LONG-TERM OPERATIONAL SAFETY PLAN
FOR DISTRICT RUN SCHOOLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
## Operational Safety Plan

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- Holistic Safety
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See full plan for details regarding:
- A complete list of 23-24 Commitments
- A complete list of all training/professional learning
- Community Engagement Data
- Additional ideas heard but not reflected in the plan
- Where the ideas we heard can be found in the plan
The completion of the Operational Safety Plan is only the beginning of its implementation. Once finalized, our next step is to administer it in a way that facilitates its success by ensuring it is enshrined in our district policies in a way that holds us accountable to it. Ends Policies 1.3 and 1.4 currently govern this area of Denver Public Schools. Moving forward these will be referred to as Ends 3.0 and 4.0. In their current form, these policies do not prioritize the new Operational Safety Plan as they were adopted prior to the creation of the plan.

Therefore, we must expedite the inclusion of the Safety Plan into our Reasonable Interpretations and Monitoring reports of Ends Policies 3.0 and 4.0 for the 2023/24 school year. This will ensure that district leadership will be held accountable to delivering on the promises of the Operational Safety Plan in this coming school year. While the Operational Safety Plan will be complete by the end of June 2023, the Reasonable Interpretations (how we will measure success) are anticipated to be completed by the start of the 2023/24 school year.
Denver Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and welcoming learning environment for our students, families and educators. DPS is focused on maintaining learning environments that center our students, elevate the experience of our adults, and turn our vision that Every Learner Thrives into a reality.

DPS implements comprehensive policies, procedures and protocols that establish, promote, and maintain the physical and psychological safety of our students, staff, families and other members of the Denver community who visit our schools and campuses. In response to recent incidents of violence throughout the Denver metro area, we have spent almost three months learning from our students, families, staff and community about how to improve our safety policies, protocols and practices. We have used that input, along with expertise of our Climate and Safety department, our staff and others around the country to develop this Long-Term Operational Safety Plan. As you will see in the plan, safety is a layered approach that encompasses many different areas including mental health supports, training within the existing work day, technology, buildings and systems.

We know that addressing the safety and climate of our schools and buildings is not something we can do on our own - this work requires extensive collaboration with the City of Denver and our broader community. We look forward to partnering with each of you to ensure our students learn and live in a safe and welcoming community where they can thrive.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SURVEYS</th>
<th>TOWN HALLS</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
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<tr>
<td>Survey #1 to inform Version 1.0 (7,719)</td>
<td>May 10 Town Hall (4,992)</td>
<td>Superintendent Advisory meetings* (48)</td>
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<td>Survey #2 to respond to Version 1.0 (3,394)</td>
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<td>School-based surveys (2,586)</td>
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<td>Principal Operations Meeting (120)</td>
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* Superintendent Advisory Council includes representation from the following advisory councils/organizations:
- Latino Education
- District Accountability
- Special Education
- MLL DAC
- Asian Education
- Student Voice & Leadership
- DSLA
- DCTA
- Parent Safety Advocacy Group
- Principal Teacher Advisory & Leader
- Pathways student
- SSC
- Black Family
- Collaborative Council
- Denver Taskforce to Reimagine Policing & Public Safety
- Superintendent Transition Team
VISION

"Every Learner Thrives"

MISSION

Educational equity is our collective responsibility. We prepare students for career, college and life. We create conditions and partnerships where students, families and team members belong and thrive.

EQUITY

Racial and Educational Equity is our collective responsibility. We will achieve equity when we dismantle deeply rooted systems of oppression that have historically resulted in inequitable access and distribution of opportunities and resources for those who represent marginalized identities, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, language and ability.

We will create conditions where we all belong, are included, have clear purpose (why) and have the autonomy (choice) to lead in our respective areas. By creating these conditions, we will eliminate the predictability of success or failure for our students and team members.
Denver Public Schools commitment to the safety of our students, staff and community is shared in the following Board policies: Ends Policy 1.3 - Student and Staff Well Being, Ends Policy 1.4 - Health and Safety, Executive Limitation 10 - Student Conduct, Discipline & Attendance, and Executive Limitation 11- School Safety. The district has also adopted administration policies dealing with student discipline. These policies are in alignment with the requirements of federal and state law.

On February 23, 2023, the Board of Education passed its revised Ends Policy wholly dedicated to safety. This new policy on safety is reflective of the continuing school violence across the nation. Ends 1.4 demonstrates that the Board is putting its values into formal policy, which the Superintendent will then adopt into tangible action. This will further ensure that tangible and measurable safety progress becomes part of the Superintendent’s evaluation, and impacts the district’s budget.

On June 15th, 2023, the Board of Education voted to amend Executive Limitation 10.10 to allow School Resource Officers to return to campuses. The new Executive Limitation reads: Accordingly, the Superintendent shall not fail to: EL-10.10 – Establish administration policies and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Denver Police Department for when the persistent presence of School Resource Officers (SROs) on school property is necessary at district-managed and charter schools.

Take reasonable steps to ensure:
- SROs who do not follow board policy, administration policy, the district’s discipline matrix, or best practices for NASRO are promptly removed at the discretion of the Superintendent;
- Citations and arrests are monitored. Provide a quarterly report of citations and arrests through the consent agenda at Board of Education meetings through the end of the 25-26 school year. Provide annual reports to the Board of Education in the following years. Data shall include the reason for the citation and arrest and be disaggregated by age and marginalized identities as defined in Ends 1.0 (Equity) at district-managed and charter schools. Promptly take corrective action and notify the Board if the district is aware of a disproportionate number of citations and arrests across marginalized identities at the district and school levels.
PERSONAL CONDITIONS

Personal conditions outline the ways in which DPS prioritizes not just physical safety for students and adults, but psychological safety as well. DPS recognizes that addressing youth violence and student safety requires a proactive and preventative approach to support our students with their mental health, social and emotional health, their physical and mental well-being, and their behavioral health. This section covers the various ways the district helps our students and staff to feel mentally, emotionally and physically safe.

MENTAL HEALTH: STUDENT SAFETY

Mental Health includes children’s mental, emotional and behavioral well-being. It affects how children think, feel and act and plays a role in how children handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choices. Some common Mental Health Disorders identified in childhood are:

- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Depressive Disorders

1 Trauma-Informed Practices

Trauma-Informed Practices is primarily focused on providing schools supports that are universal and beneficial to everyone, rather than just those who have experienced chronic or complex trauma. The focus is to support all students to feel safe - physically, socially, emotionally and academically - by addressing students’ needs in holistic ways, taking into account:

- Relationships
- Self-regulation
- Academic Competence
- Physical and Emotional wellbeing

2 Social Emotional Supports

DPS provides universal Transformative Social Emotional Academic Learning (TSEAL) in every school. TSEAL is a process for young people and adults to build strong, respectful and lasting relationships. TSEAL is aimed at promoting social justice through increased engagement in school and civic life. It emphasizes the development of:

- Identity
- Agency
- Belonging
- Curiosity
- Collaborative Problem Solving
Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI) training supports staff in preventing, recognizing and responding to crisis situations from a place of understanding how to de-escalate and intervene in a safe and supportive way. Staff learn decision-making skills that match the level of response to the risk of the crisis, focusing on least-restrictive responses that ensure Care, Welfare, Safety and Security.

**PERSONAL CONDITIONS**

3 **Universal Screening**

The [BASC-3 Behavioral and Emotional Screening System](#) (BASC-3 BESS) tool allows DPS to identify potential behavioral and emotional concerns (mental health risk) in individuals or in large numbers of children and adolescents. With this information, DPS can adjust universal teaching and provide targeted and intensive social-emotional and mental health interventions to support our student needs.

4 **Nonviolent Crisis Prevention Training**

Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI) training supports staff in preventing, recognizing and responding to crisis situations from a place of understanding how to de-escalate and intervene in a safe and supportive way. Staff learn decision-making skills that match the level of response to the risk of the crisis, focusing on least-restrictive responses that ensure Care, Welfare, Safety and Security.

5 **Student Safety Protocol Processes**

- **Nonsuicidal Self Injury Protocol**: Initiated when staff learn that a student has been hurting themself through self-injury.
- **Suicide Risk Review**: Completed immediately whenever a student talks about harming themself, or if there is concern that a student has thoughts about hurting themself as determined by the Preliminary Suicide Risk Screener.
- **Threat Response**: Initiates the Preliminary Information Gathering Form when a student poses a threat, makes a threat, or if there is concern that a student may be about to act out violently.

6 **Bullying Prevention**

Bullying prevention is guided by administrative Policy [JICDE]. DPS believes learners of all identities and abilities should feel a strong sense of belonging, are emotionally supported in school, and have the capacity to advocate for themselves and for justice.
PERSONAL CONDITIONS

MENTAL HEALTH: ADULT SAFETY

1. Training in Crisis Response

DPS provides training on what to do in the event of a crisis to ensure effective action and to promote the psychological safety of adults. Preparedness efforts span across various DPS departments:

- Department of Mental Health
- Student Safety Coordinators
- Department of Communications
- Department of Climate and Safety

2. Employee Supports

- Belong Groups
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- TherapyDirect
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) for Leaders
- Health Promotion Activities
- Reach One Mentoring
- Values-Based Leadership Development
- Wellness Champion Program
- Office of the Ombuds
School conditions cultivate a safe and welcoming climate and culture throughout the school and include not just physical safety, but also psychological safety, connectedness, and a sense of belonging. When creating these school conditions, DPS seeks to foster caring, consistent relationships among both individuals and groups, including students, educators and families. Relationships like these promote resilience, serve to protect people, and reduce the impact of chronic or acute stress, ultimately creating school buildings where all people and the community can thrive.

SAFE AND WELCOMING

Denver Public Schools is committed to ensuring each student’s learning experience deepens their learning, exposes them to various thoughts and perspectives, and allows them to critically think about the issue and context surrounding a complex global society. By focusing on high quality learning experiences that center high student engagement, the district fully anticipates this will be a major deterrent to unsafe and disengaged behaviors at the student level and will better support them in accessing the opportunities around them while also allowing them to pursue their passions and purpose.

1 Safe and Welcoming School Environment

High-crime neighborhoods may expose children to violence, which can cause lasting physical, mental, and emotional harm. DPS intends to counter these conditions by increasing the psychological safety of both kids and adults through the creation of welcoming and inclusive classroom environments. With this in mind, DPS has identified three key practices:

Practice #1: All students experience a safe and welcoming classroom that honors their diverse cultures, languages and identities (including sexual orientation and gender identity).

Practice #2: All students experience high quality Transformative Social Emotional and Academic Learning (TSEAL) lessons and/or TSEAL integration throughout all content areas.

Practice #3: All students experience a schoolwide safe and welcoming environment that honors their diverse cultures, languages and identities (including sexual orientation and gender identity).
As outlined by Colorado Senate bill 08-181 and DPS board policy KDE, each school is responsible for identifying a school Emergency Team (E-Team) in order to more effectively respond to and recover from life safety incidents that may occur on or near DPS property. E-Team training includes:

- Life safety incidents on/near school property
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Incident Command System (ICS)
- Bullying
- Suicide prevention
- Evacuation maps
- Access control
- Safe2Tell
- Situational awareness
- Emergency drills
- Emergency Operation Plan (EOP)
- Standard Response Protocol (SRP)
- Security Technology
- Reunification
- Recovery
SCHOOL CONDITIONS

SCHOOL AND BUILDING SAFETY

1 Safety Audits

DPS conducts building safety audits every 3 years following the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) program.
- Building systems and designs are evaluated by trained staff.
- Committed to working with the Denver Metro DPS Peer Support Team, DPS Department of Climate and Safety, and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) conduct and evaluate the infrastructure in our school district.

2 Standard Response Protocol

All employees, students, and leadership will be trained in the Standard Response Protocol (SRP). The SRP is a uniform, planned, and practiced response to any incident. The SRP is action-based, flexible, and easy to learn. It organizes tactics for response to weather events, fires, accidents, intruders and other threats to personal safety.

3 Student Searches

Administrative Policy JIH governs “Student Interviews, Interrogations, Searches and Arrests.” In addition to searches based on reasonable suspicion some students may be searched as part of the safety and support measures outlined in an Action and Intervention Plan (which follows the completion of a Full Threat Appraisal).
SCHOOL CONDITIONS

4 Collaboration with City Departments
Our students and staff represent the best of Denver in all neighborhoods. The issues throughout the neighborhoods are also reverberated in the schools throughout the district. DPS takes an active role in partnering with the City of Denver, parents, students and community members to help address many of the issues;

This section addresses the systems and structures that support the efforts to promote safety and youth resilience, both within the school system, and through collaboration with the city and community partners to address the issues that are outside of the district’s direct influence.

**DPS DRIVEN**

See the [full plan](#) for details regarding:

- Communication Protocols
- District Crisis Recovery Team (DCRT)
- Incident Command
- Advanced Educational Opportunities

## 1 Department of Climate and Safety Staff

The Department of Climate and Safety is staffed with safety personnel to keep our schools safe, including:

- Campus Safety Officers (CSOs)
- Patrol Officers
- Emergency Management Team
- Youth Violence Prevention Officer
- Crossing Guards
- Training Specialists
- Youth Violence Prevention Specialists
- Bullying Prevention
- School Climate and Development

## 2 Discipline Practices and Policies

Discipline practices are governed by Administration Policy JK and Regulation JK-R. The discipline matrix is a guidance document to support the implementation of JK and JK-R. In addition to providing the upper bounds of disciplinary consequences, the matrix includes guidance about when law enforcement, human services, and/or DPS Safety should be contacted in response to an event, as well as other protocols that may need to be completed, for example the Threat Response process.
Weapons Detection Systems

Weapons detection technology is designed to create an effective barrier between firearms and people. Weapons detection technology can use artificial intelligence to process students, staff and visitors quickly using touchless security screening technology. These systems use sensors and AI-based software to capture data that can be analyzed to optimize operational efficiencies and provide a comprehensive view of security operations. The determination of a weapon detection system at a school or district building will be a site-based decision with extensive community engagement.

Youth Violence Prevention at Elementary Schools

Youth violence prevention in elementary schools include all aspects of universal social-emotional learning:

- Building a positive climate and culture
- Establishing norms and routines
- Developing trusting relationships between school staff and students.

Examples of this universal programming for our younger learners include classroom meetings, comprehensive health education, positive behavioral supports, and restorative approaches.

Suicide prevention curricula (Riding the Waves) is implemented in 5th grade classrooms. This curriculum helps identify the sources of stress and learning healthy ways of coping.

Culturally Responsive Education (CRE)

The DPS Know Justice Know Peace resolution, directed the Superintendent to “operationalize a plan to ensure that all schools within the family of Denver Public Schools’ curriculum and professional practices include comprehensive historical and contemporary contributions of Black, Indigenous, and Latino communities.” We are redesigning and systemizing our process for curriculum evaluation and design and professional learning to ensure our resources and learning experiences are “…transformational, humanizing, anti-racist and asset-based!”
Those who believe they have bright futures are less likely to engage in risky behaviors. With this in mind, DPS has programming dedicated to helping students explore a variety of different career choices so they can find one that engages and excites them. The Career Development Team boasts a full suite of seven distinct programs across their comprehensive continuum that include everything from career exploration events to mentorship, internships, and apprenticeships.

Community Hubs

DPS operates six community hubs across Denver that provide wrap-around support for a student’s family and their community, providing free services to increase economic self-sufficiency and ultimately student academic success. All services and classes are free to community members 16 and older - not just DPS parents. Services include:

- GED Classes
- Employment Services
- Computer Skills
- Citizenship Classes
- Social-Emotional Support Services
- Early Childhood Literacy Classes
- Classes to learn English and Spanish
- Financial Coaching
- Energy Outreach Assistance
- Basic Needs Assistance
- Health and Nutrition Workshops
- Parenting Workshops

Out of School Time

DPS offers a variety of opportunities designed to engage students when they are not in school. See the full plan for more details.

- Before and After School Opportunities:
  - Discovery Link
  - Extended Learning and Community Schools Enrichment and Sports Programming
  - Saturday School
- Summer Learning Opportunities:
  - Summer Connections
  - Discovery Link
  - Enrichment Exploration
  - Dual Language Summer Program
DPS plans to partner with the City of Denver on the youth violence prevention efforts outlined in the city’s 2023 Youth Violence Prevention Plan. While many aspects of our safety plan reflect this intention, below are the areas of the city’s plan where the city’s support will be most critical to our collective success. We have highlighted key areas of collaboration.

See the full plan for details regarding:

- Policy Change
- Data Sharing
- Crisis Response Retrospectives

1 **Holistic Safety**

DPS will be partnering with the City of Denver to prioritize holistic safety as part of the City’s 2023 Youth Violence Prevention Plan. The city will be investing in public safety solutions supported and led by the community, creating community-based crisis response teams, and developing comprehensive intervention processes for communities experiencing violence. Specific areas of focus for this work include:

- Dismantling of Criminal Networks
- Youth Gang Intervention
- Gun Buy-Back Programs
- Gun Safety Education
- Human Trafficking Intervention

2 **Mental and Health Care: Access and Affordability**

For 35 years, DPS has partnered with Denver Health Pediatrics to open and operate our School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs). School-Based Health Centers are primary care clinics housed in schools that offer medical, mental health, dental, and behavioral health services to DPS students and their school-aged siblings. In addition, SBHCs also offer health education and insurance enrollment/advising services. Currently, Denver Health Pediatrics operates 19 SBHCs. There is no charge to the patient or their family for services offered at a SBHC.
Every Learner Thrives

We are Hiring!

Now Enrolling!

www.dpsk12.org  720.423.3200  info@dpsk12.org