



## Important Student Drop Off & Pick-up Safety Notice

September 14, 2026

Dear Capitan Families,

The safety of our students, families, staff, and community remains our highest priority. One of the greatest concerns during morning drop off and afternoon dismissal is traffic backing up onto Highway 380 while vehicles wait to enter the school parking lot. This creates a potentially dangerous situation for families and other motorists traveling on the highway.

To improve traffic flow and reduce congestion, we will be making adjustments to the elementary student drop off and afternoon pickup route. If you pick up/drop off both elementary and middle/high school students, they will be dropped off and picked up at elementary also. We reviewed the current traffic flow with our community partners and local law enforcement and developed a short-term revised plan intended to reduce congestion and create a safer, more efficient process. This will alleviate issues immediately while we work with NMDOT and the Village of Capitan for a long-term solution to the congestion on Highway 380.

Beginning **Monday, September 28, 2026**, the following changes will be fully implemented:

- **Elementary student drop-off and pickup will take place at the front of Capitan Elementary School on Forest St.**
- Families should follow the revised traffic route shown on the attached map.
- Drivers must follow all posted signs and directions provided by school staff.
- Elementary families should not enter or park in the afternoon pickup line before **3:45 p.m.** unless they have a specific need to arrive earlier.

Until the full transition is complete, we also ask families not to enter or park in the district parking lot pickup line before **3:45 p.m.** unless they have a specific need to arrive earlier. Students who are picked up are not released until **3:55p.m.** and **4:05p.m.** and arriving too early contributes to unnecessary congestion and increases the likelihood of traffic backing up onto Highway 380. Additionally, the elementary pick-up line also serves as a fire lane so parking in the lane for longer than 15 minutes before student dismissal could lead to citations by local law enforcement.

The next two weeks will serve as an information and transition period. During this time, the district will share reminders and help families become familiar with the revised traffic pattern before it is fully implemented on September 28.

Please help us maintain a safe and orderly process by:

- Waiting until the appropriate time before entering the current drop off and pickup line.
- Reviewing the attached traffic-flow map before implementation.
- Following the revised route and all staff directions.
- Keeping Highway 380, intersections, and driveways clear.
- Driving slowly and remaining alert for students and pedestrians.
- Avoiding cellphone use while driving through the school area.

We understand that changes to established routines may require some adjustment. We appreciate your patience, flexibility, and cooperation as we work together to improve safety for everyone.

Thank you,

**Heather Gutierrez**  
Superintendent

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