm, but given the safety expectations we now have, things had to change.

I know our current practices are difficult for some, but please remember that we are constantly observing, reviewing, and discussing our plans in order to create the best solution for our campus. It is historically accurate to expect the first couple of weeks of school to be a bit chaotic. The most recent severe weather has created additional challenges and delays at dismissal beyond beginning of year delays. That said, however, we ask that everyone be respectful of each other and remember to be kind and show grace. We’ve heard talks about protests and student walk-outs, but please remember we are all setting an example for our children. We appreciate your support as we model teamwork to show them how to handle difficult and challenging situations. Gateway College Prep is an incredible place, so let’s not forget why this is the best choice for your child’s education.

We distribute the latest updates via our school app and will also be posting them to our school website. Please let us know if you are having difficulty with accessing either one, as we want to make sure you can stay up-to-date with our campus news/updates.

Again, we thank you for your patience, partnership, and understanding as we process through this journey together.

Respectfully,
Donna LeJeune