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NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:

Date: August 4, 2006
Time: 9:00 a.m.
File: PUBLIC NOTICE

SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY ALERT

Wednesday, August 9, 2006, is the first day of school for the Plano Independent School District. Plano Police Officers will be heavily enforcing school zones, crosswalks, and speed limits to assure a safe commute to school this year. Please assist us in this endeavor to remind and educate the drivers traveling through our city. Attached are the safety guidelines to remind each of us that school is in session, crossing guards are in the intersections, and children may be in the intersections and crossing the street at numerous locations.

SAFE MOTORING NEAR SCHOOL CROSSING LOCATIONS

- Drive 20 MPH in designated zones. These zones are created to alert motorists that the POSSIBILITY of a pedestrian student appearing out of nowhere is very high. Watching your speedometer won't give you the time you need to react. Peripheral awareness is paramount. A collision with a child at only 20 MPH can be deadly.
- Motorists trying to commute around areas of high school traffic might choose another route to avoid frustration. The delays for non-school commuters can be substantial between 7:00 AM and 8:00 AM. Choosing a longer route out of a neighborhood to avoid the school traffic will save time in the end. Frustrated motorists put pedestrian children at great risk because they are the most likely drivers to do something unexpected to get out of a jam and avoid being late for work.
- Watch for clearly marked pedestrian crossings at locations where Crossing Guards are not on duty. It is the law that motorists stop and allow for safe passage of all pedestrians at marked locations, not just locations that have guards in attendance. Please do not 'wave' a child on from your vehicle. Your 'wave' could cause a fatal accident. Just because YOU see them and plan to wait for them to cross, doesn't mean that the motorists around you are aware of the instructions you have given.
- If you deliver children to and from school each day, know how long it takes to navigate the carpool process. When parents 'drop' children at random points along the way to save time, they are putting their children at risk, as children tend to dart in and out of traffic in order to not be late for school. Stopping in carpool traffic to unload children creates delays and may cause injury to your own child. We have seen this happen in Plano. Please take your students through the carpool lanes and deliver them to the safety of the school's entrance, or

park your vehicle at a reasonable distance from the school and escort your kids to the crossing guard for safe passage.

- Take a moment to thank the school guards at your school. Parental support means a great deal to these dedicated City Employees. They are providing a vital service to our community's families of elementary students, are rarely thanked and sometimes treated with disrespect.
- Please lead by example though exercising patience, observing traffic laws and driving the speed posted for the protection of children.