

**DEPARTMENT:** Police Department

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** William P. McManus, Chief of Police

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Citywide

**SUBJECT:** School Bus Arm Camera Program Update

**SUMMARY:**

During the June 2018 Public Safety Committee meeting, the Department provided an update on the status of the school bus camera program. In response to concerns expressed by the Committee related to the failure of participating school districts to earn revenue since the inception of the program and complaints regarding the existing citation and appeals process, the SAPD met with school district officials on July 25 and September 14 to discuss potential solutions. As a result of these meetings, school district officials have committed to strengthen public education and communication to minimize complaints and to examine the terms of its existing contracts for program administration.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Program Results**

The table below provides the combined program results for each participating school district for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. It is important to note that to date none of the school districts have received any revenue from fines collected since the inception of the program.

District	Buses w/Camera	Citations	Fines Assessed	Fines Collected	% Fines Collected	District Revenue
Northeast	391	24,863	\$6,801,400.00	\$3,127,211.50	46%	\$0
South San	36	2,228	\$632,525.00	\$283,182.50	45%	\$0
Southside	45	1,010	\$287,190.00	\$107,941.00	38%	\$0
Southwest	113	1,024	\$292,000.00	\$103,397.00	35%	\$0
Judson	159	947	\$256,750.00	\$100,485.00	39%	\$0

**Ordinance Requirements**

The authorizing ordinance granting school districts the ability to implement a bus camera citation program was approved by City Council on June 30, 2016 and establishes the following requirements:

- Video of violation must be reviewed by independent third party
- Written notice of violation must be mailed to owner within 30 days of violation
- School districts must appoint independent hearing examiners
- Person must be given opportunity to appeal up to 30 days from date notice received
- No arrest warrants may be issued, violations will not appear on driving records
- Outstanding fines may not be reported to a collection agency
- Fine may not exceed \$300; districts may assess a \$25 if person fails to respond or pay
- School districts must submit an annual report to the SAPD by July of each year

## Concerns

Since the inception of the program, there have been numerous concerns expressed by individuals cited for violations due to:

- Lack of public communication/education regarding program
- Confusion/lack of information provided with citation
- Difficulty resolving/appealing citations
- Lack of school district point of contact

Over the last two years, the City Attorney's Office has contacted the contractor to instruct the contractor to remove logos and language from its citation letters that create the impression that the citation has been issued by the City. In addition, the City advised the contractor to remove language that threatened violators with excessive penalties and the possible execution of warrants for failure to pay the fines.

Nonetheless, each school district recognizes the importance of implementing improvements that create a citation and appeals process with enhanced communication and establishing a more robust public outreach campaign to educate the public on the purpose of the program and outline the appeals process for those that receive citations. The table below provides an overview of the features of the appeals process utilized by each district. Judson ISD and Southwest ISD did not provide confirmation regarding their respective appeals process.

	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Party Video Review</b>	<b>District Police Video Review</b>	<b>Notice of Violation within 30 Days</b>	<b>Independent Hearing Examiner</b>	<b>Board Approved Adjudication Process</b>	<b>30 Days to Appeal</b>
SAISD		X	X	X	X	X
NEISD	X		X	X	X	X
South San	X		X	X	X	X
Southside	X		X	X		X

## Improvements

The participating school districts are working in collaboration to create a uniform appeals process and have indicated that program information will be posted prominently on district websites to strengthen communication and customer service.

Most importantly, the Department recommends amending the existing ordinance to require that each school district designate a school district official to serve as a local point of contact to address questions and concerns that residents and violators may have in the future and that citation language include the contact information for the designated school district official.

### **Program Status**

NEISD, the largest participating school district, confirmed that it has terminated its contract with the contractor and will suspend its citation program for the 2018-2019 school year. The remaining school districts plan to continue their respective programs.

The San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) implemented a bus camera program this school year and provided an overview of its program, which is administered by American Traffic Solutions (ATS), during the September 14 meeting coordinated by SAPD with the superintendents of the participating school districts. Both the terms of the contract and the services offered to SAISD differ significantly from the agreements negotiated by the other districts as detailed below:

#### *Revenue*

SAISD will control all revenue disbursements generated from citations with monies collected being sent directly to the school district. ATS will invoice the school district monthly for its share of the revenue. Under the ATS revenue model, SAISD will receive 15 percent of citation collections in the first year, with the percentage increasing each year to 35 percent by year five. Revenue percentages are determined by the level of additional safety and security features chosen.

#### *Equipment & Services*

In addition to camera equipment, each SAISD bus will be equipped with Wi-Fi capability that allows students to complete homework and other assignments during the commute to and from campus. Students will also be issued electronic identification cards that will help ensure that students board the bus and disembark at the correct bus stop location.

Buses will also be equipped with GPS technology to monitor mileage and the routes that drivers travel to better manage fuel consumption and costs. SAISD will also be able to ensure drivers are efficiently driving their buses, observing speed limits and staying on their scheduled routes.

**Next Steps**

Participating school districts will continue to develop enhanced communication and outreach plans to effectively address the identified concerns. Several districts have also expressed interest in developing an interlocal agreement to piggy-back on the contract executed between SAISD and ATS. Discussions among the districts are ongoing and will require approval from each respective district's school board.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact. The City receives no revenue from the program.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Public Safety Committee approve the continuation of the authorizing ordinance with the suggested amendments for consideration by City Council. The Department will remain in communication with participating school districts to monitor progress and provide and update to this committee in early 2019.