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NORTH SHORE

SCHOOL DISTRICT 112

To: Dr. Monica Schroeder, Deputy Superintendent

From: Solvei Jurmu, Director of Safety & Security

Date: January 15, 2026

RE: Traffic Management Report: Red Oak Transition to Oak Terrace (2026-2027 and 2027-2028)

Purpose

This report provides an updated overview of current traffic conditions, the anticipated impacts of transitioning Red Oak students to Oak Terrace (OT), and a summary of the current Traffic Management Plan, along with future plans. The aim is to address task force concerns regarding traffic capacity, safety, and operational readiness during the transition.

Current Traffic Conditions on Prairie Avenue

In collaboration with the Highwood Police Department, I was provided traffic and violation data specifically tied to Prairie Avenue in front of Oak Terrace:

- **Traffic Accidents (01/01/24–11/20/25): 2 total**
Extremely low volume, with no recurring patterns that suggest structural roadway risks.
- **Traffic Violations (01/01/24–11/20/25): 21 total**
 - Fewer than one traffic stop-related offense per month, spread across 24-hour periods.
 - Most violations were related to cellphone use, rather than speeding or unsafe driving in school zones.

Conclusion:

Prairie Avenue currently demonstrates stable, low-risk traffic behavior. There is no evidence of congestion-related safety issues that would prevent accommodating Red Oak student transitions.

Student Population Impact

Oak Terrace Elementary currently serves approximately 482 students. This includes 150 preschool students divided between morning and afternoon sessions.

Arrival and dismissal occur four times daily. The morning preschool session dismisses midday, shortly followed by the arrival of the afternoon preschool session.

Elementary arrival coincides with the start of the morning preschool session, while elementary afternoon dismissal aligns with the end of the afternoon preschool session. Preschool students arrive/dismiss in separate buses (and special transportation as necessary) from the K-5 population.

Beginning the 2027-28 school year, Early Childhood programming will move from Oak Terrace.

Impact:

When Early Childhood programming moves out of Oak Terrace in the 2027–2028 school year, the incoming Red Oak students will move in, and the overall population will potentially decline, given the anticipated (3) sections of kindergarten for the 2026-27 school year. This change will also eliminate the need for preschool bus transportation at the start and end of the day.

Conclusion:

During the 2026-2027 school year, Oak Terrace Elementary will maintain a stable population. The long-term outlook (post-preschool removal) will further ease roadway and on-site traffic conditions, as there will be only one morning and one afternoon dismissal (eliminating the half-day dismissal preschool requires), allowing all K-5 students to be on buses.

Traffic Management Plan (2025–2026) With 2027-28 Adjustments



The current Oak Terrace Traffic Management Plan (see image above) relies on the consistent and controlled routing of buses, cars, and pedestrians.

- Key Plan Components with no anticipated change during the transition period.
 - All vehicle drop-off and pick-up, including buses and cars, will continue on the north side of the property.
 - Prairie Avenue frontage remains staff-only parking.
 - No walk-up through the staff lot or Prairie is allowed.
 - School Staff Supervisors ensure safety and flow for both arrival and dismissal.
 - Crossing Guard positioned at the corner of High St and Prairie Ave; Central Ave and Prairie Ave; and at High Ave and Highwood Ave.
- **Updated Walk-Up Recommendation (NEW)**
 - All walk-up students (walkers) will be instructed to arrive and depart at the current K–5 walk-up location (Playground on the east side of the property) This consolidates family walk-up traffic to a single, predictable location, simplifying supervision.

Current Safety Concerns:

- Parents are non-compliant with parking procedures, parking on:
 - High Street and blocking the neighbors' driveways
 - Oak Ridge and are blocking the flow of arrival traffic
 - In staff spots on Prairie to walk their child to the playground
 - In the staff lot and walk their children across the lot. They must remain in their cars in the car line, but do not follow directions.

These remain behavioral compliance issues, not indicators of inadequacy in the plan, and will continue to be assessed.

Capacity Assessment

Based on police data, the plan structure, and enrollment projections:

- The system currently supports approximately 482 students without congestion issues.
- The circulation loop located on the north side of the property is designed for continuous flow, not static parking, and has proven effective.
- Walk-up consolidation enhances clarity and reduces unpredictable pedestrian movement.

Assessment Summary:

Oak Terrace is fully capable of accommodating the Red Oak transition starting in the 2027-28 school year without a significant impact on traffic flow around the school during arrival and dismissal times. The plan remains structurally sound, safety-focused, and capacity-appropriate.

Further Recommendations

To reinforce confidence and smooth implementation:

- Maintain a review period in collaboration with Highwood Police during the start of the 2026-2027 school year and make any modifications that would be deemed necessary. This will continue into the 2027-2028 school year and is also a practice that occurs at all school buildings. At Ravinia Elementary, after renovation, the Traffic Plan changed twice.
- Communicate with parents during the summer arrival and dismissal procedures, regardless of the mode of transport (walker, bus, or vehicle).
- Reinforce compliance with driveway, staff lot, and no-walk-up-through-parking rules through parent communication.
- Continue to deploy staff visibility at arrival and dismissal times.
- Assess queue flow at the start of the year to confirm anticipated performance.

How many cars actually drive down the north driveway?

A concern has been raised that the north driveway is congested, unsafe, and used as a cut-through.

I analyzed video footage over five days and determined that between 9 am and 11 am, there were as few as 3 and as many as 15 vehicles. All were related to late arrival,

early pickup, district vehicles, and UPS. Between 1 pm and 3 pm, as few as 3 and as many as 7 vehicles. Between 11 am and 1 pm, I observed an OT staff member standing in the north drive on all days to prevent vehicles from driving through. Only a maximum of three vehicles were seen driving on the drive outside of morning ECC dismissal and afternoon ECC arrival. On the dates I analyzed, the drive had not been used as a cut-through but rather for parents dropping off, picking up, district employees (Operations), USPS/UPS.

School Security Assessment:

1. Perimeter
 - a. Fencing prevents unauthorized entry and reduces incidents of student elopement. Other Elementary schools have experienced elopement, and the installation of fences along their play spaces was done to prevent it in the future. Elm Place, Wayne Thomas, Braeside, and Ravinia also have this.

Post Sub-Committee Meeting on January 15, 2026

On January 15, 2026, a presentation was conducted for the Facilities Sub-Committee of the Dual Language Task Force to discuss the Traffic Management Plan at Oak Terrace Elementary. Concerns that were brought up were:

- The lack of obvious school warning signs for vehicular traffic on Prairie Ave
- The safety of crossing students across Prairie Ave at arrival and dismissal.

Lack of Obvious School Warning Signs on Prairie Ave-I conducted a review of this area and identified multiple traffic control signs for both eastbound and westbound vehicles on Prairie Avenue. Eastbound signage begins approximately one block west of Central Avenue, while westbound signage begins approximately one block east of High Street. I also observed a School Warning sign for both directions of traffic on Prairie Avenue at Pleasant Avenue. Pleasant Avenue terminates at Prairie Avenue at the former main entrance to Oak Terrace School and lies between High Street and Central Avenue.

Safety of Crossing Students Across Prairie Ave at Arrival and Dismissal-During arrival and dismissal, I observed a crossing guard present on Prairie Ave at High St and one on Prairie Ave at Central Ave.

Response to Follow-Up: Based on concerns about student safety, on February 24, 2026, I submitted a Letter of Request to the City of Highwood requesting the installation

of a stop sign on Prairie Ave at Pleasant Ave for both east- and westbound traffic. A STOP sign was recommended rather than an additional school warning sign because warning signage alone does not require motorists to alter their behavior, whereas a STOP sign would create a mandatory traffic control point, reduce vehicle speeds, and provide a safer, more predictable crossing opportunity for students during arrival and dismissal.

Response from City of Highwood on March 11, 2026

Response to the Request: On March 11, 2026, I received a response from Highwood City Manager Scott Coren regarding my request letter. The City has reviewed the request to install a stop sign at the intersection of Prairie Avenue and Pleasant Avenue, and it was denied based on traffic safety guidelines and existing intersection control. The City of Highwood already has two stop signs installed at the four-way stops at South Central Avenue and High Street in close proximity to the requested location. Adding a third stop-sign-controlled intersection in an area where two low-volume local roads intersect with a collector road is more likely to reduce safety at all three intersections than to improve conditions at this one.