



Crossing Guard Program Discussion

Renee Callaway, Assistant Director of Traffic Engineering

Alex Stewart, Crossing Guard Supervisor West

Niko Magallon, Crossing Guard Supervisor East

Crossing Guard Program Discussion

1. Program & Policy Review
2. RESJI Analysis Background
3. Identified Policy Issues
4. Policy Next Steps
5. Middle School Students & Start/End Times
6. Location Change Recommendations



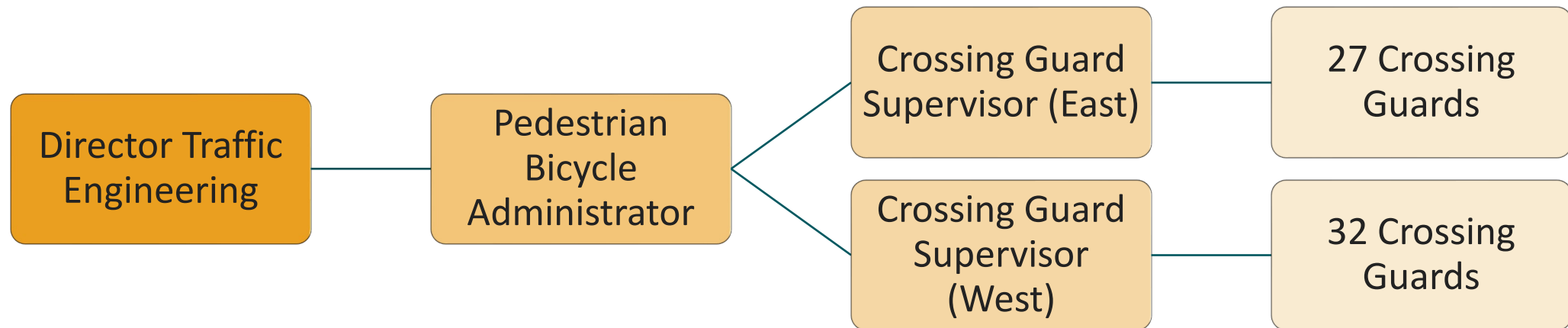
What is the Crossing Guard Program?

Madison's Crossing Guard Program is an integral element in supporting active transportation to and from elementary school.

- The City's adult school crossing guards play an important role in the lives of children who walk or bicycle to school by helping children safely cross the street at key locations.
- The presence of trained adult crossing guards can lead to more parents feeling comfortable about their children walking or bicycling to school.
- Crossing guards also serve as a role model helping children develop the skills necessary to cross streets safely at all times.



Crossing Guard Staffing



Crossing Guard Policy History

1960s

- Developed City's school crossing protection policies
- Criteria accepted by Common Council

1975

- Common Council requested reevaluation
- Lengthy review – minor changes made
- Recommendations based on:
 - Criteria detail
 - Degree of hazard
 - Provide comparison

2014

- Pedestrian Bicycle Motor Vehicle Commission requested review of criteria
- Reviewed criteria
 - Madison's criteria found to be one of the best in the country

2016

- Last amended criteria to:
 - Notify neighborhood
 - School Traffic Safety Committee for requests

2022-23

- Transportation Commission request to do RESJI review of Policy

Current Policy & Process

Request for new assignment

- By: Elementary School Principal
- To: School Traffic Safety Committee (STSC)

TE Study – Collect data

- Elementary school students
- Available gaps
- Vehicle speed
- Crash history
- Physical conditions of location
- Typically collect data 1x Fall and 1x Spring on better weather days

Determine Locations to Review for Discontinuation

- Review annual count data
- For locations with low numbers review several years data
- Determine list of locations for further study

TE Study – Collect data

- Elementary school students
- Available gaps
- Vehicle speed
- Crash history
- Physical conditions of location
- Typically collect data 1x Fall and 1x Spring on better weather days

Crossing Guard Policy

- <https://www.cityofmadison.com/trafficEngineering/documents/ScHxngProtectCriteria2016.pdf>

Hazard Rating

>20 points ≥25
elementary
students

- Mark as School Crossing

>30 points ≥25
elementary
students

- Install Flashing Beacons

>40 points ≥25
elementary
students

- Assign Crossing Guard

<30 points <15
elementary
students

- Discontinue existing Crossing Guard location

School Traffic Safety Committee

MMSD

- Office of Safety & Security
- Transportation

City

- Traffic Engineering
- Parking
- Police Department

Other

- Wisconsin Bike Fed (SRTS Program)
- First Student, Inc. (Bus Company)

RESJI Analysis Considerations

- What factors associated with the crossing guard policy **might be affecting communities of color and/or low-income populations differently?**
- What are **potential unintended consequences** of current policy or potential changes to the policy? What **benefits or burdens** may result from current policy or changes?
 - (Consider social, economic, health and environmental impacts)
- Are there **potential disproportionate impacts** on communities of color or low-income communities related to this policy?
- Who could **benefit from changes** to the current policy? Who would **benefit from keeping** policy the same?
- Who would be burdened from changes to the current policy? Who would **benefit** from keeping policy the same?

RESJI Analysis Team

- Pedestrian Bicycle Administrator
- Pedestrian Bicycle Outreach Specialist
- Crossing Guard Supervisors
- Planner/Neighborhood Resource Team Leader
- MMSD Safety & Security Director
- Crossing Guard
- Traffic Engineer
- Wisconsin Bike Fed Safe Routes to School Coordinator

RESJI Team - Items for Discussion

1. Total number of students required for a new location
2. Hazard score points awarded for number of children crossing
3. Other Factors Points & Racial Equity & Social Justice Considerations
4. Location Discontinuation Policy
5. Pilot Locations
6. Distance Between Crossings
7. Infrastructure Improvements
8. Private Schools
9. Other Issues

Requirements: Number of Children Crossing

- Policy requires **25 children** crossing at a K-5 school as well as a high hazard rating to recommend a crossing guard (15 for K-2 school)
- Locations where crossing guards cross a mix of students walking, biking and being dropped off will have the highest numbers
 - These tend to be near the school entrance
 - Example: Leopold Elementary averages over 100 students per shift
- Locations that are further away from the school tend to only cross students walking and biking
 - Example: Commonwealth at Allen averaged 30 students per shift this school year in a very walk/bike friendly neighborhood

Hazard Rating – Total Children Crossing

- Hazard rating process awards points based on number of children crossing
- A crossing guard location is recommended if hazard rating is greater than 40 points at crossing used by at least 25 elementary students during the peak crossing hour.
- If the school has only grades K-2, then recommend the assignment of an adult guard when the rating is greater than 30 points at a crossing used by at least 15 elementary students during the peak crossing hour.

Total Children	Hazard Points
1-5	1
6-9	2
10-14	3
15-19	4
20-24	5
25-29	6
30-34	10
35-39	15
40-49	20
50-74	30
75 & over	35

Total Children Crossing Requirement

Discussion:

- Is 25 the right minimum number to recommend a crossing? Many of our locations operate below that number.
- Would it be better to have a lower minimum for locations that are focused primarily on students walking and biking?
- Is it confusing to award points towards the hazard rating for total numbers of students while also having a minimum requirement?
- Should points be only for numbers over the minimum required or at a threshold that does add hazard?
- If this is a hazardous crossing will there be that many students crossing before a Crossing Guard is present?
- Should it be based on potential students in area?

Total Children Crossing Requirement

- **Discussion:** Should there be consideration for the number of students who are walking without an adult?
 - Takes time for parents to feel comfortable with new crossing and allowing children to walk/bike alone.
 - Some families have less flexibility to walk with their student.
 - Some children walk with older children.
 - What about when many students are crossing after being driven to school?
- **Discussion:** Should the number be different for K -2 schools (15 vs 25) and should that be higher or lower?
 - K-2 students more likely to be with an adult or older student.

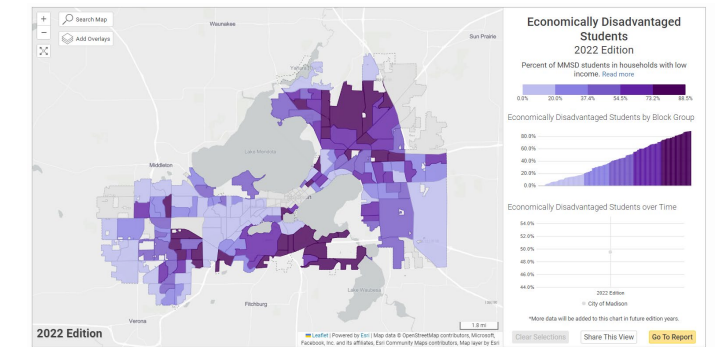
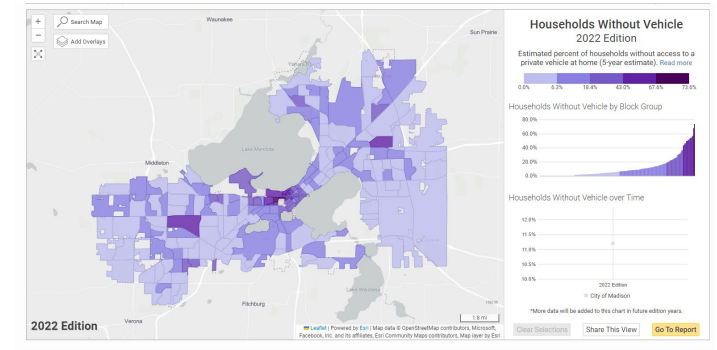
Other Factors Points

Factor	Points
Foreign traffic route (more non-local drivers)	0 to +5
For each approach in excess of four	+5
For complex signal or crossing design	+5 to +10
For simple signal or crossing design	-5 to -10
Large percentage of Grade K and 1 students (over 40%)	0 to +5
An intersection of two arterial streets where the total weekday traffic volume exceeds 25,000	+4
Children crossing multiple crosswalks at an intersection	0 to +10
Stopped buses and other obstructions	0 to +5
Volume of turning traffic not reflected in gap availability	0 to +5
Observation of the percent and types of trucks during the times when students are using the crossing	

Other Factors Points – RESJI Considerations

Discussion: Should we use [Neighborhood Indicators Data](#) to add additional Other Factors points? Potential Data:

- Economically disadvantaged students by block group
 - Percent of Madison Metropolitan School District students identified as economically disadvantaged. Economically disadvantaged students include those whose household income was 185% or less of the Federal poverty guidelines.
- High Mobility Students
 - Percent of MMSD students that transferred 2 or more times between schools in the past 3 prior years.
- Households without access to a private vehicle



Other Factors Points – RESJI Considerations

Discussion: Should we consider other factors?

- Consideration of different requirements for locations further from main entrance to reflect that it is just walker/bikers.
- Neighborhood Walk Score to reflect the disparity in infrastructure safety in neighborhoods.

Current Discontinuation Policy

RECOMMEND THE DISCONTINUANCE OF ADULT GUARD PROTECTION at a crossing when the hazard rating falls below 30 points or if the number of school children crossing during the peak crossing hour is less than 15. At the intersection of two arterial streets where the total entering weekday traffic volume exceeds 25,000 vehicles, the total number of students crossing at the intersection will be used to compare to the minimum of 15 students required to retain an adult guard.

Additional Discontinuation Policy Information

The decision to review an existing Adult School Crossing Guard Assignment can also be made for the following reasons:

- Based on changes in school attendance area boundaries such that elementary school students no longer have to cross a particular street
- Changes in school busing policies where students who used to walk to school are to be bused to school instead
- Locations where the number of elementary school aged students using the crossing has dropped below the threshold of 15 for several years
- Changes in traffic patterns such that the hazard rating at a location might have dropped below the threshold of 30 points

Discontinuation: Years of Low Usage

- Current policy is to study when has been less than 15 students for several years.
- **Discussion:** What constitutes “several” years?
 - Some locations have had low usage for more than 5 years.
 - What is an appropriate number of years for a corner with declining student crossings to be studied for potential discontinuation? 3 years or more?

Discontinuation: Student Numbers

- **Discussion:** Is 15 the right number to trigger a study?
 - Recently locations have been studied when the usage is less than 5 students.
 - Removing a crossing guard location is often unpopular.
 - Our crossing guard counts used to determine the numbers are done fall & spring on good weather days. Do not consider winter counts to trigger study.
 - Currently 9 locations with less than 10 students each of the past 3 years
 - Currently 7 locations with 10-15 students each of the past 3 years

Discontinuation: Infrastructure Change & Hazard

- Do not currently review locations after infrastructure improvements are made.
- **Discussion:** Current policy says that discontinuance should be studied if the hazard falls below 30 points -
 - Should a study be conducted after a reconstruction project?
 - Or additions such as pedestrian islands, RRFBs or other moderate sized improvements?
 - Policy mentions where “traffic patterns” might change hazard score – are there other items that should trigger a review of the hazard rating?
 - Should new bus service be a reason for a study?

Pilot Locations

- 2022-23 added Pilot locations which is not currently addressed in policy.

Discussion:

- How long before we re-study for “permanent” status?
 - Example – Raymond/Leland had 13 students in 1st year of pilot and 15 in 2nd year
 - Example – Moorland/Dunwoody had 13 students in 1st year
- Or should they automatically become permanent if they have a certain number of students crossing after a certain number of years?
- Should all new locations be Pilots to see impact of having a crossing guard?

Distance Between Crossings

- Policy deducts up to 10 points for Safer Crossing One Block Out of Way

Discussion:

- Currently do look at relocation to better fit school and family needs but reluctant to study locations one block from current crossing.
 - Example – Highland relocation recommendation
- What distance is appropriate to ask families and students to walk out of there way to reach a Crossing Guard?

Infrastructure Improvements Policy

Current Policy:

- Marks as a School Crossing when the hazard rating is greater than 20 at a crossing used by at least 25 elementary school children during the peak crossing hour. The traffic engineer is authorized to mark such a crossing with appropriate warning signs and special crosswalk markings.
- Install flashing beacons if any one of the following conditions is met:
 - The 85th percentile speed is in excess of 40 mph, measured at existing school crossing signs, which have been in place at least 30 days.
 - The street crossed is a US or State Trunk Highway on which a significant percentage of “foreign” drivers can be expected.
 - That ratio of sight distance to safe stopping distance is less than 1.5
 - The hazard rating is greater than 30 at an unguarded location where at least 25 elementary students cross and the available safe crossing gaps are less than 50%.

Infrastructure Improvements

Discussion:

- Now that the Safe Streets Program exists to fund and rank projects should this section be removed?
 - The policy only reflects two type of improvements, but the City often also does other improvements.
 - This includes many items such as no turn on red, leading pedestrian intervals, pedestrian islands, high visibility crosswalks or other appropriate improvements.
 - The policy could reflect adding any area studied that doesn't qualify for a crossing guard to the Safe Street Program list using the hazard rating.
- Should we add this infrastructure even with the placement of a crossing guard?
 - Being a crossing guard can be a hazardous job that is made safer with these improvements.

Private Schools

- Not addressed in current policy but some private schools do receive benefits from public school crossing guard locations
- Private schools have a different schedule: some days public school is closed but private schools are open.
- Currently if a crossing guard will not be at the location the private school is notified so families are aware.
- Private schools draw from a wider city area so have fewer children walking/biking.
- Crossing Guards who would staff locations with public/private schools would have fewer days off

Discussion:

- Should private school coverage be addressed in policy?
- Should there be a minimum number of students using location to have it open on non-MMSD days?
- Are there other items that should be considered?

Other Issues

- Hiring crossing guards continues to be challenging so it does happen that a crossing may not be staffed at start of year even if approved
 - Historically have around 20-25% staff loss during the school year
- Need for a proactive look at demographic shifts throughout school district to best locate crossing guards to meet current needs
 - Having crossings with low utilization makes it challenging to staff new locations
- Discontinuation also calls for the City to “offer assistance to help the school community increase the number of elementary school students walking to school and using the crossing in order to retain the Adult School Crossing Guard assignment.”
 - This doesn't reflect our Safe Routes to School program partnership with the Wisconsin Bike Fed
 - This also is resource intensive and current Safe Routes to School focus is Community Schools
 - Does not reflect that it may be that there are changing demographics

Other Issues

- Would it be better in some instances to fund Safe Routes to School programming such as Walking School Buses?
- Staff Concerns
 - Not seen as desirable if staffing a location with few students to cross (especially when work in all weather conditions)
 - If less than 10 during good weather, then there are sometimes no crossings during portion of year when weather is cold/wet
 - Challenges if also expected to cover private schools with different or less days off
- Language Updates need including:
 - Update to remove Pedestrian-Bicycle Motor Vehicle Commission.
 - Consider changing to School Traffic Safety Team as it is a staff working group
 - Look more at who to notify of potential changes as not every school has an active PTO or neighborhood association.

Example Crossing Guard Policies

- [Wichita, Kansas](#)
 - 40 students over 2 hours (am/pm)
- [Austin, TX](#)
 - Elementary students only
 - Requirement of 20 children crossing
 - Look at many of the same factors as Madison but one difference is they look at the ratio of adults to children crossing the intersection
- [Dallas, TX](#)
 - 20 unsupervised students warrants a crossing guard
 - If students crossing of 4 or more lanes then crossing guard is warranted
 - If less than 20 unsupervised students and less than 4 lanes, then looks at other hazards
 - Have official form to request a new crossing guard at elementary schools – includes both public and private schools
- [Philadelphia, PA](#)
 - Only K-5 schools
 - Must be within 2 blocks of a school
- [Lawrence, KS](#)
 - Includes middle schools
 - Requires 40 students except in certain more hazardous situations where it only requires 10 students.
 - Placement is only on designated SRTS Routes. Evaluation of crossing guard locations required every five years (or sooner if other changes happen).
 - Do have one year pilots for new locations to see if meet the required numbers as placement is based on anticipated numbers.
 - Locations evaluated at least once every five years.
- [New Jersey Model Municipal Crossing Guard Policy](#)
 - Policies include consideration of presence of alternative route that already has a crossing guard
 - One policy includes physical terrain (but does not specify what that means).

Policy Next Steps

1. Take Transportation Commission feedback to RESJI team
2. Team will take feedback to refine some recommendations
3. Test recommendations on example data to see impacts of potential changes on new locations & discontinuations
4. Return to Transportation Commission with a set of final recommendations

Middle School Students

- Fostering independence and understanding of how to travel safely
- Experience with East/North Middle School Students
- Middle School Student Feedback
- 2024-25 School Start/End Times

Fostering Independent Travel

Consideration:

- The skills related to independence do not emerge solely due to biological maturation, but through the opportunities and experiences children have practicing these and related skills.
- Research found that parents often feel conflicted in making decisions about things like letting their child travel to places on their own, because they are concerned about safety, but at the same time, they would like their child to have the opportunity to develop their independence (Fotel & Thomsen, [2002](#)).
- <https://srcd.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/sop2.27>

Fostering Independent Travel

- As children walk to school independently, they are using their decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, and independence skills. These skills would not be practiced if an accompanying parent took charge of those activities.
- Cross-cultural research shows that, depending upon the environment, children as young as 5 or 6 years old could walk to school alone, if they have practiced it previously with an adult (Shaw et al., [2015](#)).
- The most important factor (regardless of age) is if they have walked to school before, practiced it, and discussed their plan with an adult, because children's cognition develops through their experiences and gets strengthened through routines (Best & Miller, [2010](#); Gauvain, [2022](#)).

North/East Middle School Experiences

- Students who did not have Crossing Guard at middle school seemed to better understand how to cross safely
- Other students needed to learn to activate RRFB and look for traffic yielding but did improve their pedestrian habits
- Need to have a continuum of education
 - Elementary walking education
 - Middle school biking education
 - High School overall mobility
- Prepare students to be independent
 - Middle school student travel more on their own and need to have skills to travel not just to school

North/East Middle School Support

When start/end time shifted Middle School student support included:

- Mobile speed display deployed in walk area
- LED light upgrade at key crosswalks
- School visits to assist with educating students on safe behavior
- Provision of bike lights and light up leg/arm bands to youth who needed them
- School messaging on being safe while walking/biking

Middle School Focus Groups

Would you listen to a crossing guard and would one make you feel more likely to walk/bike?

- “We are teenagers” – don’t want to be told what to do, know what to do
 - Don’t want to go to crossing guard location
 - Would not listen to them
 - Don’t want to wait to cross
- “Kids are kids” – we make mistakes still
 - Like to be safe when they travel
 - Would listen

Middle School Focus Groups – Other Student Comments

Too many drivers speeding

People driving don't yield at crosswalks

Dogs that harass them

Need more trash cans

Sidewalks should be connected

Construction areas feel unsafe

Personal safety/abduction concerns

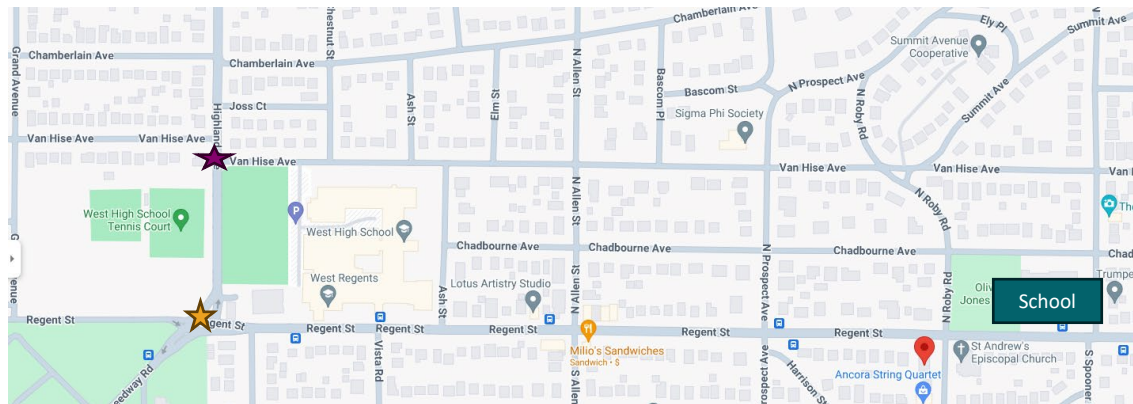
Better bus stops

2024-25 Middle School Start Times

- Middle Schools planned to start at 9:00 AM
- Middle Schools planned to dismiss at 4:25 PM every day except Monday
- Badger Rock will continue to start at 8:20 AM and dismiss at 2:20 PM every day
- No Middle Schools will align with Crossing Guard times except for dismissal at Badger Rock

2024-25 Proposed Location Changes

- Randall Elementary - Highland Ave Crossing Guard relocation
- Currently located at Highland/Regent/Speedway
- Propose to move to Highland at Van Hise Ave for 2024-25
 - Some families cross at Van Hise now without Crossing Guard
 - Some students walking alone go out of their way to come to current location



2024-25 Proposed Location Changes

- Randall Elementary – Proposed Crossing Guard Pilot Location
- 2206 University Ave (The Heights, a new apartment building)
- Located .7 miles from Randall Elementary so within typical walk zone
- Building opened fall 2023 and offers a mix of market-rate and affordable housing units including 16 units for families recently experiencing homelessness
- 9 students anticipated for 24/25 but expected to increase
- No traffic study completed as request is recent
 - 10,600 cars per day, Allen St not signalized

2024-25 Proposed Location Changes

Muir Elementary – Pilot relocating crossing guard

- Current crossing guard is at Gammon Rd and Tree Lane
 - Less than 5 elementary school students crossing (some days none)
 - West side of Gammon Rd receives bus service to school
 - Principal encourages any students walking/biking to cross at Gammon Rd & Colony Dr
- In our visits to Gammon/Colony have seen little usage of crossing by elementary students
 - Talked to parent who does travel to school with daughter and uses Gammon/Colony
- Visited school and found large number of students crossing at Inner Dr and Yellowstone Dr
 - Have not completed traffic study