

Hang Up the Cell Phone in School Zones, New Law Requires; Citations Will Be Issued to Ensure Safety

The Texas Legislature passed House Bill 55 in September 2009, prohibiting the use of cell phones in school zones without the use of a hands free device.

The new law requires that proper signage be displayed at the entrances to the school zones, and the City of Austin has worked diligently to post proper signage warning against the use of cell phones.



Currently, there are more than 20 Austin school zones with the signs prohibiting cell phone use. The

City is continuing to work to complete all the school zones in the near future.

Now that more than 20 school zones have signs, enforce-

ment is being conducted by both AISD and Austin police departments, with citations being issued. The fine is \$200.

Drivers are encouraged to remember the new law, and refrain from using cell phones in school zones.

Cell Phones + Driving = Trouble

Cell phones and driving don't mix! Check out these facts:

- Drivers who use cell phones are four times more likely to be involved in a crash.
- There is no difference between the cognitive distraction between hand-held and hands-free devices.
- Cell phone use contributes to an estimated six percent of all crashes. This equates to more than 600,000 crashes a year related to cell phone use while driving.
- While other activities may be more dangerous than talking on a cell phone, because cell phone use occurs with more frequency and longer duration, it is the number one cause of driver inattention-related crashes.
- The annual cost of crashes caused by cell phone use is estimated at \$43 billion.

(Harvard Center for Risk Analysis.)

Meet Rocco, AISD's New K-9 Officer

There's a new K-9 in AISD. Meet Rocco.

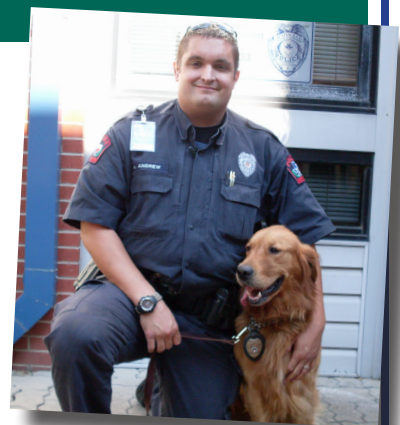
AISD Police Officer Anthony Andrew and K-9 Rocco have been graduated from Global Training Academy on October 21. Since his graduation, Rocco has performed several presentations at elementary and middle schools, as well as several vehicle and classroom searches.

Rocco is a two-year-old Golden Retriever, a sporting breed of dog that has high energy and loves to work.

Rocco went through 1-1/2-2 years of

training to become a certified Narcotics Detection Working Dog. During the training, he was certified to detect various drugs, smokeless powder, and guns. Rocco requires approximately four hours of training per week to remain sharp on detection work, and daily maintenance grooming to keep him healthy.

The average service of a police K-9 is eight-to-ten years. "Rocco and I thank you for welcoming us into the AISD family. We look forward to helping to keep Austin children, parents, and staff safe for many years to come," Officer Andrew said.



AISD Police Officer Anthony Andrew and K-9 Rocco

Chief's Corner

Chief Pat Fuller

'Do the Write Thing' Challenges Students

AISD PD Middle School Resource Officers (SROs) will assist Gardner-Betts Juvenile Center in supporting the "Do the Write Thing" Challenge program in AISD's middle schools this year. The program is an anti-violence and academic program that provides seventh and eighth



graders with the opportunity to communicate in writing what they think should be done to build a healthy civil society.

Teachers are provided a lesson plan for classroom discussions and writing assignments. Students will answer the following three questions: *How has violence*

affected my life? What are the causes of violence? What can I do about violence?

The written entries are judged for local, state, and national recognition.

The Challenge program began in Washington D.C. in 1994. The Texas Challenge is the nation's largest, with AISD being one of the largest contributors in Central Texas. Each student paper is read by

community volunteers who select a boy and girl with the most thought-provoking writings from each school. These Student Finalists then have their papers reviewed by the Executive Committee, and the top two girl and boy authors are selected as National Finalists, who are invited to the National Campaign to Stop the Violence recognition events in Washington D.C.

AISD middle school SROs will assist in promoting the program at their respective schools, as well as facilitate the collection and judging of entries.

These AISD middle schools are participating — Bailey, Burnet, Covington, Dobie, Garcia, Kealing, Martin, Murchison, O. Henry, and Small.



Officers Learn SAMA Techniques To Redirect Aggressive Behavior

AISD Police Department officers assigned to middle schools recently took part in an eight-hour block of instruction in "Satori Alternatives to Manage Aggression" (SAMA).

SAMA is the technique currently practiced by the Special Education Department to prevent, re-direct, and mitigate aggressive behavior in students. These techniques offer training in verbal skills to de-escalate conflict, and physical skills in non-injurious containment.

The officers also received training in District policy on the restraint of students. AISD PD is training the middle school SROs because these officers are sometimes called upon to assist special education teachers and staff in managing a student's aggressive behavior.

Pictured are officers training in SAMA techniques. Right (from left), Stephanie Thompson and Kim Pierce; below (from left), David Herrera, Joseph Crowell, and Josh Clements.

