DALLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS – SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS FAQS

On December 11th, the City was informed by Dallas County Schools (DCS) that due to their dire financial situation, the agency would cease operating the School Crossing Guard Program after January 31. On December 18, the DCS Board voted on this action.

On December 14th, the City sent a letter to DCS formally requesting payment to the City of outstanding financial obligations, including an accurate accounting of the amounts owed. The City also requested that all equipment for operation of the school crossing guard program be transferred to the City.

How is the City involved with Dallas County Schools?
Prior to 2012, the Dallas Police Department operated and managed the school crossing guard program. In May 2012, a joint proposal for a Child Safety Program was developed with DCS. DCS agreed to provide administrative and operational oversight for the school crossing guard program through an Inter-Local Agreement (ILA) with the City. The City also agreed, through another ILA and a new ordinance, to allow DCS to implement the stop arm enforcement program.

Who is responsible for providing school crossing guards?
The City of Dallas is required by State law to provide for a school crossing guard program. Dallas County, Dallas Independent School District (DISD), and the State of Texas do not have a responsibility to provide a school crossing guard program.

RESPONSIBILITIES

DCS – School Crossing Guards
- Fund, manage, and operate school crossing guard program
- Encourage Dallas County to adopt state authorized $1.50 vehicle registration fee for Child Safety Trust Fund

City of Dallas – School Crossing Guards
- Maintain school crossing guard program and provide feedback to DCS as applicable
- Forward child safety revenue to DCS as offset to full costs

DCS – Stop Arm Enforcement
- Operate cameras, issue citations, collect fines and provide support for citizen appeals/inquires and provide activity reports to the City
- Maintain escrow account, and pay the City administrative fee for adjudication process

City of Dallas – Stop Arm Enforcement
- Maintain City Ordinance to allow for DCS video enforcement
- Hear citation appeals at Municipal Court

What is the cost of this program?
When the City ran the school crossing guard program, the range of the program cost was $2.2 - $3 million. Since DCS took over the program, they have increased the number of school crossing guards, the hourly rate paid to the crossing guards, and provided a benefits package. The current estimate to run the program, including the continuation of benefits and pay rate, is $5 million.

What funding sources are available to support the school crossing guard program?
The City currently collects approximately $600,000 annually in Child Safety Fees, provided through the Texas Local Government Code, and has been transferring these fees to DCS per the ILA. Dallas County is allowed by law to impose a fee of up to $1.50 on vehicle registrations for child safety. The fee would produce an estimated $3.4 million in annual revenue. The City of Dallas would receive an estimated 50% of the County fee revenues, approximately $1.5 million.
If Dallas County adopts the optional fee, and with the $600,000 in other Child Safety Fees currently being collected, there would still be a gap of approximately $2.9 million to fully fund the school crossing guard program annually.

Does DCS provide school crossing guards for other ISDs in Dallas County?
In the other 15 school districts in Dallas County, either the district provides for school crossing guards, or the cities provide the service. Like the City of Dallas, other cities are eligible to receive Child Safety funds provided through State law, and may use those funds to offset the costs of the program. For school districts with schools in the City of Dallas, DCS provides school crossing guards.

What is the plan going forward?
The City Council was briefed on January 3 on the current situation, as well as the plan to develop a potential child safety partnership between the City, County, DISD, State and other regional partners to fund and manage the school crossing guard program.