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INTRODUCTION

Denver Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and welcoming learning environment for our students, families and educators throughout the school district. Safety is paramount. 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.

We know that addressing the safety and climate of our schools and buildings is not something that Denver Public Schools can do on its own - this work requires extensive collaboration with the City of Denver and our broader community. We are thus releasing this early draft of the plan in a spirit of collaboration. We have until June 30, 2023 to revise this plan prior to presenting it to our board.

If you have key questions that you want to make sure are addressed in this plan, please share them. We will be sharing updates, feedback opportunities, and a live FAQ on the Safety Plan Website (https://superintendent.dpsk12.org/safetyplan/). Your feedback will help us ensure that this plan includes how to best use our collective resources to keep youth across Denver, and the adults that support them, safe.

In order for the school district to fulfill the goal of maintaining a safe and welcoming learning environment, DPS implements comprehensive policies, procedures and protocols that focus on safety issues. The primary objective of these district-wide and school-specific safety policies is to 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, district leadership has worked to revise the district-wide safety policies. We recognize that school safety is a community issue which requires collaboration throughout our community. To that end, this work is being done in partnership with industry professionals, along with input from students, employees and community members. It is intended to provide guidance and resources to prevent violence and crises as well as to provide direction in a variety of emergency situations. The plan encompasses each of our schools, every campus, and our Central Office building. The final version of this new district-wide safety plan will be comprehensive, concise and specific.

In keeping with the policy of the Board of Education, the purpose of this new district-wide safety plan is to maximize the safety of every student, educator and visitor of Denver Public Schools. Once implemented, these new policies, procedures and protocols, which include guidelines for managing emergencies along with basic procedures to implement the school district’s safety plan, will be evaluated routinely and revised as needed.
LEGISLATION: FEDERAL AND STATE

State Legislation

- **SB23-241** Creation of the Office of School Safety
- **Gun Control**
  - **HB23-1219** Waiting Period to Deliver a Firearm
  - **SB23-168** Gun Violence Victim Access to Judicial System
  - **SB23-169** Increasing Minimum Age to Purchase Firearms
  - **SB23-170** Extreme Risk Protective Orders
  - **SB23-279** Unserialized Firearms And Fire
- **Pending Legislation:**
  - School to Prison Pipeline Reform
    - **HB23-1042** Admissibility Standards For Juvenile Statements
    - **SB23-029** Disproportionate Discipline In Public Schools
    - **HB23-1249** Reduce Justice-involvement For Young Children
    - **HB23-1291** Procedures for Expulsion Hearing Officers
  - **SB23-249** False Reporting of Emergency (Anti-Swatting bill)

The state statute regarding Safe Schools and Safe School Plans is C.R.S. § 22-32-109.1. These legal requirements are incorporated through many DPS Administrative Policies, with ADD being the overarching Safe Schools policy. While there are many provisions in law that relate to safety at school, the main discipline policies are § 22-33-105 and § 22-33-106. Section 22-33-106.1 relates to the use of discipline with our youngest learners.

The Claire Davis School Safety Act, found at § 24-10-106.3, requires districts act with reasonable care to prevent targeted acts of violence on school grounds. DPS maintains a close relationship with the Colorado School Safety Resource Center, which provides information about Claire Davis [here](#).

At the federal level, key laws that relate to safety include the Gun Free Schools Act, and when providing needed support and addressing behavioral concerns which could implicate safety for students with disabilities, IDEA and Section 504 may come into play. Civil rights laws at the state and federal level, which prohibit harassment and discrimination on the basis of protected class, also bear a connection to school safety.

Taken together, the statutes limit the District’s ability to exclude students except under certain circumstances. Because of these legal limitations, the District has limited exclusionary discipline and worked to ensure students can stay in school.
RELEVANT DPS EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS AND DPS POLICIES

Denver Public Schools commitment to the safety of our students, staff, and community is conveyed in 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.

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 March 23, 2023, one day after the tragic shooting at East High School, the Board of Education directed the Superintendent to craft a comprehensive safety plan. This plan though is not new, but rather was part of the adoption of Ends 4.0. The directive issued to the Superintendent on March 23 asked him to expedite the development of this plan and to report it to the Board by June 30, 2023.

Once the security plan is presented to the Board, they will then consider how best to evaluate the Superintendent based upon his performance in achieving the goals of the plan.

EQUITY STATEMENT

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 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.
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

OVERVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH TEAM

The Department of Mental Health encompasses the Department of Social Work and Psychological Services, we have over 400 school social workers and school psychologists (SW/SP) who are uniquely qualified members of school teams who provide direct and indirect social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health services for children and youth, as well as work with families, school administrators, educators, and other professionals to create supportive learning and social environments for all students. The minimum expectation for school-based mental health providers is 1.0 full time employee (FTE) per school. With 205 schools, we have far exceeded this expectation, consistent with the priority we have placed on mental health in our strategic roadmap.

Our school psychologists and school social workers play the following roles:

- Consult with educators and parents on recommendations for developmentally appropriate services and strategies to assist in improving student achievement.
- Consult with parents and educators in the development of appropriate behavior goals/interventions.
- Participate in crisis management and student safety by assessing risk, providing interventions, and making community referrals.
- Plan and facilitate social and emotional intervention for students (in groups and individually).
- Evaluate the need for social and emotional support under Section 504 and IDEA. Interpret assessment data and develop goals to meet individual student needs.
- Support district initiatives on social and emotional learning.
- Serve as a liaison between students, parents/guardians, family services, outside or internal therapeutic supports, courts, protective services, doctors, and other contacts, to help children and families who face challenges such as disabilities, abuse, or poverty.
- **School Psychologists ONLY**: Evaluate the need for cognitive delays/concerns under Section 504 and IDEA. Interpret cognitive assessment data and develop goals to meet individual student needs.
- See [here](#) for school guidance on Dept. Priority Roles and Workload for School Social Workers and School Psychologists

On top of the daily responsibilities at schools, the mental health department also leads the district student safety work for mental health and psychological safety, substance use prevention and intervention, therapeutic services and interventions including trauma specific interventions for students, social emotional and mental health screening, and truancy and delinquency court support.

In addition to the mental health team, there are a variety of other roles in the school building that support the mental health of students:

- **School Counselor**: Provides support in three domains: academic, social emotional, and career. Trained in student safety protocol responses (suicide risk review and non-suicidal self-injury protocol). Requires an advanced degree in school counseling as well as a CDE SSP license. Works in alignment with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards.
- **Prevention and Therapeutic Specialist**: Part of our internal Substance Use Prevention and mental health programming, PTSs address substance concerns with students individually through the utilization of an SBIRT model, often as an alternative to exclusionary discipline. Schoolwide, whole class, and small group interventions are also offered to prevent substance misuse and support elevated mental health symptoms. If indicated, PTSs can additionally provide individual therapeutic support to students with elevated mental health needs or post-traumatic stress symptoms. Requires CDE certification as School Psychologist, Social Worker, or School Counselor.
- **School Nurse**: Coordinates student care with all stakeholders including the mental health team. Our “Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model” practice model includes addressing social, mental, physical health concerns. Addresses access to care, cultural competency, health education, health equity, outreach, risk reduction, social determinants of health and surveillance. Often the first to see students with unidentified mental health issues in the health office due to unfelt needs. CDE SSP License Required.
- **Dean**: Supports school culture and oversees disciplinary processes, including restorative justice. No certification needed.
- **Attendance / Newcomer Specialist**: Works with students and the families of students who are not regularly attending school to identify barriers and remove them. No certification needed.
- **School Based Restorative Practices Coordinators**: Provides behavior intervention support to the entire building through consistent application of the School Management program, Works with the Dean to find alternatives to suspension for students who
require disciplinary action and facilitating restorative justice interventions, responding to student behavioral concerns, creating reports, supervising students. No certification needed.

- **Teacher:** In addition to teaching in a trauma-informed manner, responsible for delivery of SEL lessons and identification of students who would benefit from additional mental health support.

In addition to in-house mental health staff at DPS, the district also partners with community-based mental health programs, particularly for individual or small group support and family therapy. Major mental health partners include WellPower (FKA Mental Health Center of Denver), Jewish Family Service of Colorado, Maria Droste Counseling Center, and Denver Children’s Advocacy Center. 80+ schools have access to a community-based provider on their campus - most at no cost to students or their families. In addition, we have 19 Denver Health School-Based Health Clinics providing care to approximately 12,000 students each year.

**UNIVERSAL SCREENING AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS**

To ensure that every student receives access to the support that they need, we have implemented universal screening through the [BASC-3 Behavioral and Emotional Screening System](https://www.bascresearch.org) (BASC-3 BESS). This tool allows DPS to quickly identify potential behavioral and emotional concerns (mental health risk) in individuals or in large numbers of children or adolescents. With this information, DPS can then adjust universal teaching, as well as provide targeted and intensive social-emotional and mental health interventions to support our student needs.

In addition to conducting universal screening, DPS also provides universal Transformative Social Emotional Academic Learning (TSEAL). TSEAL is a process whereby young people and adults build strong, respectful, and lasting, relationships that facilitate co-learning to critically examine root causes of inequity, and to develop collaborative solutions that lead to personal, community, and societal well-being through direct instruction, integration into content areas and safe and welcoming environments.

This form of TSEAL is aimed at redistributing power to promote social justice through increased engagement in school and civic life. It emphasizes the development of identity, agency, belonging, curiosity, and collaborative problem solving.

It's critically important that school wide TSEAL implementation intentionally nurtures an environment in which educators gain social and emotional competence by learning, collaborating, and modeling their social and emotional skills. Along with these social and emotional skills, schools must also fold in conversations about race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, language and ability so that the conversation about TSEAL takes into account the student’s fullest identities. It is recommended that schools do a deep dive into
understanding how educators, students, and community can navigate conversations about race, sex, gender, ableism and other social identities in order to establish systems and supports that strengthen both adult and student Social Emotional Academic Learning.

Components of SEL Programing (TSEAL in DPS):

- **Culture and Climate**: A safe and welcoming, supportive, culturally and linguistically reflective environment that fosters learning and growth through an equitable, trauma informed and restorative learning environment.
- **Adult Practices**: In order to cultivate students’ social-emotional skills, adults also need to feel supported and valued. Promoting student Social Emotional Learning (SEL) starts with adults.
- **Explicit Instruction**: Explicitly teaching the DPS TSEAL competencies and Equity focus area (Self Awareness / Identity, Self Management / Agency, Social Awareness/Belonging, Relationship Skills/Collaborative Problem Solving, and Decision Making/curiosity through intentional lessons at the universal level of instruction. Grounded in practical skill application (moving past teaching skills to applying the learning)
- **Academic Integration**: Infuse TSEAL skills and competencies into rigorous content delivery and throughout lesson activities. This provides context and reinforcement of lessons taught during explicit instruction and brings relevance to skill acquisition. Ex: Student practice perspective taking while making hypotheses during a science lesson.

To ensure the effectiveness of universal screening and SEL supports across DPS schools, we have provided the following guidance to building leaders:

- The Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BESS) will be completed for all students using two forms during three screening windows for the 23-24 school year.
- All schools will devote 20 minutes a day E-8 and 20 mins 3xs a week in HS, leveraging either a district-approved SEL curriculum or TSEAL resources. School leadership teams schedule TSEAL blocks for direct instruction and staff training, which is delivered by an instruction specialist.
- All schools may opt into SELweb, a tool they can use to proactively measure, implement, and adjust their universal TSEAL practices in order to support students' acquisition of social emotional skills.
- Required additional TSEAL supports will be customized based on the needs of the school community as identified in the BESS results. Specifically, if schools' Fall 2023 BESS results indicate less than 80% of students are in the Normal Risk category (more specifics on this criteria can be found on page 3 of this draft BESS/SELweb Integration document), then the SELweb must be implemented at the whole school or grade-specific levels.
- If schools have questions regarding their TSEAL implementation, they may reach out to seven instructional specialists in this area on the central office team.
In addition to universal screening and educator observations, interactions, and conversations with students, the following processes also identify youth that benefit from supports from the mental health team:

- **Special Education Processes:** [Federally mandated processes](https://www.ideapublicschools.org/) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- **Discipline Referrals:** Places in the discipline process where social emotional needs are identified and referrals to the mental health team are made
- **Student Safety Protocol Processes:** Standard operating procedures in response to student safety concerns that prompt referrals to the mental health team.

**STUDENT SAFETY PROTOCOL PROCESSES**

Some types of student behaviors are concerning enough that they warrant detailed attention from our mental health team. These concerning behaviors are addressed by three different types of student safety protocol processes:

- **Nonsuicidal Self Injury Protocol:** The [NSSI Protocol](https://www.nssi.org/) is initiated when staff learn that a student has been hurting himself/herself/themself through self-injury.
- **Suicide Risk Review:** A Full [Suicide Risk Review](https://www.cdc.gov/suicideprevention/resource) is completed immediately whenever a student talks about harming him/her/themself, or if there is concern that a student has thoughts about hurting him/her/themself as determined by the Preliminary Suicide Risk Screener
- **Threat Response:** The building Threat Appraisal Team should initiate 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. If that initial protocol warrants it, then a full [Threat Appraisal](https://www.dpsk12.org/) is conducted.

Students are often identified through peer referrals, parent reports, educator observations, law enforcement referrals and anonymous tips flagged through Lightspeed and Safe2Tell Colorado. When a protocol is initiated, this is recorded on the student’s record in our student information system, Infinite Campus. At any time, a school team can run a flag report to monitor implementation needs. As a result, school teams can ensure continuity of support for students during transition periods, such as when they enroll in a different school or return to school after the holidays or other periods of absence.

Once a protocol is initiated, a trained facilitator leads the process and ensures the development of an Action and Intervention Plan. All student safety protocol processes are school-based processes and managed by the school team. Should a student be monitored by the District Safety Review Committee, the school team provides updates pertaining to progress or lack
thereof, and any successes and concerns related to compliance with the school plan to the committee.

Schools are required to develop Action and Intervention plans based on the needs of the student prior to submitting an expulsion request, if warranted by Regulation JK-R. The plan is then referred to the new school of enrollment for review and modified to align with the current school’s systems of response. As outlined in the protocol process, supports may include social emotional mental health supports/programming, Check-in/Check-out, restorative approaches, referrals to community based services, arrival/dismissal procedures, and other responsive supports.

Given that these behaviors are the ones that concern DPS staff and the broader community the most, DPS does not simply wait to react to what could be a potential tragedy. Wherever possible we have identified in advance preventive programming that we can offer as well as a list of potential actions and interventions that can be immediately offered to a student. More detail on these is covered for each of the protocols below. In addition, district workgroups are implemented to support ongoing protocol process reviews and adjustments to ensure our approach reflects both best practice and the needs of our communities.

There are times a concern does not require completion of a student safety protocol. In those cases, a Student Support Plan may be developed. This plan is intended to address common concerns that include, but are not limited to, difficulties with physical boundaries, conflict resolution, bullying, frequently leaving the classroom without permission, and minor verbal and physical aggression. Supports and interventions reflect the individual and unique needs of the student, classroom, and school (as warranted) to ensure safety and student success. The specific actions and interventions are customized to each student in a Student Support Plan. These plans are developed, implemented, and monitored by the school team. Protocol guidance documents support development and implementation practices with students and families.

**Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) Prevention and Intervention**

The TSEAL programming described above is designed to provide students with alternative strategies for coping with challenges and emotions - ones that do not involve self harm. If an action and intervention plan needs to be created for a student in this area examples of student programming in response to self-injurious behavior can be accessed by any DPS employee in the corresponding Schoology training course. The trained facilitators at the school level who run this protocol also have access to consultation from a Student Safety Coordinator.

**Suicide Prevention & Postvention**

DPS has a long history of implementing suicide prevention programming in schools with a focus on 5th, 6th, 9th, and 12th grades. Implementation aligns with best practices outlined in
research and guidance published by professional agencies. Student programming focuses on teaching the warning signs of stress, anxiety, and depression, showing care in a response to an individual at risk, and supporting an individual with accessing a trusted adult.

In partnership with the Denver Department of Public Health Office of Behavioral Health, additional “We Got This” events focused on building resilience and suicide prevention have been implemented in selected schools since the 21-22 school year. Programming includes various partnerships with community mental health organizations that include, but not limited to, Robbie’s Hope, Partner’s for Children’s Mental Health, Judi’s House and Soul Stories. School mental health staff provide annual staff and parent training on suicide prevention to school staff focused on teaching the warning signs, how to respond, and who to access for support should a student be in crisis. In 2019, grant funding was used to secure trainers in the Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) model that serves as a universal, adult gate-keeper training that has since been offered to any DPS staff and school community. Requests for training may be directed to a Student Safety Coordinator.

Following a loss by suicide, DPS follows the guidance outlined in the After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools and other best practices outlined in professional literature. This includes confirming cause of death, confirming parental preferences for information sharing, and attending to the potential for contagion among youth. Booster programming is often implemented and include student, staff, and parent suicide prevention programming.

Collaborative efforts to monitor risk of suicide and trends impacting youth in DPS alongside access to community mental health services are supported through partnerships with other Metro-Denver Districts and mental health agencies such as Colorado Crisis Services, Second Wind Fund, Children’s Hospital, DDPHE, and Colorado Safe Schools Resource Center. Additional grant opportunities to support continuity of school-based programming has been sought from Centura Health and the Office of Suicide Prevention. Community media is supported through partnership opportunities such as sessions produced by DPS EDUCA.

Violence Prevention and Threat Response Process

DPS has a long history of implementing violence prevention programming in schools. Youth violence includes a continuum of behaviors that pose danger to the well-being of students and can include, but are not limited to, fighting, bullying, domestic violence, sexual abuse, threats with weapons, and gang-related violence. Prevention programming includes building safe and welcoming schools, supporting coping skills development, and implementing systems of response to youth violence. Unique to Colorado, school teams provide annual training and/or information on Safe2Tell Colorado to students, staff, and parents to ensure equitable access to anonymous reporting in response to youth violence.
The DPS Threat Response Process is initiated when a student poses a threat, makes a threat, or if there is concern that a student may be about to act out violently. Students are often identified through peer referrals, parent reports, law enforcement referrals, District Attorney Notifications, and anonymous tips flagged through Lightspeed and Safe2Tell Colorado.

In response, a trained facilitator on the school threat response team initiates the Preliminary Information Gathering Form (PIGF) to determine if a Full Threat Appraisal (TA) is warranted. The determination occurs in consultation with a member of the school threat response team. The Full Threat Appraisal requires participation from: 1) the school administrator/designee; a minimum of one general education teacher; and, 3) a school mental health provider. The case manager of an active Section 504 Plan or Individualized Education Plan is always required (when appropriate). There are exceptions to initiating the Full Threat Appraisal which include students in ECE-3rd grade and those identified with disabilities without the consultation of a Student Safety Coordinator. Those considerations are implemented with intent to align the developmental needs of our youngest learners and those impacted by disabilities to address disproportionality trends.

There may be times when a Level II Threat Appraisal is conducted. This meeting is district-facilitated and includes representation from the DPS Department of Climate and Safety and a DPD School Violence Detective. A Level II Threat Appraisal always occurs when there is confirmed possession of a firearm on school grounds. Other discretionary criteria may initiate the Level II process.

In addition to the district workgroups that are implemented to support ongoing safety protocol process reviews and adjustments, a District Safety Review Committee (DSRC) meets monthly to monitor cases that elevate to established criteria that includes crimes of violence outlined in the Claire Davis Act with consideration of other discretionary criteria. Monitoring occurs in collaboration with the school threat response team from the current school of enrollment.

Discontinuation of district monitoring often occurs in response to criteria such as graduation, transition out of DPS enrollment or successful completion of established discontinuation criteria. Regular committee members include Student Safety Coordinators, Truancy and Delinquency Specialist, Sr Manager of Mental Health, Sr Manager of Special Education/designee, Director of Department of Climate and Safety/designee, DPS Operational Services/designee, and the two Discipline Managers. Lastly, monthly meetings with Mental Health and the Department of Climate and Safety departments support review of safety-related trends (e.g., child in crisis calls, protocol trends, etc.).

District processes that also address response to youth violence include, but are not limited to, Mandated Reporting procedures, DPS Title IX/Discrimination Prevention and Response process and an offense-specific safety protocol used to address certain cases involving inappropriate sexual behaviors. Collaborative efforts to monitor trends for youth violence are supported.
through partnerships with Colorado Safe Schools Resource Center and Metro-Denver relationships.

**TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES**

In addition to focused social emotional learning programming, Denver Public Schools is a leader among urban school districts in offering trauma-informed and trauma-specific student supports. The DPS Trauma Informed Practices team offers ongoing professional development opportunities and consultation to broader school teams around the identification and implementation of school-specific trauma-informed practices. Specifically, two members of the Department of Social Work and Psychological Services serve as internal trainers in Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) and Bounce Back, small group, evidence-based interventions for students of all ages who endorse elevated post-traumatic stress symptoms. To-date, these individuals have trained over 150 DPS school psychologists and social workers in these curricula, enabling staff to offer trauma informed support at their respective school sites.

The DPS Prevention and Therapeutic Specialist team is also serving as the intervention group for the first ever large-scale study of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) in school settings, providing students with equitable and efficient access to individual care designed to reduce post-traumatic stress symptoms.

**BULLYING PREVENTION**

Bullying prevention is guided by administrative Policy **JICDE**. DPS believes that learners of all identities and abilities feel a strong sense of belonging, are emotionally supported in school and have the capacity to advocate for themselves and for justice. The Board of Education supports the development and implementation of practices that promote a safe and welcoming school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. The purpose of this policy is to promote consistency of approach to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all.

We define bullying as the use of coercion or intimidation to obtain control over another person or to cause physical, mental or emotional harm to another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal or electronically transmitted expression or by means of a physical act or gesture. Bullying is prohibited against any student for any reason, including but not limited to any such behavior that is directed toward a student on the basis of his or her academic performance or any basis protected by federal and state law or District policy, including race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender status, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability, whether such characteristic(s) is actual or perceived.
Bullying is prohibited on District property, at District or school-sanctioned activities and events, when students are being transported in any vehicle dispatched by the District or one of its schools, or off school property when such conduct has a nexus to school or any District curricular or non-curricular activity or event.

A student who engages in any act of bullying, and/or a student who takes any retaliatory action against a student who reports in good faith an incident of bullying, is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the bullying behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made. Bullying behavior that constitutes unlawful discrimination or harassment shall be subject to investigation and discipline under related Board policies and procedures. Students targeted by bullying when such bullying behavior may constitute unlawful discrimination or harassment also have additional rights and protections under Board policies and procedures regarding unlawful discrimination and harassment.

*Bullying Prevention and Intervention* within the Colorado Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Denver Public Schools’ bullying prevention efforts will be carried out through the Colorado Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (COMTSS) framework, a comprehensive systematic approach to support desired student outcomes and success. Our comprehensive bullying prevention/intervention approach, consists of the following actions:

1. Establish a multidisciplinary team to lead the efforts outlined below (must include at least 1 administrator, 1 mental health professional and 1 teacher).
2. Identify and implement a layered continuum of best practices at the universal, targeted, and intensive level to promote a safe and welcoming school environment (including but not limited to efforts related to character building, social emotional curriculum, and positive behavioral intervention system).
3. Deliver and review a comprehensive screening and assessment of a student's school experience (eg: Student Voice/ Tu Voz survey) at least once every year.
4. Send a clear message to students, staff, guardians and community members that bullying and retaliation against a student who reports bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
5. Implement procedures for immediate investigation and response to reports of bullying behavior.
6. Implement procedures to understand the function of the offender’s bullying behavior and implement a plan to modify bullying behavior.
7. Implement procedures to assess level of impact and provide additional support as needed, to the target and witnesses of bullying (eg: self esteem, self efficacy, confidence, self advocacy).
8. Provide materials to families to understand the impact of bullying, actions the school is taking to prevent and intervene with bullying and what parents can do to prevent and intervene with bullying behavior.

School leaders have been provided with this document with resources and guidance to support the implementation of their bullying prevention efforts.

### MENTAL HEALTH: ADULT SAFETY

#### TRAINING IN CRISIS RESPONSE

The district provides training on what to do in the event of a crisis to both ensure effective action and to promote the psychological safety of the adults in our system. With this in mind, preparedness efforts span across various DPS Departments.

The Department of Mental Health supports training for building administrators/designees serving as part of their School E-Team by providing access to the National Association of School Psychologists PREPaRE Workshop 3. Workshop participants learn how to establish and sustain comprehensive school safety efforts that attend to both physical and psychological safety. The workshop addresses critical components needed to develop, exercise, and evaluate safety and crisis teams and plans and conduct building vulnerability assessments. The model also integrates school personnel and community provider roles in providing school-based crisis preparedness and response activities. Additional topics addressed also include media/social media, communication, reunification, students with disabilities, culture, and memorials.

In the event of a crisis, our school teams are not on their own. Within the model, school mental health staff support the direct training and services to support psychological recovery for students. District Crisis Recovery Team (DCRT) responders further support those responses when the level of response elevates to a district or regional response. Services for youth span across three mental health intervention classifications: 1) Social Support; 2) Psychological Education; and, 3) Psychological Intervention. Examples of services include classroom meetings, parent meetings, development of scripts (classroom, main office), community letters, and guidance to structure school team response and recovery efforts.

Additionally, Student Safety Coordinators coordinate access to in person or remote counseling services through our DPS Employee Assistance Program following a crisis incident. Ongoing collaboration occurs with the DPS Department of Climate and Safety and DPS Department of Communications in all types of crisis response and recovery efforts.

The Department of Mental Health also supports training of DCRT Responders and building mental health teams by providing access to the National Association of School...
Psychologists PREPaRE Workshop 2. This workshop helps mental health providers develop the knowledge and skill required to provide immediate mental health crisis interventions to the students, staff, and school community members who have been simultaneously exposed to an acute traumatic stressor. The knowledge and skill developed within this workshop helps build a bridge to the psychotherapeutic and trauma-informed mental health response sometimes required to address challenges associated with trauma exposure. Additional training can be accessed on DPS Professional Development Days and during other calendared team meetings. Standard operating procedures are provided to support the District Crisis Recovery Team (DCRT).

Additionally, DPS implements the Handle with Care model adopted by DPS and Denver Police Department in the 2019-2020 school year. Youth who experience significant stress from exposure to violent events are more likely to have poor health and negative educational and social outcomes. Reports received from law enforcement helps ensure schools' mental health teams respond within a trauma-informed framework that allows for a handle with care response. Student Safety Coordinators often receive these reports from DPD School Violence Detectives or through DPS Department of Climate and Safety. These additional supports are designed to give our in-building staff confidence that they have the outside support needed to address incidents of violence that are beyond the scope of day-to-day school operations.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS

Belong Groups

Belong groups are intentional spaces for people with similar backgrounds, beliefs and experiences to gather, celebrate and create community. These affinity spaces are designed to promote our belief that we can all show up as our authentic selves and know that we are included and belong in DPS, thus supporting our social emotional well-being. Learn more.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

DPS currently offers a confidential, no-cost service available to all DPS employees and their dependents. The EAP includes confidential, short-term counseling (5 sessions per event per year) for employees and/or their dependents. Other EAP services include financial counseling, legal support, work-life solutions, and a comprehensive online, self-service portal.

TherapyDirect

Same-day, online, crisis counseling is a service available to adults ages 18+ in the Denver metro area Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:30 PM. TherapyDirect provides quick access to a counselor for a confidential 55-minute online session, while support staff help with local referrals. Individuals
can receive up to three sessions a year at **NO COST** and interpretation services are available upon request.

**Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) for Leaders**

Facilitated by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, MHFA is a high-impact, skills-based training program that teaches leaders how to identify, understand and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges in the workplace. This is a four-hour, virtual training intended for a small group of leaders from the same organization.

**Health Promotion Activities**

The Employee Wellness team offers a variety of health promotion resources and programs to support employees holistically, including their physical, financial, and emotional health - all aspects of one's being that affect their mental health. These resources are promoted to employees through the Wellness Champion Network, Team DPS and Leader Weekly, and the Employee Wellness Monthly Newsletter. Specifically, emotional health resources include:

- Mindfulness sessions at NEW and TEAL Days; mindfulness multi-week series to follow
- Onsite meditation classes
- Virtual and onsite yoga classes
- Work of Art: Emotional Health 4-week Challenge
- Calm, Headspace, and MyStrength apps

**Reach One Mentoring**

Reach One Mentoring provides confidential space for new teachers of color to build meaningful professional relationships, allowing them to be their most authentic self. Through this opportunity, mentees will build a greater level of trust, sense of belonging and support to grow and succeed within DPS. [Learn more.](#)

**Values-Based Leadership Development**

The Culture, Learning and Development team offers values-based leadership learning experiences to provide DPS team members space to learn, grow and have a positive impact. We know our employees want to have opportunities to grow and develop in ways that honors their unique strengths and talents. [Learn more.](#)

**Wellness Champion Program**

Wellness Champions are onsite ambassadors for the Employee Wellness Department. They are tasked with supporting the health and wellness needs and interests of their coworkers,
promoting resources and available programs to employees, and facilitating activities with staff. Wellness Champions have funding available to them to support their onsite staff wellness initiatives, including the Mini Grant Program which provides funding to a select number of sites to implement sustainable, capital improvements to the workplace environment. Mini Grant projects have included the creation of onsite lactation rooms for new mothers, staff lounge renovations, and ergonomic seating for staff.

### SCHOOL CONDITIONS

School conditions are those that cultivate a safe and welcoming climate and culture throughout the school. They include not just physical safety, but also psychological safety, connectedness, and a sense of belonging. When trying to create 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 that supports them can thrive.

### SCHOOL/BUILDING SAFETY

#### SAFETY AUDITS

Educational agencies and institutions face a myriad of threats that include tornadoes, hurricanes, student bullying, drugs, and gang violence, just to name a few. School officials conduct assessments to properly prepare and mitigate these hazards on a continuous basis. The threat of gun violence in schools necessitates attention across the spectrum of emergency management mission areas: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. The vision and sample core capabilities of each phase are shown below along with their correlation to how schools should apply them per their ED’s Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (pg. 3 [K-12 School Security: A guide for preventing and protecting against gun violence](https://example.com)). For 2023, DPS is in process of conducting District-wide building assessments to evaluate building conditions. These assessments will be conducted based on best practices and include physical infrastructure recommendations such as secure vestibules, camera placement, lighting, etc.
DPS conducts building safety audits every 3 years following the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) program.

DPS is committed to working with a newly established Denver Metro DPS Peer Support Team DPS Department of Safety and CISA (a federal agency charged with assessing major threats to critical US infrastructure) to conduct and evaluate the infrastructure in our school district. The following is the Criteria for CISA assessments.
BACKGROUND
The Multi-Asset and System Assessment (MASA) is a voluntary assessment process applicable to infrastructure systems, large campuses, and clusters of infrastructure. The MASA process collects data at the enterprise and asset levels and provides infrastructure owners and operators with the following: a ranked list of assets based on their relative criticality, an overview of applicable attack types by asset, and security vulnerabilities and options for consideration. The final product is an integrated resource that includes geospatial information, interactive dashboards on security and dependencies factors, and a written report.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
CiSA conducts a MASA in collaboration with the infrastructure owner. The Protective Security Advisor (PSA) leads the coordination and data collection in the field and involves regional partners, such as fellow PSAs and regional analysts, as needed to complete all phases of the MASA. The criticality phase of the assessment is conducted through a series of webinars or onsite meetings and generates an asset ranking. The ranking assists in the determination of which assets warrant an onsite security site visit. Typical owner involvement includes the equivalent of 3-8 days often dispersed over a period of a couple months, but this commitment is flexible based on the needs of the organization and availability of personnel required for the assessment.

MASA PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE 1</th>
<th>PHASE 2</th>
<th>PHASE 3</th>
<th>PHASE 4</th>
<th>PHASE 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval and Preparation</td>
<td>Enterprise-level Assessment</td>
<td>Security Site Visits</td>
<td>Development of Options for Consideration</td>
<td>Final Products Development and Delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule and Pre-assessment</td>
<td>Facilitated Criticality Discussion</td>
<td>Identification of Vulnerabilities</td>
<td>Draft Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Asset Identification</td>
<td>Background Research Materials</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In most cases, engagement with the following enterprise personnel (or similar titles) is required:

- Facilities manager or engineering
- Chief information officer or representative from information technology
- Security manager, may include onsite law enforcement
- Human resources
DPS is in the process of retraining all employees, students and leadership in the Standard Response Protocol. Used in over 40,000 schools across the globe, the SRP is a uniform, planned, and practiced response to any incident is the foundation of a safe school. Safe business. Safe community. The SRP is action-based, flexible, and easy to learn. It rationally organizes tactics for response to weather events, fires, accidents, intruders and other threats to personal safety.
The SRP’s development is ever-evolving, created with extensive collaboration between experts such as first responders, public safety, school, districts, and communities. Its tactics are data-driven, researched and based on experience and contemporary practices.

The benefits of SRP become quickly apparent. By standardizing the vocabulary, all stakeholders can understand the response and status of the event.

For students, this provides continuity of expectations and actions throughout their educational career. For teachers, this becomes a simpler process to train and drill. For communities, it leverages the growing adoption of the protocols from residents of all ages. For first responders, the common vocabulary and protocols establish a greater predictability that persists through the duration of an incident.

People easily understand the practices and can reinforce the protocol. Additionally, this protocol enables rapid response determination when an unforeseen event occurs.

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### IN AN EMERGENCY

#### TAKE ACTION

**HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.**

**STUDENTS**
Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced.
Do business as usual.

**ADULTS**
Close and lock the door.
Account for students and adults.
Do business as usual.

**SECURE! Get inside. Lock outside doors.**

**STUDENTS**
Return to inside of building.
Do business as usual.

**ADULTS**
Bring everyone indoors.
Lock outside doors.
Increase situational awareness.
Account for students and adults.
Do business as usual.

**LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.**

**STUDENTS**
Move away from sight.
Maintain silence.
Do not open the door.

**ADULTS**
Recover students from hallway if possible.
Lock the classroom door.
Turn out the lights.
Move away from sight.
Maintain silence.
Do not open the door.
Prepare to evade or defend.

**EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)**

**STUDENTS**
Leave stuff behind if required to.
If possible, bring your phone.
Follow instructions.

**ADULTS**
Lead students to Evacuation location.
Account for students and adults.
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults.

**SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.**

**STUDENTS**
Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard.

**Hazard**
- Tornado
- Hurricane
- Earthquake
- Tsunami

**Safety Strategy**
- Evacuate to shelter area
- Seal the room
- Drop, cover and hold
- Get to high ground

**ADULTS**
Lead safety strategy.
Account for students and adults.
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults.
COLLABORATION WITH CITY DEPARTMENTS

DPS is working with the city’s Department of Safety (DOS) to develop an alternative to citation program that will create a streamlined process for accessing the resources in the city’s voluntary youth diversion program, which aims to keep youth out of the juvenile justice system.

Our crisis response also leverages the City’s Department of Public Health and Environment’s Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) Program, which deploys emergency response teams that include Emergency Medical Technicians and Behavioral Health Clinicians to engage individuals experiencing distress related to mental health issues, poverty, homelessness, and substance misuse.

Safe and Welcoming Building Plans

SAFE AND WELCOMING SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The Denver Public Schools District priorities for the 23/24 school year are two-fold: 1) Create Safe and Welcoming Environments by working diligently to examine school and classroom systems aimed at engaging students, providing them the supports they need, and helping adults identify what their students need to thrive in school everyday. 2) Students have access to Grade Level Texts and Tasks. Similar to the first goal, DPS wants students to read and write on grade level, and as a result fully capable of accessing engaging curriculum that 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. In meeting our goals, the district fully anticipates this will be a major deterrent to unsafe and disengaged behaviors at the student level, and support them in better accessing the opportunities around them, while also allowing them to pursue their passions and purpose.

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, specifically students of color, SWD and MLLs, experience a safe and welcoming classroom that honors their diverse cultures, languages and identities (including sexual orientation and gender identity). Key “look fors” in this area include:

- Students demonstrate curiosity and think critically about diverse viewpoints and interrogate historic systems and prevailing currents of thought.
- Students exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.
- Students use growth mindset language, demonstrate empathy and compassion for each other.
• Students encourage their peers to take academic risks, share ideas and persevere through productive struggle.
• Student work and art reflecting student life experiences and identities.
• Students have opportunities for brain breaks during transitions and differentiated movement incorporated into instructional activities.

Practice #2: All students experience high quality Transformative Social Emotional and Academic Learning (TSEAL) lessons and/or TSEAL integration throughout all content areas. Key “look fors” in this area include:
• Students use voice and agency when demonstrating leadership skills, leading activities and group discussions.
• Students set personal and collective goals and can name what is needed to achieve them.
• Students engage in teamwork effectively and apply collaborative problem solving skills.
• Students examine prejudices and bias, listen to multiple perspectives and demonstrate curiosity and agency to challenge and address inequities.
• Students link feelings, values, and beliefs to content learning.
• Students have a voice and choice in lessons and activities.

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). Key “look fors” in this area include:
• Artifacts throughout the school show extensive opportunities for student leadership.
• Extracurricular and enrichment opportunities exist that reflect the school’s diverse cultures and identities.
• Affinity spaces exist for students.
• Students use common spaces to connect and collaborate.
• Students hold each other accountable for high behavior expectations throughout the school.
• Students greet one another, staff and visitors without prompting.

Classroom and school observations are a regular part of the school management process, so these “look fors” articulate a clear set of goals for our building leaders and their staff, ones on which they can receive consistent and reliable feedback throughout the school year. To support schools with the implementation of safe and welcoming spaces, we offer a variety of supports around transformational social emotional and academic learning (TSEAL) and culturally sustaining and responsive education (CRE).

SAFETY OPERATIONAL PLANS

Advance planning for emergencies and disasters is essential to provide for the safety of students, staff, and visitors in the schools, should a threat to safety arise. It also strengthens the morale of all concerned to know that preparedness plans exist and that students and staff
have been trained in carrying them out. Mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery are the phases of emergency management covered in the DPS Emergency Management Plan (E-Plan) Google form. This form is used to capture school data to create the Emergency Management Plan. Annually, schools are asked to complete the DPS E-Plan. Additional information can be found in DPS Administrative Policy KDE.

SCHOOL EMERGENCY TEAMS (E-TEAM)

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. Those building staff chosen as a member of an E-Team are required to attend an annual training presented by the Department of Climate and Safety. The Emergency operations plan (EOP) is to be filled out and submitted by each school to the department of climate and safety at the beginning of each school year. This document outlines each member of the school E-Team by name and title. To ensure schools are prepared to respond to life safety incidents, the department of climate and safety also completes two drills with each school building annually in addition to the E-Team training.

E-Team training includes DPS and Colorado Senate bills pertaining to life safety incidents on or near school property, NIMS (National Incident Management System), ICS (Incident Command System), fire code, bullying and suicide prevention, safe to tell, situational awareness, emergency drills, Emergency Operation Plan (EOP), SRP (Standard Response Protocol), evacuation maps, access control, security technology, reunification and recovery. Schools may also request additional training and these requests are handled on a case by case basis.

DPS works diligently to ensure the physical and psychological recovery of students and adults impacted by a crisis event. It is important to name that recovery is the expected outcome for individuals following a crisis incident. Recovery is best supported by appropriately aligning recovery needs to the service provision that supports stabilization and return to learning in the least impactful way.

Initially after a crisis incident has been stabilized, school teams triage student needs with consideration of crisis variables that include the predictability, duration, intensity, and consequences of a crisis event. There are times when a crisis response exceeds a building team’s ability to support recovery and requires collaboration with DPS District Crisis Recovery Team (DCRT), DPS Department of Climate and Safety, DPS Communications, and other DPS Departments. In rare situations, collaboration may extend to community and state agencies and require crisis support from other district partners (e.g., metro and state crisis teams).
Services provided to students span across three levels of intervention: 1) social support; 2) psychological education; and 3) psychological intervention. Implementation of these services is commonly supported by school mental health providers. As communities stabilize, support is faded out to help students return to a sense of normalcy and well-being.

For 2023, there will be greater emphasis on mandatory emergency management training for all District staff.

**STUDENT ENROLLMENT**

**ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT PROCESS AND ONLINE SCHOOL EXPANSION**

Parents have the option, through the school choice process, to select from a variety of schools with different programming based on what they believe would be the best fit for their family, including our pathway high schools, which have models designed to serve youth who may have struggled in more traditional classroom environments, and our online school. Based on an increase in demand, DPS plans to expand its online school.

The process for determining alternative placement options for students by the district is governed by Federal law, specifically the completion of Section 504 and processes associated with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As a district we strongly believe that in person learning is the best option for students, because it allows us to support students in developing resiliency, visions for their futures, and the skills needed to achieve their dreams, key components of youth violence prevention efforts.

In addition to options offered by Denver Public Schools, the city has a “Helping Youth Pursue Excellence” (HYPE) Program which provides academic, vocational and financial empowerment support to youth who are on diversion, pretrial release, or probation.

**STUDENT TRANSFERS FROM OTHER DISTRICTS**

When a student transitions from an out of district school, the school team should be requesting prior school records as part of the enrollment process. School teams are reminded to request any prior safety protocols in response to safety needs. School teams may reach out to a Student Safety Coordinator who can also request prior safety protocols from prior districts of enrollment.

**STUDENT SEARCHES**

Administrative Policy [J1H](#) governs “Student Interviews, Interrogations, Searches and Arrests.” In addition to searches based on reasonable suspicion, which may arise unexpectedly, 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 [Preliminary Information Gathering Form](#) or
Full Threat Appraisal). Because Action and Intervention Plans are individually tailored to a student’s unique situation, practices may vary around frequency and extent of searches, what items a student is allowed to carry while on campus, and what the response to any possible non compliance might look like. The District recently addressed search processes during a Conversation with Deans and other leaders on Friday, April 7, 2023. Some answers to search related questions addressed during that meeting can be found here.

SYSTEM CONDITIONS

So far, we have covered how we will support the psychological safety of our youth and school staff as well as how we promote conditions for resiliency and safety in our school buildings and communities. This section addresses the systems and structures that support those efforts, covering the various ways DPS aims to promote both 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 is fortunate to have a diverse portfolio of schools in our district. 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; However DPS is constantly evaluating different ways we can support not only the learning environment of our students, but also the individual support systems of our students.

DPS DRIVEN SYSTEM CONDITIONS

SYSTEMS FOR SAFETY

CLIMATE AND SAFETY STAFF

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY CLARITY

In 2020, the DPS Board of Education voted to remove School Resource Officers from schools by the end of the 2020-21 school year. After the school shooting on March 22, 2023, Superintendent Dr. Alex Marrero immediately moved to reinstate School Resource Officers at comprehensive high schools until June 30, 2023. This decision was supported by the Board of Education on March 23, 2023. The chart below was created to delineate the various roles Climate and Safety and DPD Police Officers have in DPS.
The Department of Climate and Safety is staffed with safety personnel to keep our schools safe. Campus Safety Officers are staffed at comprehensive high schools and middle schools. Patrol officers are on patrol throughout the District to respond as necessary. DPS is in the process of conducting a staffing analysis to evaluate CSO presence and where more staff may be needed or how resources can be shared. We will continue to build our relationship and partnership with Denver Police in support of our schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Armed/Unarmed</th>
<th>DPD Police Officers</th>
<th>School Resource Officer</th>
<th>DoCS Patrol Officer</th>
<th>Campus Safety Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armed/Unarmed</td>
<td>Armed</td>
<td>Armed</td>
<td>Armed</td>
<td>Unarmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>POST (Police Officers Standards &amp; Training) certified by the state and commissioned by the City and County</td>
<td>POST certified and commissioned by the City and County</td>
<td>Not post certified or commissioned. Often former military, police, or CSO’s. Complete academy and many POST level trainings</td>
<td>Unarmed, but have significant training to include safety and security procedures, emergency response, crisis intervention, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed by</td>
<td>Works for the City and County of Denver (DPD)</td>
<td>Works for the City and County of Denver (DPD)</td>
<td>Work for Denver Public Schools</td>
<td>School based safety resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duties/Responsibilities</td>
<td>Patrol City and County of Denver and respond to calls for service</td>
<td>Assigned to DPS Schools to bridge the gap between schools and law enforcement, provide law enforcement presence, liaison with DPD when needed, and occasionally take enforcement action</td>
<td>Patrol the district and respond to call for service in the district that don’t require DPD</td>
<td>Assist school in safety and security matters, build relationships with students and leadership,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Manages</td>
<td>Managed by DPD</td>
<td>Managed by DPD with input from the school admin and DoCS</td>
<td>Managed by DoCS</td>
<td>Managed by DoCS with significant input from school admin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EDUCATION AND TRAINING:
Climate and safety staff participate in an extensive training program to prepare for and prevent emergency situations. Training is evaluated for compliance as well as to enhance the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to Resistance</th>
<th>Bias training (district class)</th>
<th>Trauma informed practices (district class)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Weapon safety (unarmed officers)</td>
<td>Legal presentation searching &amp; handcuffing (district class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Writing</td>
<td>Parking Citations</td>
<td>NCI/CPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio communication</td>
<td>Special event procedure and Evolv weapon system</td>
<td>Management of Aggressive Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department policy</td>
<td>Emergency Management</td>
<td>First aid/AED &amp; tourniquet training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk assessment &amp; student discipline (district class)</td>
<td>DOS climate team</td>
<td>Mandatory reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alarms and building searches (armed officers)</td>
<td>Geography and navigation (armed officers)</td>
<td>High risk vehicle contacts (armed officers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health check procedures (armed officers)</td>
<td>24 hr Emergency vehicle operation course (armed officers)</td>
<td>56 hr Firearms basic (armed officers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 hr Tactical response to active killer</td>
<td>40 hr CIT Crisis intervention training</td>
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SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SROs)

The decision to have SROs in schools is determined by the Board of Education. Executive Limitation 10.10 states:

“The Superintendent will:
10. Not staff district schools with school resource officers or the consistent presence of security armed with guns or any other law enforcement personnel;”

Based on the Memo of Directives created by the Board, this item 10.0 in Executive Limitation 10 is currently paused and is scheduled to resume on June 30th, 2023 unless the Board of Education takes further action.

It is the recommendation of Superintendent Dr. Alex Marrero to the Board of Education to allow all district-run high schools and 6th-12th campuses to engage their school communities to make
a site-based decision regarding SROs on their campuses. The decision to house Denver Police Department SROs by 6th-12th campuses would occur annually and must involve the use of a community engagement process.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS AND TIMELINES

Quick and accurate communication is vital in an emergency situation. That being said, we acknowledge that students with cell phones will be able to communicate with their families even before the DPS Communications Department is made aware of the situation. This leads to the DPS team being behind before they even begin. Additionally, it is possible that the information that is initially shared by people within the school may not be accurate. That is why it is vital that the Director of External Communications is notified quickly so that they can act accordingly and begin communicating accurate information to families as soon as possible.

In the event of a school lockdown, the Department of Climate and Safety will send an initial SchoolMessenger communication (DPS's automated messaging system) to approved family members. This message should be brief, sharing only the details that are known at the time.

Parents are notified of major incidents as soon as DPS Public Safety validates the incident. If a secure perimeter occurs within 15 minutes of school release, the Department of Climate and Safety will send out the initial SchoolMessenger to approved family members notifying them of the security status due to activities that are occurring outside of the building and that the dismissal of students may be delayed because of the secure perimeter. After the initial message, Denver Public Schools External Communications will send out continuous SchoolMessenger communications if the incident continues past 15 minutes.

In the case of an extended crisis incident and school lockdown, the Communications Department will establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) to ensure all future communications are timely and consistent across all communication platforms. The Communications Department will utilize SchoolMessenger, the DPS website, DPS social media, and any other communication platforms necessary to ensure that messaging is received by anyone who needs to hear it. The JIC will provide updates to families through these platforms every 15 minutes until the crisis is under control. A closeout message will be sent to let families know not to expect additional updates.

In some cases, a crisis incident will require a community letter. Building leaders should direct those requests to the DPS Department of Communications. Consultation with a Student Safety Coordinator may occur prior to finalizing the community letter. The DPS Department of Communications maintains a copy of letters shared with community members following a crisis incident. In most cases, community letters are shared as quickly as possible following a crisis incident.
Should a parent meeting be provided as part of the crisis response and recovery activities, collaboration across various DPS Departments occurs to ensure the content aligns with the needs of the community.

We are in the process of evaluating and enhancing communication protocols to include crisis management systems, notifications, Incident Activation and Management Platforms including panic buttons for school staff.

**DISCIPLINE PRACTICES AND POLICIES**

Discipline practices in the district, which primarily refer to the use of in school suspension, out of school suspension, and expulsion, are governed by Administration Policy **JK**, Regulation **JK-R**, and the **matrix**, a widely used guidance document to support with the implementation of JK and JK-R. These are public facing documents that can be accessed by any employee, parent/guardian, or community member at any time.

DPS discipline practices also include implementation of “ladder steps” to help address behavior at the lowest level possible, prior to the use of any exclusionary practices, or in tandem with discipline if warranted. 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.

Discipline work is supported centrally by two discipline program managers, as well as the Superintendent’s Designee for Discipline. Each school is expected to have a Discipline Building Leader (DBL) who is well-trained and well-versed in these policies. Roughly twice per month, DBLs and other leaders are invited to attend meetings with the discipline program managers to keep their training current and stay up to date on best practices with discipline, as well as intersecting bodies of work, such as special education, restorative practices, culture and climate building, etc.

Restorative justice practices are referenced consistently throughout the discipline ladder steps as part of DPS’s commitment to equity. A full description of how restorative practices are applied may be found [here](#). This guide is written for educators, families, and community members who understand that traditional, punitive discipline policies and practices are ineffective, do not support students, and have a disproportionate impact on students of color. This guide hopes to build the capacity of educators and community members to implement a positive approach to discipline in the form of restorative practices. Restorative practices build community and promote healthy relationships among educators and students in order to teach the social-emotional and conflict-resolution skills necessary to reduce conflict.
DPS policies and practices around discipline are rooted in and compliant with state and federal law, and wherever possible, this work is implemented consistently with the District’s core values, including Students First and Equity. High level behavior concerns should be addressed through a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach to help ensure safety and positive outcomes, including exploring and responding to any connection to trauma, disability, and other possible root causes for behavioral issues.

Like all school districts in Colorado, DPS reports discipline data to CDE annually. More information can be found here. DPS has also reported safety and discipline related data.

**DISTRICT CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM**

DPS District Crisis Recovery Team (DCRT) works to support schools with response and recovery efforts following a crisis. DCRT Responders include school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, school counselors and other staff that serve as district responders when a crisis exceeds the building’s ability to support recovery.

DCRT Responders implement services aligned with the NASP PREPaRE Model in collaboration with DPS Communications and DPS Department of Climate and Safety. Staff may access support through the Employee Assistance Program and other public agencies. Parents/caregivers may learn more about a school’s crisis response and recovery efforts by contacting the mental health team.

Families needing support can reach out to the school social worker or school psychologist for information on mental health resources that may be available to families. Resources that families can access outside of the instructional day or during a school holiday include, but are not limited to, Colorado Crisis Services for crisis support, the Second Wind Fund for counseling in response to risk of suicide, or Judi’s House for grief and loss services.

**INCIDENT COMMAND**

Crisis incidents can occur at a minimal, building, district, or regional level. Minimal level responses often require one to three staff members who can support recovery needs. A building level response likely disrupts the day to day routines of a school and can be supported by the school E-Team. District level responses exceed a building team’s capacity and requires additional deployment of district staff. District teams tend to access community agencies and other mental health partners to respond during regional responses as they exceed the school and district’s ability to support recovery efforts.

The type of response is often informed by crisis event variables including predictability, duration, intensity, and consequences. It is likely that the trauma impact is greater when a crisis event is perceived to be caused by people and perceived as intentional.
More specifically, when an incident occurs, Denver Public Schools refers to its Incident Command Structure (ICS).

In the event an incident requires some level of Incident Command System (ICS) activation, this is the structure used to guide the decision making process. As illustrated, the City, School and District incident commanders are at the same level to illustrate the formation of a unified command; however, the District Incident Commander bubble is slightly larger meaning decisions made by both the City and School incident commander must be communicated with the District Incident Commander.

As noted above, the ICS is scalable and does not require a full activation to effectively respond to a small scale incident; however, the ICS structure becomes necessary once the scale of the incident is identified to have the potential to necessitate a district level response. For instance, a building level response, such as a weather related emergency, may require a small scale activation so only a site incident commander is necessary. The incident commander has the choice to only activate those sections of the ICS structure they deem necessary to effectively respond to the incident.

The Denver Public Schools Department of Climate and Safety operates on the “all-hazards” approach to emergency management. Rather than managing planning initiatives for a multitude of threat scenarios, all-hazard planning develops capacities and capabilities that are critical to prepare for a full spectrum of emergencies or disasters. With this concept in mind the ICS structure can be activated for a small scale event which may affect a single school or on a larger scale at the district, city, state or even national level.

Deactivation of the ICS structure is simply communicated to the E-Team, by the incident commander via conventional methods at the conclusion of an event. Depending on the scale of the event the entire event timeline may be a few minutes to many hours or even days. The ICS structure allows for replacement personnel, in shifts, for events which require an extended timeline.

WEAPON DETECTION SYSTEMS

Weapons detection technology is designed to create an effective barrier between firearms and people in schools. This could be achieved by using low profile entry-based weapons detection systems similar to those currently being used in other school districts such as Baltimore Public Schools and in sports arenas, airports and courts. Weapons detection technology can provide artificial intelligence to process students, staff and visitors through 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 (average hourly and maximum visitors and alerts). The use of these
systems will require staff personnel to manage during peak times at school start. Other systems currently present within all DOS buildings include access control at select doors as well as surveillance systems at all perimeter doors to determine if doors are propped open.

The determination of a weapon detection system at a school or district building will be a site-based decision with extensive community engagement.

PROMOTING YOUTH RESILIENCY

YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Unfortunately the challenges that lead to violence for our older youth often have roots that start much earlier in life. With this in mind, DPS’ efforts to prevent youth violence and promote youth resilience start in our elementary schools.

Youth violence prevention in elementary schools include all aspects of universal social-emotional learning. This includes building a positive climate and culture, establishing norms and routines, and 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.

Targeted programming is often completed at the grade or classroom levels. This includes annual implementation of suicide prevention in 5th grade classrooms using Riding the Waves. Other programs may be selected based on student needs and may include programs such as Second Step or Zones of Regulation.

Community services that are implemented in schools may include education on sexual harassment, lessons on consent, healthy relationships, and anonymous reporting on topics related to violence. Partners in this work may include Denver Children’s Advocacy Center, Safe2Tell Colorado and Colorado Safe Schools Resource Center.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATION

Culturally responsive education helps the Denver Public Schools address school safety by helping schools establish a positive and inclusive school culture where students feel valued, respected, and safe. We believe that when students feel connected to their school community and have positive relationships with their teachers and peers, they are less likely to engage in risky behaviors or acts of violence. Culturally responsive education recognizes and celebrates the diversity of students' backgrounds, which can help to reduce conflicts and misunderstandings that can lead to bullying, harassment, or other forms of violence.
Historically, our students marginalized by systemic inequalities based on race, ethnicity, language, ability or gender and sexuality, have not experienced curriculum and instruction that centers and celebrates their rich backgrounds, experiences, and cultural lineages. Traditional curricula have centered White, middle-class norms and narratives and positioned those above mentioned students as having deficiencies needing to be overcome and replaced. Our students have not seen themselves or their cultural ways of being honored in their learning experiences leading to a lack of a sense of belonging and psychological safety.

We have committed to radically transform curriculum and instruction to provide culturally responsive-sustaining learning experiences for our students. We seek to “...perpetuate and foster—to sustain—[the] linguistic, literate and cultural pluralism of our students. As our young people experience learning, they’re identities and cultural ways of being will be held as assets and sustained as they extend/further develop their academic and social repertoire.” (Paris, Alim, 2017, p.1).

As outlined in the DPS Board Know Justice Know Peace resolution, the Board 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!”

The focus on designing culturally responsive-sustaining curriculum is aiding us in building our educators mindsets and capacity to elevate students’ assets and nurture the sustaining of their heritages. We are supporting leaders and teachers in deepening their cultural competence and critical consciousness to not only implement revised/new curriculum with integrity and sensitivity but also cultivate psychologically safe and uplifting learning environments.

In these ways, the Denver Public Schools’ approach to culturally responsive education helps to build students' social and emotional skills, which are critical for preventing violent behavior. By incorporating culturally relevant materials, perspectives, and practices into the curriculum, teachers can create a learning environment that is engaging and relevant to students' lives. This can increase students' motivation to learn and reduce their likelihood of disengaging from school. Additionally, culturally responsive education can help students develop empathy and understanding towards others, reducing instances of conflict and promoting peaceful resolution of disputes. Ultimately, by promoting a positive and inclusive school climate and building students' social and emotional skills, culturally responsive education can contribute to a safer and more peaceful learning environment.
CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Youth who believe that they have bright futures ahead of them 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 that they can find one that engages and excites them.

Since 2014, DPS has offered access to high-quality work-based learning opportunities for K-12th graders. 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.

This work-based learning programming has had over 50,000 student enrollments since its inception and the team continues to innovate by designing affinity-group resources and targeted experiences for their most vulnerable populations. Recently, they have forged partnerships with the District’s summer school program, as well as community-based organizations to reach more youth and help shape their career identity. Central and school-based staff support student engagement at no cost to the school/families. Inquiries can be directed to careerandcollegesuccess@dpsk12.org.

In addition, the Denver Youth Employment program provides youth paid work experiences and comprehensive wraparound support at North High School, Manual High School, Respect Academy, Lincoln High School and Creative Learning Academy.

ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to our work-based learning programming, which aims to help youth identify their desired career paths, DPS offers a wide range of advanced, engaging educational opportunities for our youth that allow them to actively pursue their goals in high school, increasing the relevance of their learning experiences. Since these programs serve to keep kids engaged in their learning and focused on their futures, we see these opportunities as a key component of youth violence prevention efforts.

DPS offers students access to concurrent enrollment (CE), Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programming, and career technical education (CTE) that allows them to enroll in higher education organizations in pursuit of their career interests. All programs are free of charge to DPS students and their families. DPS currently has over 6000 students in Concurrent Enrollment, 4000 in AP and 2300 in IB. Any and all students are encouraged to take these courses and high schools receive both implementation support and advanced allocation funding to support the creation of these courses on their campus. Students can also take College Select Concurrent Enrollment on the campus of Community College of Denver (CCD), Metro State University (MSU) and Community College of Aurora (CCA) at no cost. Students who
take these courses consistently have higher graduation rates, lower remediation rates and higher college acceptance rates.

DPS offers Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways in both middle and high schools. These CTE pathways lead to a career with an industry certificate in areas such as nursing, business, IT, cybersecurity, engineering and many others. Students have the opportunity to take CTE pathway courses, complete an internship if applicable and earn a certificate that can be applied to an Associate or Bachelor’s program upon high school graduation. Many certificates also translate directly into the workforce. Currently, DPS offers CTE pathways at almost every comprehensive and traditional high school. These programs lead to high growth, high wage careers for students and gives them real world, applicable learning in high school.

COMMUNITY HUBS

Sometimes our students are unable to engage due to factors that have little to do with their experiences at school. With this in mind, 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 in English, employment services, including writing a resume, job searching and interview skills, support accessing employment through DPS, computer skills, citizenship classes, classes to learn English and Spanish, financial coaching, Energy Outreach Assistance, basic needs assistance, including referrals to Denver Human Services and community agencies, social-emotional support services, health and nutrition workshops, early childhood literacy classes, and parenting workshops.

Similar to our community hubs, but focused on providing services to our high need youth in Central Region Pathways high schools, The Village at CLA is a place where current and former students, graduates and their families may turn to meet needs and address the challenges they have identified as consistently and substantially disruptive to engagement in school and employment, and the achievement of life goals. The Village addresses unmet needs related to poverty, housing insecurity, difficulty obtaining employment, significant emotional and/or mental health struggles, and family and social issues by providing: mental health counseling, substance misuse intervention services, mentoring, outreach and gang intervention and violence reduction services (Urban Impact), post-secondary counseling, clothing and basic needs support, food support (Food For Thought, Stigma), connection to paid work opportunities, career exploration, job readiness training, financial literacy and GED programming (Emily Griffith’s GED program).
OUT OF SCHOOL TIME

Youth who are engaged in constructive, engaging activities outside of school are also less likely to engage in risky and violent behaviors. With this in mind, DPS offers a variety of opportunities designed to engage students when they are not in school.

Summer Learning Opportunities

DPS currently offers multiple district-run Summer Learning opportunities. Two of the largest opportunities are Summer Connections and Discovery Link.

Summer Connections is offered at 10 DPS elementary schools and can serve up to 200 students. Summer Connections (redesigned Summer Academy) is a free, 5-week academic program that is open to rising 1st through 5th-grade students. This full-day program focuses on preparing all elementary students for future success. Students will engage with content they will see in the upcoming school year, which will include instruction in foundational literacy, math and science. Enrichment partners will guide students for 60 minutes each day through hands-on activities aligned with that day’s academic lessons.

Discovery Link Summer Camp is offered at 16 DPS elementary schools and can serve up to 165 students daily. Discovery Link Summer Camp is a full day offering from 7am - 5:30pm for 8 weeks and is licensed by the state of Colorado. The majority of the camps serve students 3 to 12 years old, but some accept students up to age 15. Students participate in fun and engaging activities supporting relationship-building skills, movement, and creativity. The program is a multi-subject offering that could include SEAL (Social Emotional and Academic Learning), Physical Education, Art, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math), Dance, Music, Chess, Field Trips, and many more activities.

The DPS Student Safety Coordinator team provides school teams with access to training and protocol guidance to respond to student safety needs during district-run summer learning programs. Additional training is offered to our partners on topics such as suicide prevention and student safety protocol processes.

Before and After School Opportunities

DPS partners with numerous before and after school partners, including but not limited to Boys and Girls Club of Metro Denver, Breakthrough Kent, City Year Denver, Colorado Gear UP, Colorado I Have a Dream (CIHAD, Colorado Uplift, Denver Urban Scholars, Colorado Youth for a Change, Denver Scholarship Foundation, Generation Teach, Girls Inc, Goodwill Denver, Mile High United Way, Project PAVE, Reading Partners, Scholars Unlimited, YESS Institute, Launch Network, and the Mi Casa Resource Center.
We actively wish to partner with our communities to find enriching, culturally relevant opportunities. We recognize that this is often easiest to do if community organizations can meet our students where they are. With this in mind, we make it possible for any local community organization to request use of our facilities space via our community use process. We have also streamlined our processes for more comprehensive partnerships with community organizations so that the vetting process for safety and quality can happen once at the district level, and then an organization may engage with any of our schools. For more information on this, visit the Extended Learning website.

In addition to these partnerships, the district also runs a before and after school program called Discovery Link. Licensed by the state of Colorado, Discovery Link is currently offered at 50 DPS schools and will be at 60 starting for the 2023-2024 school year. Students participate in fun and engaging activities supporting relationship-building skills, movement, and creativity. Similar to the Summer Camp offering, the program is a multi-subject offering that could include SEAL (Social Emotional and Academic Learning), Physical Education, Art, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math), Dance, Music, Chess, and many more activities.

Each program intentionally provides a “High Impact Offering” to all students within the first 15 minutes of programming in all After School Discovery Link Programs. A High Impact Offering is an intentional activity that gives all students a meaningful experience. Some examples include: Welcoming Rituals, SEAL, Team/Culture Builder, Seasonal Activity, Student Public Speaking/Presentations, etc. The skills that students learn during a High Impact Offering allow for more opportunities to prepare them to succeed in their daily lives. Without access to these programs, it may limit their options. By providing a High Impact Offering at the program’s start, DPS will increase student access.

In addition to Discovery Link programs, Extended Learning and Community Schools offer Enrichment programming and ELCSports (currently in a year one pilot). Enrichment Enrichments are unlicensed single subject offerings mainly provided by outside companies that are DPS Community Partners. ELCS supports Enrichment programming at over 50 schools across the district, providing DPS students with various electives. Enrichment programming runs simultaneously with Discovery Link and is generally for the first hour after school. Students can attend Enrichment and Discovery Link on the same day as long as they register for both programs. The enrichment partners DPS works with cover subjects including but not limited to: Athletics, STEM, Art, Physical Activity, Science, Cooking, Engineering, Math, Reading, and Coding. As mentioned above, ELCSports is currently in the pilot stage and will look to expand by eventually offering this programming to all DPS elementary schools. The mission of ELCSports is to provide all DPS elementary schools and students the opportunity to have an ELCSports program and participate in DPS elementary School Athletics. This program will be primarily for 4th and 5th Graders during the school year. Summer programs will be used to better prepare rising 4th and 5th graders for the upcoming school year. ELCSports will align with DPS Middle and High School Athletics regarding sports offered and the pay-to-play model. ELCSports will
create a pipeline for DPS elementary students to prepare them and enhance their skills for DPS Middle School Athletics. Students participating in ELCSports will develop their athletic abilities, learn leadership skills, and understand the importance of sportsmanship.

Through these out-of-school offerings provided by the district and the partnership of hundreds of DPS community Partners, DPS is working to ensure all students have a safe place to go and continue their learning when school is not in session.

**SYSTEM CONDITIONS NOT DRIVEN BY DPS**

DPS intends to deeply 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.

**HOLISTIC SAFETY**

Safe schools benefit from safe environments around our schools, and DPS will be partnering with the City of Denver on prioritizing 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 to be focused upon by the city and in collaboration with community partners, include:

- **Dismantling of Criminal Networks:** Work with community stakeholders from federal, state, local, and grassroots communities to focus on gang violence and activity reduction. Continue Denver’s expansive gang violence reduction strategy.
- **Youth Gang Intervention:** Support the evolution of the long-running GRID program, now the Office of Community Violence Solutions, that employs Gang Outreach Workers who have an in-depth knowledge of both gang culture and Denver communities to provide individual and family mentoring and advocacy to high-risk gang members and families and promote gang disengagement.
- **Invest in Gun Buy-Back Programs:** Allow residents to anonymously turn in firearms for destruction at voluntary events where trained volunteers assist with destroying the firearms. The RAWtools program purchases guns from owners, then melts the metal to produce gardening tools and jewelry. The program was sponsored by City Council members in Denver and Aurora in 2022, and will be housed under Denver Office of Community Violence Solutions moving forward to contract hosted events, and expand the partnership with Denver Health.
- **Gun Safety Education:** The city will promote safe storage practices in collaboration with youth, community, public and private partners.
- **Human Trafficking Intervention**: Host educational opportunities for service providers, community members, schools and the community at large to provide in-depth training on signs to look for and ways to combat human trafficking.

**EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC STABILITY**

Communities with high concentrations of poverty, unemployment and limited financial resources and opportunities tend to experience the negative conditions of substandard housing, homelessness, inadequate nutrition, food insecurity, inadequate childcare, lack of access to health care, unsafe neighborhoods, and under-resourced schools. Job related stress, employment loss, and financial insecurity can negatively impact the entire household. Denver, like other cities, has consistently higher poverty rates than the state – the 2021 Census identified about 81,000 people living below the poverty line in Denver.

The cost to meet the basic needs of a family in Denver is nearly four times the federal poverty level. As a result, Denver Public Schools intends to partner with the city to strengthen economic well-being to increase access to opportunity including offering:

- **Summer youth employment and financial empowerment program**. The Denver Youth Employment Program (DYEP), operated by the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) team in DPS, offers Denver youth ages 14-21 the opportunity to connect to education and employment opportunities. Services include paid work experiences, occupational skills training, leadership development, supportive services, mentoring, career counseling, financial literacy, post-secondary readiness, in-demand industry information and connections, and follow up services. DYEP partners with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and city agencies to provide 300 youth from targeted, high-violence communities with 120 hour paid internships over the summer months, giving youth the opportunity to gain critical job skills while earning money to support their families and savings goals for the future. This district/city collaboration is a crucial component of the city’s violence prevention efforts.

- **Youth financial empowerment programming for students**. The goal of the Youth Financial Empowerment Program is to inform students of the financial ecosystem which includes but is not limited to affordable and safe banking, understanding the importance of obtaining and keeping a good credit score, to include budgeting, saving, investing and what a thriving wages means for their journey.

- **Financial navigation for families**. This program seeks to help youth families navigate city services, non-profits, and state and federal services to understand what is available to them after high school in terms of a career pathway that leads to a living wage, not just a job.

- **Adult Services**. Denver Workforce Services assists employers to hire, train and retain a quality workforce while providing job seekers access to employment, training and workforce development opportunities. Jobseekers are able to get connected to and
prepared for careers in in-demand industries through occupational skills training, industry-recognized certifications and work-based learning opportunities.

In addition, DPS and the city of Denver are working together to establish a program for generating a pipeline of culturally responsive mental health professionals that can fill school psychologists, school social workers, and potentially other mental health-related positions at DPS. The district intends to take a three pronged approach to ensuring that community members with lived experiences that reflect those of our students can move into these important mental health roles:

1. **DPS Student Focus:** Integrate mental health professions as an option in our EdConnect career pathway for students and recruit students into that pathway. The students could serve as School Support Liaisons while they attend school, and then post-graduation, as they gain experience and skills, move up a career path that could include Restorative Practice Coordinator, Dean of Culture and then Social Worker or Psych.

2. **Current Employees in Para/Entry Level Positions:** Recruit current School Support Liaisons and Restorative Practice Coordinators into pathways that will lead to Dean of Culture positions. Provide programs and supports to get them to the Dean positions, including training.

3. **Current Deans of Culture:** Recruit this group to enter School Psych and Social Worker Programs - starting with ones who already have Bachelor's degrees.

This program would provide those participating with tuition stipends and access to educational opportunities that will allow them to get certifications required while working full time. These opportunities would be made available to interested community members as well, who can apply for any posted DPS positions in these areas based on their current skills and experience.

**HOUSING: STABLE AND AFFORDABLE**

Housing and the availability of affordable housing is an important issue facing Denver and many other U.S. cities. Inadequate living conditions that don’t promote safety result in negative consequences. Housing instability, insecurity, and lack of affordability increases the risk of violence. As part of the city’s [Youth Violence Prevention Plan 2023](#), DPS intends to partner to provide access to safe, stable, and affordable housing to promote strong resilience in individuals and communities, working with affordable housing agencies including Denver Housing Authority (including the [Section 8 lottery process](#)), Metro West Housing Solutions, Aurora Housing Authority, CHFA, Brother's Redevelopment Properties, Mercy Housing, and Catholic Charities.
MENTAL AND HEALTH CARE: ACCESS AND AFFORDABLE

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 that are spread geographically across the city. There is no charge to the patient or their family for services offered at a SBHC.

POLICY CHANGE

Championing policy change means aligning new policies with best practice at the legislative, systems, and organizational level. Policy change begins with engaging policymakers to become active partners in dissolving outdated policies that inadvertently perpetuate youth violence. DPS will be partnering with the city of Denver to:

- **Comprehensive Policy Assessment** - Review all policies that impact youth violence prevention work across both organizations regularly to determine if they are working as intended, if there are opportunities for improvement or if other areas have similar policies that are more effective in practice.
- **Sunset Outdated Policies** - Determine which policies across both organizations are no longer serving community needs, or are inadvertently damaging youth violence prevention efforts and take steps to dismantle policies that do not work.
- **Articulate Programming to Support** - Provide a comprehensive list of city programs that work together to advance youth violence prevention so legislators are clear on where to focus energy.
- **Ensure Program Funding** - Prioritize youth violence prevention programming during city budget process, support strategic increases for initiatives outlined and protect programming dollars during cuts.

DATA SHARING

As part of the city’s [Youth Violence Prevention Plan 2023](#), our goal is to have integrated cross-system care made possible by a central database powered by the latest technology that allows continuity of care for youth in need. Sharing data across systems means providers can access information from city partners and non-profit organizations to support youth and ensure follow-up on referrals, so no youth is left without the vital services they need. While being vigilant to protect student data privacy, we will pursue the following strategies to ensure more coordinated care for youth:
• **Establish regional compacts:** Collaborate with metro area cities and counties with formal agreements to share information and data to increase prevention and reduce violence.

• **Develop a central database:** Provide a cohesive database sharing system to provide information on MOUs, network partners, schools, and service providers complete with contact information.

• **Upgrade communication technology:** Ensure there is an emergency communication system for schools, healthcare, service providers, city departments, and others to be able to communicate quickly and effectively. Assess and upgrade outdated technology.

• **Develop community resource directory:** Create a current directory of community-based organizations that highlights everyone doing YVP work and the communities served. Provide inventory that can be used to forge conversations and align efforts.

We will also seek out software to support the coordination of the delivery of mental health services:

• **Integrating Community Partnerships:** Expanding on existing school support structures and bridging the gap to available community providers for needs that exceed the scope of school-based services

• **Conducting Full Case Management:** Streamline the process for submitting referrals, track the status of referrals in real-time, make it possible for community to do self-service matching in their language

• **Enabling Messaging:** Distribute messages that spread mental health awareness and encourage help seeking in the language of the community member

• **Reporting:** Review live data on health needs to support decision making

• **Navigating Insurance:** Support equitable access to care regardless of insurance coverage

**CRISIS RESPONSE RETROSPECTIVES**

DPS participates in the City and County of Denver’s Citywide Community Crisis Response Group - a collaboration between CCD Agencies, Denver Public Schools, and community representatives to better coordinate communication and use the resources during an event that causes harm within a community.

This group defines community harm as any event that changes/alters how the community typically acts or behaves. These events can fall into three different categories:

• **Impact to Community Access:** Instances where community members lose access to or experience difficulty utilizing city services or facilities in their neighborhood.
• Violence in the Community: Situations where community members are victims of or witnesses to violence in their neighborhood.
• Community Disruptors: Factors in the community that can cause instances of harm (e.g. Drugs, Gangs, or Human Trafficking).

When a community crisis takes place, a core group of representatives from CCD Agencies, DPS, and Denver communities will come together to assess the situation, strategize a game plan, and loop in other agencies as needed. Then at monthly meetings for representatives from CCD Agencies, DPS, and Denver communities, the group reflects on the crisis response, identifies potential process improvements, and discusses long-term support for communities facing crises and how to proactively mitigate risk.

APPENDIX

RESOURCES

PLAN CREATION RESOURCES

Community Voice
• Board Memo Directive
• Legislation: Federal and State
• Student, Parent, Staff, and Community Survey Results
• SRO Engagement Information
• City’s 2023 Youth Violence Prevention Plan
• U.S. Department of Education: Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools
  Technical Assistance Center
• DAC School Safety Statement
• BFAC Safety Data & Solutions & BFAC School Safety
• East High School Themes & Parents Safety Advocacy Group (P-SAG) (4/17 media release)
• DSLA School Safety Statement
• DSLA Survey Data
• Mental Health team report

External Resources
• **Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools**
  
  ○ **Guide**: The role of districts in developing high quality School Emergency Operation Plans
  ○ **Toolkit** for K-12 and districts for developing School Emergency Operation Plans
  ○ **Checklist** for School Emergency Operation Plans
  ○ **Workbook** for School Emergency Operation Plans
  ○ Topic specific resources for School Emergency Operation Plans

**CITY OF DENVER RESOURCES**

[Denver 311](https://www.denvergov.org/311) provides residents with an effortless, accessible way to navigate city services. The contact center staff are leaders in innovative problem-solving and deliver an unprecedented commitment to assist.

The [Youth Services Locator](https://www.denvergov.org/311/Youth-Services-Locator) is maintained by the Denver Office of Children’s Affairs (OCA) and provides information on a variety of programs that keep youth safe, engaged and active. Services also extend to the whole family.

[DenverStrong](https://www.denverstrong.org) is a program within the Office of Behavioral Health Strategies designed to educate and empower the Denver community around behavioral health issues. Services include training, consultation, and community collaboration. The Community Resource Guide is available in [English (PDF, 4MB)](https://www.denvergov.org/311/Youth-Services-Locator) and [Spanish (PDF, 4MB)](https://www.denvergov.org/311/Youth-Services-Locator). It is a helpful guide for locating the services.

The Behavioral Health Solutions Center provides an innovative, treatment-focused, voluntary safe haven for adults experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Admission to this 24/7 facility is only by referral from first responders and approved mental health organizations. The facility offers crisis stabilization services, temporary housing and ongoing assistance for mental health and substance misuse issues, as well as assistance in transitioning to community living. Operated by [WellPower](https://www.wellpower.org), under contract to the [Denver Department of Public Health & Environment](https://www.denvergov.org/doh), the Behavioral Health Solutions Center – a 28,741-square-foot facility centrally located in West Denver – provides critical short-term care and treatment for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis, diverting them from unwarranted and unnecessary stays in inappropriate facilities, such as the emergency room or jail.

Second Wind Fund focuses on improving access and delivery of suicide care. The program provides an avenue for families to obtain treatment services for children and youth at risk for suicide. When a child or teen, up to 19 years old, is at risk for suicide and faces a financial or social barrier to accessing mental health treatment, Second Wind Fund covers the cost of therapy. Referrals can be made by parents/guardians or mental health providers on their [website](https://www.secondwindfund.com).
Colorado Crisis Services provides 24/7, free, professional Crisis Line services to the residents of the State of Colorado, in partnership with Colorado's Mobile Crisis & Walk-In Centers. Crisis Services are offered through phone, text, with triage to Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners Support Line available. The Colorado Crisis embraces the 'no wrong door' approach to helping all Coloradans in need of mental health and substance use support, removing barriers to treatment along the way. Services can be accessed by calling 1.844.493.TALK or by texting 'TALK' to 38255.

SURVEY RESULTS

The Initial Safety Survey results are posted on the DPS Superintendent’s website.

- **Key Takeaways**
  - Similar to response rates from other DPS family surveys, responses from families of color were underrepresented, with white families overrepresented. However, in the reporting, responses were weighted to account for these systematic differences to report percentages more reflective of the district population as a whole.
  - Across families/community, staff, and students, the highest ranked concerns were weapons being brought into school and student on student violence.
  - Across families/community, staff, and students, the most important safety practices were increasing mental health supports and discipline policies and practices.