

**VERSION 3.0**  
LONG-TERM OPERATIONAL SAFETY PLAN  
FOR DISTRICT-RUN DPS SCHOOLS

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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.

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.

We know addressing school safety has no clear end points - it is an ongoing process which requires engagement throughout our community. To that end, this work was informed by best practices in the field of safety 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 district-run schools, and our Central Office buildings. As you will see in the plan, safety is a layered approach that encompasses many different areas including mental health supports, training within the existing work day, technology, buildings and systems.

## **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 (choice) to lead in our respective areas. By creating these conditions, we will eliminate the predictability of success or failure for our students and team members.

## **LEGISLATION: FEDERAL AND STATE**

**Current State:** 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 Administration Policies, with [ADD](#) being the overarching Safe Schools policy. There are many provisions in law that relate to safety at school.

School choice is governed by C.R.S. § 22-36-101, which impacts student enrollment and relates to the circumstances under which the district can deny or dictate enrollment. Relatedly, the main discipline policies are § 22-33-105 and § 22-33-106, which among other topics, address expulsion and denial of enrollment, which are limited to one year periods for certain proven conduct. 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](#).

At the federal level, key laws that relate to safety include the Gun Free Schools Act, and when providing needed support and addressing behavioral and safety related concerns for students with known and suspected disabilities, IDEA and Section 504 may be implicated. 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.

The District takes into account all applicable legal limitations, and considers best practices to address behavior and safety concerns, as well as District values, when making decisions about the use of exclusionary discipline and related processes.

**New Legislation from 2023 General Assembly:**

- [Link to full End-Of-Session Report](#)

**RELEVANT DPS EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS AND DPS POLICIES**

Denver Public Schools commitment to the safety of our students, staff and community is shared in the following Board policies: [Ends Policy 1.3 - Student and Staff Well Being](#), [Ends Policy 1.4 - Health and Safety](#), [Executive Limitation 10 - Student Conduct, Discipline & Attendance](#), and [Executive Limitation 11- School Safety](#). The district has also adopted administration policies [ADD](#) and [J](#) policies dealing with student discipline. These policies are in alignment with the requirements of federal and state law.

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

measurable safety progress becomes part of the Superintendent's evaluation, and impacts the district's budget.

On March 23, 2023, the Board of Education directed the Superintendent to expedite the development of a long-term safety plan and report it to the Board by June 30, 2023.

On June 15, 2023, the Board of Education voted to amend Executive Limitation 10.10 to allow School Resource Officers to return to campuses. The new Executive Limitation reads:

Accordingly, the Superintendent shall not fail to:

EL-10.10 - Establish administration policies and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Denver Police Department for when the persistent presence of School Resource Officers (SROs) on school property is necessary at district-managed and charter schools. Take reasonable steps to ensure:

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

## PERSONAL CONDITIONS

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

## MENTAL HEALTH: STUDENT SAFETY

### OVERVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH TEAM

Mental Health includes children's mental, emotional and behavioral well-being. It affects how children think, feel and act and plays a role in how children handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choices. Some common Mental Health Disorders identified in childhood are Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Anxiety Disorders, Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders, and Depressive Disorders. Since the global pandemic, we have seen an increase in children and youth reporting higher rates of anxiety and depression symptoms. ([CDC, Children's Mental Health](#))

## **TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES**

Denver Public Schools adopted a [Board Resolution](#) to become a Trauma Informed School District in October of 2017 as a measure to address the impacts of trauma on the social, emotional and academic growth of DPS students.

The Trauma-Informed Practices team is dedicated to providing professional development opportunities that educate on the foundations and impacts of trauma and adverse childhood experiences on brain development and behavior. This team focuses on promoting Trauma-Informed Practices as best practices for all.

These practices include coping strategies and mechanisms that help students and staff regulate their behavior and calm their nervous systems. As educators, it's important to understand which brain state a student is in to facilitate optimal learning. By providing this knowledge to all educators, the Trauma-Informed Practices team hopes to shift teaching practices from a punitive approach to a more humanistic approach.

The team is primarily focused on providing supports that are beneficial to everyone, rather than just those who have experienced chronic or complex trauma. The team does not diagnose or treat students who have experienced trauma, and more complex cases are referred to the school-based mental health team.

**Current State:** Trauma-Informed Practices help schools effectively support all students to feel safe - physically, socially, emotionally and academically - by addressing students' needs in holistic ways, taking into account their relationships, self-regulation, academic competence, and physical and emotional wellbeing. This work supports staff capacity to work together as a team with a sense of shared responsibility for every student. 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.

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 qualified members of school teams who provide direct and indirect social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health services for children and youth. These professionals also 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 exceeded this expectation, consistent with the priority we have placed on mental health in our [strategic roadmap](#).

Our school psychologists and school social workers have 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 of the Rehabilitation Act](#) and the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (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.
- [School guidance](#) on 22-23 Department Priority Roles and Workload for School Social Workers and School Psychologists. The [working draft](#) of the 23-24 Department Priority Roles and Workload document for School Social Workers and School Psychologists.

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

We have designed a specific role within the larger Department of Social Work and Psychological Services, called the Prevention and Therapeutic Specialists (PTS). This role is designed to address the mental health needs of youth and children primarily outside the scope of Section 504 and IDEA, which ensures all students have access to high quality mental health care and services in the school setting including substance abuse prevention and intervention, as well as

therapeutic services which address symptoms of anxiety, depression, and other impacts that are a result of exposure to a traumatic event or are symptomatic of complex trauma. 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 Program, a program for school-based clinicians who work with children in grades Kindergarten thru fifth grade. The program is intended to support students exposed to traumatic events and are experiencing symptoms of traumatic stress. These are small group, evidence-based interventions for students of all ages who may be dealing with elevated post-traumatic stress symptoms. To-date, these individuals have trained over 150 DPS school psychologists and social workers.

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. This work provides students with equitable and efficient access to individual care designed to reduce post-traumatic stress symptoms.

In addition to the mental health team, there are a variety of other roles in the school building that support the social and emotional well-being as well as the mental health of students:

- School Counselor: These Provides support in three domains: academic, social emotional, and career. They are trained in student safety protocol responses (suicide risk review and non-suicidal self-injury protocol). They are required to have an advanced degree in school counseling as well as a Colorado Department of Education (CDE) SSP license. Each works in alignment with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards.
- Prevention and Therapeutic Specialist (PTS): 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. They are required to have a CDE certification as School Psychologist, Social Worker, or School Counselor.
- School Nurse: Coordinate student care with all stakeholders including the mental health team. They address access to care, cultural competency, health education, health equity, outreach, risk reduction, social determinants of health and surveillance. These individuals are often the first to see students with unidentified mental health issues in the health office due to unfelt needs. CDE SSP License is required.
- Dean: Support school culture and oversee disciplinary processes, including [restorative justice](#). No certification is needed.
- Attendance/Newcomer Specialist: Work with students and the families of students who are not regularly attending school to identify barriers and remove them. No certification is needed.



- School Based Restorative Practices Coordinators: Provide behavior intervention support to the entire building through consistent application of the School Management program. They work with the Dean to find alternatives to suspension for students who require disciplinary action and facilitating restorative justice interventions. They respond to student behavioral concerns, create reports, and supervise students. No certification is needed.
- Teacher: In addition to teaching in a trauma-informed manner, teachers are responsible for the delivery of SEL lessons and identification of students who would benefit from additional mental health support.

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, 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.

**Future State:** As mentioned above, the Department of Social Work and Psychological Services has over 400 providers serving our students. As evidenced by national data from the [CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Data Summary and Trends Report: 2011-2021](#), children and youth are experiencing poor mental health at an elevated rate which is requiring the need for more mental health providers. Additionally, The Exceptional Student Services Collaborative Committee, made up of Specialized Service Providers, is developing an Exceptional Student Services Guidance Manual that will outline workload considerations for special education teachers and for each Specialized Service provider discipline, including a process for accountability and workload audits for educators. These workload benchmarks will be used to inform resources allocated through the school budgeting processes to meet student needs. The Department of Social Work and Psychological Services Department Leadership Team has defined Students who have more intensive needs as "students identified with a disability or may be perceived to possibly have a disability, students with student support plans, students identified as at risk for becoming habitually truant, students who may be identified as experiencing mental health, social emotional, or behavioral concerns, and other complicating factors that may require a tier two or tier three level of mental health supports."

Our school-based mental health providers often become aware of gaps in community resources that families may benefit from or need to address barriers to academic and social emotional success. These gaps include mental health resources for students, parents and other family members, housing, food and clothing, transportation, etc. Often our school-based mental health staff do not have the capacity to provide robust care coordination services or case management supports that families require to successfully navigate the complex systems that exist for accessing physical, mental health care and other community resources. With the increased need for mental health and behavioral health support for students, families and employees across the

country as well as in Colorado, it is recommended that Denver Public Schools partners with a care coordination service to provide wrap-around care. This partnership will address barriers to school attendance and accessing essential physical and behavioral health care needs.

## **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS**

**Current State:** DPS provides universal Transformative Social Emotional Academic Learning (TSEAL), which is a process whereby young people and adults build strong, respectful and lasting relationships. These partnerships will 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.

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.

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 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 Current SEL Programming (TSEAL in DPS):**

- **Culture and Climate**: We must have a safe and welcoming, supportive, and 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**: We must explicitly teach 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. The teaching must be grounded in practical skill application (moving past teaching skills to applying the learning).
- **Academic Integration**: We must 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.

All schools have identified SEL curriculum and resources to support direct instruction of social emotional learning during their school day. ESSER grant funded Instructional Specialists support schools with the implementation of curriculum and resources. This is done through planning, coaching, and providing feedback to teachers and school administrators about the quality of implementation and integration of TSEAL equity focus areas (Self Awareness/Identity, Self Management/Agency, Social Awareness/Belonging, Relationship Skills/Collaborative Problem Solving, and Decision Making/ Curiosity) into academic content and meaningful discussions. Because much of this work is dependent on adults having a deep understanding of their own social and emotional wellbeing, the TSEAL team of instructional specialists offers ongoing professional learning to school teams to deepen these skills.

**Future State:** DPS is committed to providing Social Emotional Supports in schools that meets the needs of students and families. A primary driver for the work will be schools, and their collaboration with families and communities to enhance understanding of TSEAL implementation and what it looks like in the school building and translates to the community. Additionally, DPS will work to increase the number of strong partnerships (e.g. Hazel Health) with out-of-school providers to ensure consistent language and practices that foster student social and emotional well-being.

## UNIVERSAL SCREENING

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

**Future State:** To ensure the effectiveness of universal screening and SEL supports across DPS schools, we have provided the following [guidance](#) to building leaders:

- All eligible\* students will be screened using two forms of the BESS (Student Self-Report, Teacher Report, and/or Parent Report) three times during the 23-24 school year (beginning, middle, and end of year).  
*\*Parents may opt their child out of completion of the Student Self-Report Form.*
- This [rubric](#) has been developed to support school teams, building administrators, and their district-level supports/leadership in understanding and implementing expectations for BESS completion during the 23-24 school year.
- The ultimate goal is to use BESS data to match students with the most appropriate level and type of social emotional or mental health intervention - using the right

method/curricula, at the right time, for the right duration, and from a well-trained team of school staff.

## NONVIOLENT CRISIS PREVENTION TRAINING

The fully accredited [Nonviolent Crisis Intervention \(NCI\) training](#) is offered to all DPS staff within the existing work day. NCI training supports staff in recognizing and responding to crisis situations from a place of understanding how to de-escalate and intervene in a safe and supportive way. Staff learn decision-making skills that match the level of response to the risk of the crisis, focusing on least-restrictive responses that ensure *Care, Welfare, Safety and Security*. This training has strong outcomes in reducing student behaviors from escalating further. Staff members feel supported with this training as they are equipped to recognize situations that are beginning to escalate and they can intervene in a proactive and responsive way. Currently, DPS focuses on training center-based staff as well as one-on-one paraprofessionals.

**Future State:** NCI training is critical in providing staff the valuable tools to identify and intervene in situations with students who may be exhibiting behaviors that have the potential to become a crisis situation leading to potential safety risks for students and staff. We will work to increase the number of training sessions within the standard work week to allow for more staff directly working with students in our schools to be well trained and equipped with a variety of tools.

## STUDENT SAFETY PROTOCOL PROCESSES

**Current State:** Wherever possible, we identify preventive programming we can offer as well as a list of potential actions and interventions that can be immediately offered to a student. 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:** Initiated when staff learn that a *student has been hurting themselves through self-injury*.
- **Suicide Risk Review:** Completed immediately whenever a *student talks about harming themselves, or if there is concern that a student has thoughts about hurting themselves* as determined by the Preliminary Suicide Risk Screener.
- **Threat Response:** The building Threat Appraisal Team initiates the Preliminary Information Gathering Form when a *student poses a threat, makes a threat, or if there is concern that a student may be about to act out violently*. If that initial protocol warrants it, then a full Threat Appraisal 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.

Lightspeed is the safety filter used on student Chromebooks and Google Accounts. All DPS student Google accounts and devices are monitored for certain keywords related to bullying, harassment, violence, self-harm, depression, etc. If an email, document, or search term gets flagged, Lightspeed reports the incident to the Department of Climate and Safety who investigates. Lightspeed works 24/7/365 and if an incident might be a threat to the safety of either a student or a school community, the dispatch center is contacted. The dispatchers will have either the school or a patrol officer conduct a welfare check on the student.

[Safe2Tell](#) is a safe and anonymous reporting option where students, staff, parents, and community members can report information about any issues that concern their safety or the safety of others. Reports can be submitted any time of day by calling 1-877-542-SAFE (7233), using the link on the [website](#), or through a mobile app. Safe2Tell will send the report to the appropriate school, Department of Climate and Safety staff, and/or law enforcement officials and verify report receipt and response. A student safety protocol process and/or a mandated report may occur.

When a protocol is initiated, it is recorded on the student's record in our student information system, Infinite Campus. At any time a school can run a report to determine who has had a prior student safety protocol. 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.

In some instances involving the Threat Response process, school discipline may also be considered and applied. For these cases, schools may be required to develop Action and Intervention plans based on the needs of the student, if warranted by [Regulation JK-R](#). If the student is expelled or attends a new school, the plan is then referred to the new school of enrollment for review and modification 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 tailored to the individual student's safety and support needs.

Not all concerns 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 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.

Currently, the Department of Climate and Safety completes home visits in partnership with Denver police on all threats involving violence and weapon calls that cannot be resolved during the normal school day. Officers attempt to confirm that there is no access to weapons in the home.

**Future State:**

TRAINING	AUDIENCE	PURPOSE	WHEN
Suicide Risk Review Protocol	School psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, school counselors, and school administrators	Foster fidelity and integrity of the protocol process	Synchronized and asynchronous training throughout the school year and within the current work year calendar
Non-Suicidal Self Injury Protocol			
Threat Response Process Protocol	School psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, school counselors, school deans, and school administrators		

DPS is developing an online dashboard to support schools with identification of protocols completed by school teams, and extending to monitoring of Action and Intervention Plans. The district will work over the next 3-years to provide access and use of this tool with all schools.

The Student Safety Coordinator Team will develop a narrative on each student safety protocol process for schools to adopt in their parent and student handbooks. This narrative will be provided to all school leaders for annual use.

The Student Safety Coordinator Team will develop suicide, threat, and non-suicidal self injury training during the Fall of 2023 for district implementation in Spring of 2024. Mandatory completion of this training will begin in the Fall of 2024. All DPS staff will complete this annually within the Infor Learning Management system and within the current work year calendar.

Similarly, all parents will be encouraged to complete the annual training at the time of school registration.

The district commits to exploring online systems that can track the implementation, monitoring, and discontinuation steps as part of each student safety protocol process.

### **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 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 through an online 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 and Postvention**

**Current State:** 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, 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, "[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 are 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 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 offered to any DPS staff and school community.

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.



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](#), Denver Department of Public Health and Environment ([DDPHE](#)), and [Colorado Safe Schools Resource Center](#). Community media is supported through partnership opportunities such as sessions produced by [DPS EDUCA](#).

**Future State:** DPS will now offer annual suicide prevention programming in all 5th, 6th, 9th and 12th grades. Similarly, all schools will be supported in sharing information on Safe2Tell Colorado in those respective grades for students. Completion and outcomes of programming will be tracked using the district data tracker.

DPS will continue its partnership with the Denver Department of Public Health by providing access for DPS high school students to attend the Annual *We Got This* Summit hosted in Denver. Additionally, DPS will offer a minimum of one session on grief and loss for all staff and parents who need these services within the current work year calendar. Additional grant opportunities to support continuity of school-based programming has been sought from Centura Health and the Office of Suicide Prevention.

### **Violence Prevention and Threat Response Process**

**Current State:** Denver Public Schools has a long history of implementing [violence prevention programming](#) in schools. [Youth violence](#) includes a continuum of behaviors that pose a danger to the well-being of students and can include, but is not limited to:

- Fighting
- Domestic violence
- Threats with weapons
- Bullying
- Sexual abuse
- Gang-related violence

Prevention programming includes building safe and welcoming schools, supporting coping skills development, and implementing systems of response to youth violence.

Concerns are often identified through peer referrals, parent reports, law enforcement referrals, District Attorney Notifications, and tips flagged through Lightspeed and anonymous tips through [Safe2Tell 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, including concerns that a fellow student may pose a threat.

The DPS Threat Response Process helps inform our district responses to threats of violence. When warranted, a trained facilitator from 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) school administrator/designee;
- (2) minimum of one general education teacher;



- (3) school mental health provider;
- (4) case manager of an active Section 504 Plan or Individualized Education Plan (if appropriate)

Those considerations are implemented with the 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. A Level II Threat Appraisal is district-facilitated meeting 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.

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.

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 implicate established criteria that includes crimes of violence outlined in the [Claire Davis Act](#) with consideration of other discretionary criteria. Regular committee members include:

- Student Safety Coordinators
- Sr. Manager of Mental Health
- Director of Department of Climate and Safety (or designee)
- DPS Operational Services (or designee)
- Two Discipline Managers.
- Truancy and Delinquency Specialists
- Sr. Manager of Special Education/designee

Monthly meetings with Mental Health and the Department of Climate and Safety departments will continue to support review of safety-related trends (e.g., child in crisis calls, protocol trends, etc.).

Other district processes that also address response to youth violence include, but are not limited to, mandatory 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 School Safety Resource Center](#) and Metro-Denver relationships.

**Future State:** The district shall return School Resource Officers (SROs) to secondary comprehensive district schools. The Student Safety Coordinator Team in partnership with Denver Police will train SROs in DPS regarding student safety protocol procedures and Handle with Care.

DPS will expand their partnership with local law enforcement to host youth violence meetings in each respective region of the district. This is anticipated to support collaboration with local law enforcement to monitor trends of violence impacting school communities and strengthen partnerships to dismantle barriers impacting access to programming for youth.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION**

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

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 their academic performance or any basis protected by federal or 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 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, 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.

There are three primary sources we use to assess the level of bullying in Denver Public Schools. These sources include the student voice/Tu Voz survey, Safe2Tell, and logged disciplinary responses. The student voice/Tu Voz survey asks students two questions regarding bullying.

- "In the past 30 days, have you been bullied (Yes/No)?"
- "In the past 30 days have you witnessed bullying (Yes/No)?"

Disciplinary responses are collected from staff members who have identified, responded to a bullying situation, and followed response protocol. Safe2Tell is an anonymous reporting system that anyone can use to report instances of bullying.

**Current State:** There are a variety of practices within DPS that meet bullying prevention criteria. These efforts include:

- TSEAL
- Trauma Informed Practices
- Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems (PBIS)
- Restorative Practices.

Each of these support a safe and welcoming school by creating a culture where the likelihood of bullying is reduced. Bullying prevention also includes providing specific social/emotional learning lessons specific to differentiating bullying from other behaviors, teaching and promoting kindness, and healthy use of social media. Prevention efforts also include information to parents on how to prevent bullying.

#### Intervention Efforts

Intervention practices include identifying and responding to bullying. This requires knowing the signs of bullying and protocols for [on-the-spot response](#), investigation, informing parents, mental health support, discipline and safety response. Intervention also includes providing parents with ways to support their child if they have been bullied, are bullied, or have witnessed bullying.

**Future State:** Denver Public Schools' bullying prevention efforts will continue to be carried out to ensure each student feels psychologically and physically safe, in addition to ensuring each student is successful. The level of implementation has varied previously at schools, therefore, we will continue to work with our schools to implement prevention strategies with fidelity. Our comprehensive bullying prevention/intervention approach:

1. Establishes a multidisciplinary team at each school to lead the efforts outlined below (includes at least 1 administrator, 1 mental health professional and 1 teacher).
2. Identifies and implements best practices for all students based on their specific needs, 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. Delivers and reviews a comprehensive screening and assessment of a student's school experience (eg: Student Voice/Tu Voz survey) at least once every year.
4. Sends 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. Implements procedures for immediate investigation and response to reports of bullying behavior.
6. Implements procedures to understand the function of the offender's bullying behavior and implements a plan to modify bullying behavior.
7. Implements 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. Provides 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 will have the guidance and support to implement their bullying prevention and intervention efforts with fidelity.

## MENTAL HEALTH: ADULT SAFETY

### TRAINING IN CRISIS RESPONSE

**Current State:** 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. 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 1](#) (NASP).

In the event of a crisis, school teams are not on their own. School-based mental health staff provide 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 for employees 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](#).

Additionally, DPS implements the Handle with Care model adopted by the Denver Police Department. 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 help ensure a school's mental health team responds within a trauma-informed framework and allows for a handle with care response. Student Safety Coordinators often receive these reports from DPD School Violence Detectives who share information that may

warrant a Handle with Care (when a youth is exposed to violence in the community). The report contains information pertaining to law enforcement contact in Denver and may contain information from other law enforcement agencies. DPD does not direct our threat response process and does not have decision-making power related to our threat response process. Rather DPD works with the 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.

**Future State:** The Mental Health Department will expand QPR training to HR and central leaders. It is a gatekeeper training for suicide prevention. This training is an educational program designed to teach the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond. The process follows three steps:

- (1) *Question* the individual's desire or intent regarding suicide
- (2) *Persuade* the person to seek and accept help
- (3) *Refer* the person to appropriate resources

QPR training will be offered to all school leaders, central office leaders and human resources school partners to ensure staff are prepared and feel confident in responding to situations where adults may be experiencing suicide ideation or be in imminant risk of suicide. In addition to the QPR training, DPS will outline a response procedure for school leaders and managers to follow in the event they become aware of an employee experiencing suicidal ideation or who may be at imminent risk of suicide.

DPS will maintain a District Crisis Recovery Team (DCRT) and those identified to serve as DCRT Responders will be provided annual release time to attend:

- (1) a NASP PREPaRE Workshop 2 once every three years
- (2) an annual grief/loss training once a year
- (3) a 30-min monthly DCRT Responder meeting
- (4) two annual skill-building trainings hosted by DPS Mental Health.

When possible, training will align with the designated DPS professional development days.

DPS will continue to offer access to NASP PREPaRE Workshop that align with the recruitment and retention of school E-Teams who are well versed in crisis response and recovery procedures in alignment with DPS Emergency Management.

## EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS

### **Current State:**

[Belong Groups](#) (Also known as affinity 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.

#### [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 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. 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 Educator Welcome and District provided professional learning 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.

#### [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 honor their unique strengths and talents.

### [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 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.

### [Office of the Ombuds](#)

The Office of the Ombuds assists and supports all DPS employees to ensure that they receive fair and equitable treatment. The Ombuds Office serves as a resource for employees seeking information and insight from a trusted navigator who is confidential, independent, impartial and informal. All visits with an Ombuds are voluntary.

### **Future State:**

- We are working to add:
  - Servicios de la Raza
  - Care Solace for students, staff, and family members

## **SCHOOL CONDITIONS**

School conditions cultivate a safe and welcoming climate and culture throughout the school and include not just physical safety, but also psychological safety, connectedness, and a sense of belonging. When creating these school conditions, DPS seeks to foster caring, consistent relationships among both individuals and groups, including students, educators and families. Relationships like these promote resilience, serve to protect people, and reduce the impact of chronic or acute stress, ultimately creating school buildings where all people and the community can thrive.

## **SAFE AND WELCOMING BUILDING PLANS**

### **SAFE AND WELCOMING SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**



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

**Current State:** Denver Public Schools District priorities for the 2023-24 school year are two-fold: (1) Create Safe and Welcoming Environments by supporting every educator with developing genuine and authentic relationships with each student, working diligently to examine and develop school and classroom systems that promote high quality student engagement and physical and psychological safety, and continuing to support school-based leaders to identify what their students need to thrive in school everyday; and (2) ensuring students actively engage with grade level texts and tasks, or higher.

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

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

**Future State:** We will continue working to implement these practices across our family of schools, however it will now be in alignment with the Denver Public Schools Strategic Roadmap.

## SAFETY OPERATIONAL PLANS

**Current State:** 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 Operations Form \(EOP\)](#). This form is used to capture school data to create the emergency operations plan. Annually, schools are asked to complete the DPS emergency operations plan. Additional information can be found in DPS Administrative Policy [KDE](#).

**Future State:** To account for new staff, changing school assignments and real-time changes to an emergency operations plan roles within the emergency operations plan, the Department of Climate and Safety will move emergency operations plan information into a computerized

system for better tracking and greater efficiency. The system will have the ability to capture edits allowing the Department of Climate and Safety and the school to track and document changes in real time. This system will be in place for the beginning of the 23-24 school year.

## STUDENT ENROLLMENT

**Current State:** Through school choice families have the option to select from a variety of schools with different programming options based on what they believe would be the best fit for their child. Our portfolio of schools is varied and includes traditional schools, innovation schools, on-line and hybrid models, charter schools, and pathways schools. The intent of choice is to ensure students find a setting that meets their educational needs, and helps them thrive as students, and healthy members of society. As a district we strongly believe that in person learning is the best option for students, as it allows us to support students in developing resiliency, visions for their futures, and the skills needed to achieve their dreams. These are all key components of youth violence prevention efforts. Based on choice data reviewed annually, we work to understand the need for additional school programming or increased seats. Recently we identified data suggesting an increased desire for more online options at the secondary level, and are working with the school leader at our Denver Online School to add additional seats to accommodate a growing waitlist.

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.

## ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT PROCESS

The process for determining alternative placement options for students with disabilities 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, as it allows us to support students in developing resiliency, visions for their futures, and the skills needed to achieve their dreams. These are all 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 transfers from an out of district school, the DPS school team requests prior school records as part of the enrollment process, including any prior safety related protocols, if applicable. School teams may reach out to a Student Safety Coordinator who can also request

prior safety protocols from prior districts of enrollment. If a school team identifies prior safety concerns, the district team will reach out to the sending school or district to gather additional information on the student and situation.

**Future State:** Based on choice data reviewed annually, we work to understand the need for additional school programming or increased seats. While we believe in-person learning is the best option for students, we acknowledge that some students may need choices that meet their educational needs at different times in their lives. Therefore, we are exploring opportunities to expand hybrid online learning seats within the district. Recently we identified data suggesting an increased desire for more online options at the secondary level, and are working with the school leader at our Denver Online School to add additional seats to accommodate a growing waitlist.

To support enrollment decisions when there is a safety consideration outlined in Administrative Policy JC and JC-R, we are implementing a process to support consistency of decision making, equitable practices, and the safety of the student and school community.

## **SCHOOL EMERGENCY TEAMS (E-TEAM)**

**Current State:** 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. Staff chosen as a member of an E-Team are required to attend an annual training presented by the Department of Climate and Safety. To ensure schools are prepared to respond to life safety incidents, the Department of Climate and Safety completes two drills (fire and SRP) with each school building annually in addition to the E-Team training.

- The first drill is completed during the first semester of each school year. and t
- The second drill is completed during January of each calendar year..

Every drill is attended by staff from the Department of Climate and Safety and debriefed with staff at its conclusion.

E-Team training includes:

- Information pertaining to life safety incidents on or near school property
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Incident Command System (ICS)
- Bullying and suicide prevention
- Situational awareness
- Emergency Operation Plan (EOP)
- Evacuation maps
- Security technology
- Recovery
- Fire code
- Safe2Tell
- Emergency drills
- Standard Response Protocol (SRP)
- Access control
- Reunification

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. Recovery is the expected outcome for individuals following a crisis incident. Recovery is best supported by aligning recovery needs to the service provision that supports stabilization and return to learning in the least impactful way.

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. During large scale events, collaboration may extend to community and state agencies and require crisis support from other district partners (e.g., metro and state crisis teams).

**Future State:** An external consultant provided training for DPS in May 2023 to ensure we are up to date on the Standard Response Protocol (SRP). Any applicable information has been updated in the Department of Climate and Safety E-Team training and will be utilized in this and all other SRP training moving forward. This training will be available within the current work year calendar

For 2023, there will be a continued emphasis placed on mandatory emergency management training for all District staff within the current work year calendar. The basic emergency management training will be required for all district staff on a yearly basis. Other additional training for crisis related topics are either in place currently or in development.

The district will also implement an improved new employee orientation training covering emergency management and crisis recovery within the current work year calendar. This training will replace the current new employee orientation training and will be ready for deployment for all new hires to the district in the fall of 2023.

## SCHOOL/BUILDING SAFETY

### SAFETY AUDITS

**Current State:** Educational agencies and institutions face a myriad of threats that include tornadoes, 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.

DPS conducts building safety audits every 3 years following the [Crime Prevention through Environmental Design \(CPTED\)](#) program. Building systems and designs are evaluated by trained staff. Some safety systems currently present within all DPS buildings include access control at select doors as well as surveillance systems at all perimeter doors to determine if doors are propped open.

**Future State:** DPS is committed to working with a newly established Denver Metro DPS Peer Support Team, DPS Department of Climate and Safety, and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to conduct and evaluate the infrastructure in our school district. The District is committed to continuing the practice of assessing our school buildings on a three year basis.

For 2023, DPS has partnered with an external consultant with extensive school and district-level experience to connect with high school leaders to review and audit safety processes and better identify building-level questions and needs. The consultant and DPS are in the 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.

## STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL

**Current State:** DPS is in the process of retraining all employees, students, and leadership in the [Standard Response Protocol \(SRP\)](#). Used in over 40,000 schools across the globe, the SRP is a uniform, planned, and practiced response to any incident. The SRP is action-based, flexible, and easy to learn. It organizes tactics for response to weather events, fires, accidents, intruders and other threats to personal safety. By standardizing the vocabulary, all stakeholders can understand the response and status of the event.

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. Additionally, this protocol enables rapid response determination when an unforeseen event occurs.

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

**Future State:** DPS is committed to ensuring Standard Response Protocol retraining is offered and is required for all District employees within the current work year calendar.

## STUDENT SEARCHES

**Current State:** Administrative Policy [JIH](#) 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. [Answers](#) to search related questions were addressed during the meeting.

**Future State:** Denver Public Schools will continue to maintain a climate and culture in schools conducive to learning and protective of the safety and welfare of staff and students. Building off of the feedback provided by Deans and other leaders, the Department of Climate and Safety will provide additional support in conducting searches, especially where weapons may be present, as outlined above. Training and further guidance are available to school staff, and will be revisited on an annual basis.

The District will leverage and expand upon the resources available through the Department of Climate and Safety to support school teams with the implementation of Action Intervention Plans that call for searches of students who may be in possession of a firearm. This includes a plan for regional coverage by existing patrol officers (armed) and CSOs (unarmed, school based) to provide particular support on a case by case basis, depending on the needs of individual schools and their students. For example, if a school has completed an Action Intervention Plan for a student who was found to be in possession of a firearm in the community, and plans to complete daily searches upon the student’s arrival to school, a DPS Safety patrol officer will be designated to support that for the specific window of time that allows for a safe, supervised search and entry into the building. From there, the assigned CSO can work with the school team and communicate with patrol if/as needed for any follow up. This allows the District to effectively leverage current employees, trained and knowledgeable about school based procedures and responsive to District expectations, to help ensure safe school environments, rather than outsourcing this work to police officers who are not employed by the district.

## COLLABORATION WITH CITY DEPARTMENTS

**Current State:** 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.

**Future State:** DPS is working with the city’s Department of Climate and 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.

**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**

**DEPARTMENT OF CLIMATE AND SAFETY STAFF**

**Current State:** The Department of Climate and Safety is staffed with safety personnel to keep our schools safe.

Campus Safety Officers (CSOs)	Staffed at comprehensive high schools and middle schools
Patrol Officers	On patrol throughout the district and respond as necessary
Emergency Management Team	Provide staff training on how to respond to critical incidents
Youth Violence Prevention Officer	Supports students in finding resources to keep them out of Juvenile Detention Centers



Crossing Guards	Helps support students and families to cross the street to/from school safely
Training Specialists	Support all teams within the Department of Climate and Safety with required yearly trainings, as well as new officer academies
Youth Violence Prevention Specialists	Supports students and schools as a liaison to provide services through the city and through non profit youth violence services.
Bullying Prevention	School culture and bullying prevention
School Climate and Development	Works alongside principals, instructional leadership teams, mental health providers, and educators to identify systems that impact the learning community and collaboratively create new systems that are effective, equitable and sustainable in order to change experiences and outcomes for students.

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING:**

The Department of Climate and Safety participates in an extensive training program within the current work year calendar to prepare for and prevent emergency situations. Training is evaluated for compliance as well as to enhance the program. Training topics include:

Response to Resistance	Bias training (district class)	Trauma informed practices (district class)
Critical Thinking	Weapon safety (unarmed officers)	Legal presentation searching & handcuffing (district class)
Report Writing	Parking Citations	NCI (Nonviolent Crisis Intervention)/CPI(Crisis Prevention Intervention)
Radio communication	Special event procedure and Evolv weapon system	Management of Aggressive Behavior
Department policy	Emergency Management	First aid/AED & tourniquet training
Risk assessment & student discipline (district class)	DOS climate team	Mandatory reporting
Alarms and building searches (armed officers)	Geography and navigation (armed officers)	High risk vehicle contacts (armed officers)



Mental health check procedures (armed officers)	24 hr Emergency vehicle operation course (armed officers)	56 hr Firearms basic (armed officers)
24 hr Tactical response to active killer	40 hr CIT Crisis intervention training	

**Future State:** DPS is in the process of conducting a staffing analysis to evaluate CSO presence, dispatch requirements, and where more staff may be needed or how resources can be shared. We are adding additional resources for training.

See [Resources](#) for more information about training and professional learning.

### **SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SROs)**

**Current State:** 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 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 on March 23, 2023, this Executive Limitation 10.10 was temporarily suspended and is scheduled to resume on June 30th, 2023 unless the Board of Education takes further action.

Based on data received from Denver School Leaders Association (DSLAs), 80% of principals who participated in the survey are in support of SROs returning to schools, however, 60% of principal participants believe the School Board/Superintendent should make the decision.

Based on data received from Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA), the majority of staff who participated in the survey would prefer for the decision to be made at each individual school or building. The difference of viewpoints from the DSLA and DCTA show the division on this topic in our community.

On June 15th, 2023, the Board of Education voted to amend Executive Limitation 10.10 to allow School Resource Officers to return to campuses. The new Executive Limitation reads:

Accordingly, the Superintendent shall not fail to: EL-10.10 – Establish administration policies and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Denver Police Department for when the persistent presence of School Resource Officers (SROs) on school property is necessary at district-managed and charter schools. Take reasonable steps to ensure:

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

In addition and in conjunction with the Denver Police Department, DPS will develop Guiding Principles that outline the expectations and vision for the relationship between DPS and SROs to align to DPS core mission and values. DPS will take a collaborative approach with DPD and the schools to select SROs for placement.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY CLARITY**

	<b>DPD Police Officer</b>	<b>School Resource Officer</b>	<b>DoCS Patrol Officer</b>	<b>Campus Safety Officer</b>
<b>Armed/ Unarmed</b>	Armed	Armed	Armed	Unarmed
<b>Certification</b>	POST (Police Officers Standards & Training) certified by the state and commissioned by the City and County	POST certified and commissioned by the City and County	Not POST certified or commissioned. Often former military, police, or CSO’s. Complete academy and many POST level trainings	Not POST certified or commissioned. Unarmed, but have significant training to include safety and security procedures, emergency response, crisis intervention, etc.

<b>Employed by</b>	City and County of Denver (DPD)	City and County of Denver (DPD)	Denver Public Schools	Denver Public Schools
<b>Duties/ Responsibilities</b>	Patrol City and County of Denver and respond to calls for service	Assigned to DPS Schools to bridge the gap between schools and law enforcement, provide law enforcement presence, liaise with DPD when needed, and occasionally take enforcement action	Patrol the district and respond to calls for service in their assigned districts. These duties often require officers to work closely with Denver Police. DPS officers complete home visits, for threats of violence, self harm and suicidal students and staff	Assist school in safety and security matters and build relationships with students and leadership
<b>Who Manages</b>	Managed by DPD	Managed by DPD with input from the school admin and DoCS	Managed by DoCS	Managed by DoCS with significant input from school admin

## COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS AND TIMELINES

**Current State:** Quick and accurate communication is vital in an emergency situation. Parents are notified of major incidents as soon as DPS Public Safety validates the incident. 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.

During the following situations, parents/guardians can expect:

**School lockdown:** The Department of Climate and Safety sends an initial SchoolMessenger communication (DPS's automated messaging system) to approved family members. This message is brief, sharing only the details that are known at the time. If additional communication is needed, it will be sent from the Communications Department.

**Secured perimeter:** There is a potential threat outside of the building and all staff and students are to remain inside but school business can continue as normal.

Secured perimeter (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 secured perimeter. After the initial message, Denver Public Schools External Communications will send out continual SchoolMessenger communications if the incident continues for longer than 15 minutes.

Extended crisis incidents: The Communications Department establishes a Joint Information Center (JIC) to ensure all future communications are timely and consistent across communication platforms. The Communications Department utilizes 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 provides updates to families through these platforms every 15 minutes until the crisis is under control. A closeout message is sent to let families know not to expect additional updates.

In some cases, a crisis incident requires a community letter. Building leaders 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.

**Future State:** At the beginning of each school year, the building principal will send a communication to parents/guardians articulating the different types of drills their child will may experience during the year.

In an effort to decrease the time it takes for staff and students affected by a crisis to receive accurate information, the District is 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**

**Current State:** Discipline practices are governed by Administration Policy [JK](#) and Regulation [JK-R](#). The [discipline matrix](#) is a guidance document to support the implementation of JK and JK-R.

In addition to providing the upper bounds of disciplinary consequences, the matrix includes guidance about when law enforcement, human services, and/or DPS Safety should be contacted in response to an event, as well as other protocols that may need to be completed, for example the Threat Response process.

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 in discipline policy and regulation, as well as allied policies governing student conduct. 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 policy and regulation, as well as allied policies governing student conduct. as part of DPS's commitment to equity. A [restorative practices](#) guide is accessible to 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. The 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.

Like all school districts in Colorado, DPS reports [discipline data](#) to CDE annually. DPS has also reported safety and discipline related [data](#).

**Future State:** The Denver Public Schools student discipline strategy will continue to be rooted in and compliant with federal and state law, and wherever possible, this work is implemented consistently with the District's core values, including Students First and Equity. In preparation for the 23 - 24 school year, representatives of DPS leadership will travel to Harvard University to collaborate with other U.S. large urban school districts in the PELP Institute to build strategies for strengthening student engagement, equity, and safety across all school settings. The DPS team will focus their work with the PELP Institute on enhancing a foundation of school safety through the district-wide implementation of positive student engagement strategies across all school settings using restorative practices, trauma-informed practices, and identification of and support for student abilities and disabilities. Acknowledging that student behavioral concerns can pose significant threats to the wellbeing of students, staff, and community members, the DPS leadership team will comprehensively examine current student discipline practices with the goal of enhancing the experience of safety while maintaining compliance with federal and state law, and achieving the goal of equity and inclusion for all students.

## **DISTRICT CRISIS RECOVERY TEAM**

**Current State:** 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.

The Department of Climate and Safety leads the District Crisis Response, in order to address concerns to physical safety during a crisis event. Once physical safety has been addressed, the Department of Climate and Safety collaborates with the Department of Mental Health's District Crisis Recovery Team to address emotional and psychological safety. The primary focus of the DCRT is to ensure students have access to necessary crisis mental health care and support the school in recovery and get back to an emotionally safe environment that is conducive to learning as quickly as possible.

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 or learn about mental health 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.

**Future State:** Denver Public Schools will continue to provide these resources for students and families, and work with internal and external stakeholders to determine additional partnerships that will strengthen the impact of these resources.

## INCIDENT COMMAND

**Current State:** Crisis incidents can occur at a minimal, building, district, or regional level. The type of response is often informed by crisis event variables including predictability, duration, intensity, and consequences.

- Minimal level: Often requires one to three staff members who can support recovery needs.
- Building level: Likely disrupts the day to day routines of a school and can be supported by the school Emergency Team (E-Team).
- District level: Exceed a building team's capacity and requires additional deployment of district staff.

- Regional level: District teams tend to access community agencies and other mental health partners as they exceed the school and district's ability to support recovery efforts.

When an incident occurs, Denver Public Schools refers to its [Incident Command Structure \(ICS\)](#). 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.

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 timeline may be a few minutes to many hours or even days.

**Future State:** In order for school and administration staff to be proficient in the operation of the ICS, the Department of Climate and Safety will implement the requirement that school based members of E-Teams complete the [Federal Emergency Management Agencies Independent Study Course 100.c](#), Introduction to the Incident command System. These web based interactive courses are free and allow the learner to complete them at their own pace.

## **WEAPON DETECTION SYSTEMS**

Weapons detection technology is designed to create an effective barrier between firearms and people in schools, similar to those currently being used in other school districts such as Baltimore Public Schools and in sports arenas and courts. Weapons detection technology can use artificial intelligence to process students, staff and visitors quickly using touchless security screening technology. These systems use sensors and AI-based software to capture data that can be analyzed to optimize operational efficiencies and provide a comprehensive view of security operations.

**Current State:**

Weapons detection is only being used for athletic events and events requested by administrators. The use of weapons detection requires an increased number of officers to support the events. The Department of Climate and Safety has four units that are mobile and easy to move from location to location.

**Future State:** A weapons detection system is just one layer of the safety strategy and we are continuing to research the best, most effective options. 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**

**Current State:** Unfortunately the challenges that lead to violence for our older youth often have roots that start much earlier in life. 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:

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

Examples of this universal programming for our younger learners include:

- Classroom meetings
- Comprehensive health education
- Positive behavioral supports
- 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 curricula, which focuses on the sources of stress and learning healthy ways of coping. The lessons are educational, not therapeutic, and are done with the entire class. Other programs may be selected based on student needs and may include programs such as Second Step, classroom-based social skills program for students in preschool through junior high (ages 4–14 years). It is designed to reduce impulsive, high-risk, and aggressive behaviors and increase children's social competence and other protective factors. There are also Zones of Regulation, an approach used to support the development of self-regulation in children. All the different ways children feel and the states of alertness they experience are categorized into four coloured zones. Children who are well regulated are able to be in the appropriate zone at the appropriate time.



**Future State:** Community based organizations will partner with schools to educate on sexual harassment, mental health awareness, suicide prevention, lessons on consent, healthy relationships, and anonymous reporting on topics related to violence. Partners in this work may include, but are not limited to [Denver Children’s Advocacy Center](#), [Safe2Tell Colorado](#) and [Colorado Safe Schools Resource Center](#). In addition to partnering with students and staff at the school, our community partners will strive towards providing training and information to parents/guardians to support the use of common safety language between home and school.

## **CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATION (CRE)**

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, 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.”

As outlined in the DPS [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 in building our educators mindsets and capacity to elevate students' assets and nurture the sustaining of their

heritages. We support 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' cultural competence, and social and emotional skills, which are critical for preventing violent behavior. By incorporating culturally relevant resources, 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.

**Current State:** During the 2022-2023 school year, academic teams engaged in learning to ground in the principles of culturally and linguistically responsive-sustaining curriculum and instruction while developing a vision of what we want to be true of our curricular resources. In the spring of 2023, we developed evidence based culturally and linguistically sustaining curriculum evaluation tools for each academic content area and began engaging in internal audits of our curricula. Teams including leaders, Culturally Responsive Education specialists and coaches, and teachers, have audited 10 of our DPS sponsored curricula across all our grade levels. Gaps identified from the audits are informing revisions and development or adoption of new resources in alignment to our vision for culturally and linguistically sustaining curriculum.

We also are developing systems to engage leaders, teachers, and students in feedback loops to collect data at the beginning and end of each unit of study to determine where the class has made gains, both in terms of competency (student learning) and culturally responsiveness (cultural competence and critical consciousness). The feedback loops, in addition to audits inform content revisions, development of new resources, and course design. The initial pilot is a collaboration between schools, academics, assessment and data teams to gather student feedback loops across core content areas.

**Future State:** For the 2023-24 school year, we will continue internal audits of our curricular offerings. We are expanding the feedback loops to engage teachers, leaders, and families. The audits and feedback loops will continue to inform revisions and the development/adoption of resources.

Professional learning offered from academic teams will be grounded in deepening our asset-based culturally responsive mindsets. Educators will strengthen their capacity to facilitate culturally responsive tier 1 instruction where students engage with curriculum that is transformational and humanizing.

All new DPS educators will engage in our Culturally Responsive-Sustaining foundations course and returning teachers and leaders will have the opportunity to engage in the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining regrounding course.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**Current State:** Youth who believe they have bright futures are less likely to engage in risky behaviors. With this in mind, DPS has programming dedicated to helping students explore a variety of different career choices so they can find one that engages and excites them.

Since 2014, DPS has offered access to high-quality work-based learning opportunities for K-12 students. 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 aimed at introducing students to high growth, high wage careers and supports the development of social capital through professional networking beginning in elementary.

The work-based learning team continues to innovate by designing affinity-group resources and targeted experiences for our most vulnerable populations. Recently, they have made 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 participation at no cost to the school/families. Inquiries can be directed to [careerandcollegesuccess@dpsk12.org](mailto:careerandcollegesuccess@dpsk12.org).

In the 2021-22 school year, Denver Public Schools offered these experiences to more than 10,700 students across K-12. During the 2022-23 school year DPS expanded opportunities with a focus on young learners as well as increasing affinity based opportunities. We will have served more than 5,000 elementary and middle school students this year, having expanded our pilot program to include more students and more schools.

In addition, the Denver Youth Employment program provides 300 youth paid work experiences during the summer and 100 students during the school year receive comprehensive wraparound support from case managers at North High School, Montbello High School Manual High School, Respect Academy, Lincoln High School, and Contemporary Learning Academy. Inquiries can be directed to [dyep@dpsk12.org](mailto:dyep@dpsk12.org)

**Future State:** We believe increased access to work-based learning will ensure DPS students graduate college, career and life ready. For the 2023-24 school year Denver Public Schools will

continue to expand opportunities for students in early career identity development while also increasing access for secondary students in mentorships, internships, and apprenticeships.

### **ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

**Current State:** Students who take advanced courses in high school consistently have higher graduation rates, lower remediation rates, and higher college acceptance rates. DPS offers the following programs free of charge to DPS students:

Program	# Students Enrolled
Concurrent Enrollment (CE)	6,000
Advanced Placement (AP)	4,000
International Baccalaureate (IB)	2,300
Career and Technical Education (CTE)	More than 9,000

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.

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

**Future State:** During the 2023-24 school year Denver Public Schools will collaborate with schools to offer increased access to students in all Advanced Academic opportunities. In addition Denver Public Schools will continue to increase the rigor in daily instruction through ongoing professional development and consultancies with workforce advisory councils. Additionally, Denver Public Schools will align school course offerings across the system to provide more students with college and career credentials that lead to high growth, high wage careers. To do this Denver Public Schools will collaborate with local Colleges and Universities, as well as industry partners in innovative ways to expand CTE and credentialing coursework across all secondary schools.

## COMMUNITY HUBS

**Current State:** Sometimes our students are unable to engage due to factors that have little to do with their experiences at school, therefore, under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Marrero, DPS opened six community hubs in 2022-2023 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. Community Hubs provide services in all regions of our school district. Services include:

- GED classes in English
- Computer skills
- Classes to learn English and Spanish
- Financial coaching
- Basic needs assistance
- Health and nutrition workshops
- Early childhood literacy classes
- Employment services
- Citizenship classes
- Energy Outreach Assistance
- Social-emotional support services
- 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 can turn to meet their needs and address the challenges they have identified as disruptive to engagement in school, employment, and the achievement of life goals. The Village addresses unmet needs related to:

- Poverty
- Emotional/Mental Health
- Outreach
- Post-Secondary Counseling
- Career exploration
- GED programming
- Housing
- Substance misuse
- Gang intervention
- Clothing
- Job readiness training
- Employment
- Mentoring
- Violence reduction
- Food
- Financial literacy

### Future State:

- In the 2023-2024 school year, Community Hubs will provide ESL classes, GED classes, Workforce Services, and Early Literacy Programs in all regions
- Book vending machines will be available at four Community Hubs
- Family literacy events will be organized
- The development of home libraries will be supported for all participants
- Additional Community Hubs will be established as funding allows
- Goal to exceed the GED graduation rates by 10% from the 2022-2023 school year
- Continue to expand workforce development partnerships

## OUT OF SCHOOL TIME

Youth who participate in constructive, engaging activities outside of school are also less likely to engage in risky and violent behaviors. Therefore, we offer a variety of opportunities designed to engage students when they are not in school.

**Current State:** DPS offers the following out of school time opportunities for students:

### **Summer Learning Opportunities**

DPS offers multiple district-run Summer Learning opportunities. Two of the largest opportunities are Summer Connections and Discovery Link. The district offers an Enrichment Camp called Enrichment Exploration at one DPS elementary school that is centrally located. We also offer Dual Language Summer program and Middle School Summer Program.

**Summer Connections:** A free, 5-week academic program open to rising 1st through 5th-grade students and offered at 10 DPS elementary schools serving up to 3,000 students. [Summer Connections](#) (redesigned Summer Academy) is . 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 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. Programming is based on [registration](#).

**Discovery Link Summer Camp:** A full day offering from 7am - 5:30pm for 8 weeks is licensed by the state of Colorado and offered at 16 DPS elementary schools. Each school can serve up to 165 students daily equalling over 2,600 students across all camp offerings. 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
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math)
- Art
- Dance
- Music
- Chess
- Field Trips

[Register](#)

**Enrichment Exploration Summer Camp:** An à la carte camp option for families; they can select up to four 1.5 hour classes daily with an eclectic catalog of offerings, including but not limited to Coding, Art, Science, Music, Physical Education, Cooking, etc. A student can attend this camp and have intentional time to focus on building multiple single skills throughout the day. This camp truly allows students to explore current and new interests in an engaging and structured setting. For Summer 2023 this camp will be offered at Cory Elementary School. [Register](#)

**Dual Language Escuela Valdez Summer Program:** A unique summer program with highly certified staff to provide students the opportunity to continue developing bilingualism in math,

literacy, and computer science (Legos coding). The program will begin June 6th-June 30th serving rising K-5 students. To register please contact the [school](#) directly.

Regional Middle School Engagement Summer School (Montbello): A program designed for middle school students to motivate and engage them in academics and life skills. The program will be from June 5th-June 30th serving rising 7th and 8th students. Focus of the program will be math, literacy, TSEAL, computer science (Legos coding) and outdoor adventures. For more information, or to register, please contact the [school](#) directly.

### **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](#)
- [City Year Denver](#)
- [Colorado I Have a Dream](#)
- [Denver Urban Scholars](#)
- [Right at School](#)
- [Generation Teach](#)
- [Goodwill Denver](#)
- [Project PAVE](#)
- [Scholars Unlimited](#)
- [Launch Network](#),
- [Breakthrough Kent](#)
- [Colorado Gear UP](#)
- [Colorado Uplift](#)
- [Colorado Youth for a Change](#)
- [Denver Scholarship Foundation](#)
- [Girls Inc](#)
- [Mile High United Way](#)
- [Reading Partners](#)
- [YESS Institute](#)
- [Mi Casa Resource Center.](#)

These partners offer a variety of programs and many are on a first come, first serve basis. The district and school currently partner to communicate openings directly to families through school distribution list.

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](#).

Discovery Link: The district runs a before and after school program during the school year called Discovery Link. Licensed by the state of Colorado, Discovery Link is currently offered at 50 DPS schools during the school year. 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)
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math)
- Dance
- Physical Education
- Art
- Chess
- Music



Extended Learning and Community Schools: Offer Enrichment programming and ELCSports (currently in a year one pilot).

Saturday School: An innovative program that supports students in continuing to develop their math, literacy and TSEAL every Saturday throughout the school year. We currently have eight Elementary Schools and two Middle Schools participate and serve over 530 students. , and will be expanded in the 23/24 school year to more schools across the district in the 23/24 school year.

ELCS Enrichment: Enrichments are unlicensed single subject offerings mainly provided by outside companies that are DPS Community Partners. ELCS supports Enrichment programming at over 30 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 we work with cover subjects including but not limited to: Athletics, STEM, Art, Physical Activity, Science, Cooking, Engineering, Math, Reading, and Coding.

ELCSports: The mission of ELCSports is to provide all DPS elementary students the opportunity to have an ELCSports program. 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 prepare DPS elementary students for DPS Middle School Athletics. Students participating in ELCSports will develop their athletic abilities, learn leadership skills, and understand the importance of sportsmanship. As this program develops, more information will be available to DPS students and families.

**Future State:** DPS will offer a variety of out-of-school opportunities, including but not limited to the following:

#### Expanded Summer Learning Opportunities

- The City of Denver is planning to launch an after school pilot, My Spark Denver, for DPS students age 11-14 who qualify for free or reduced lunch this fall, pending City Council approval. My Spark Denver will provide \$1,000 debit cards that students and families can use to enroll in participating afterschool activities and extracurricular programs. The pilot, which is expected to serve 4,000 students, will be administered through Mile High United Way and Gary Community Ventures with oversight from the Denver Office of Children's Affairs. Visit [mysparkdenver.org](https://mysparkdenver.org) for updates and to learn more.
- Expand Summer Connections based on registration.
- Expand Discovery Link Summer Camp based on family interest.
- Expand Dual Language Summer Camps to multiple locations for Dual Language students

- Expand Regional Middle School Summer Engagement Program to serve more Middle Schools
- In relation to ESPORTS, DPS will host district tournaments amongst high school students and celebrate their accomplishments in collaboration with CHSAA and other districts around the state.
- Before and After School Opportunities

Expanded Out of School Time:

- Saturday School programming will expand to at least 30 schools with a focus on Math, Literacy and Computer Science. The program will run from September - May 25 from 9am-12pm with snacks provided.
- ELCS will be in 60 schools for the 2023-24 school year and will plan to offer a minimum of 20 Summer camp offerings across the district for Summer 2024.
- For the 2023-24 school year, ELCS will be adding 10 new schools where Discovery Link will be offered to families.
- For the 2023-24 school year ELCS Enrichment programming will be offered at 50 of 60 ELCS schools. With the remaining 10ten schools offering their own enrichment model.
- The goal of ELCSports is for the program to be offered into every DPS Elementary School by the 2025-26 school year. In order to scale appropriately, ELCS will be conducting several pilots to ensure quality and success.
- Denver Public Schools will host ESPORTS district tournaments amongst high school students and celebrate their accomplishments in collaboration with CHSAA and other districts around the state.

<b>Fall 2023</b>	<b>Winter 2023-2024</b>	<b>Spring 2024</b>	<b>Summer 2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
22 schools	44 schools	60+ schools	Skill development camp at one location	60+ schools	All DPS elementary schools

**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.

**HOLISTIC SAFETY**

**Current State:** 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 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.
- 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.

**Future State:** We know the work of safety extends beyond our school buildings, which means we have to be active participants with the city, county, and state to advocate for areas that we know impact the safety of our students, staff, and community. We will continue to focus on system conditions not controlled by DPS such as employment, economic stability, and stable housing.

## **MENTAL AND HEALTH CARE: ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY**

For 35 years, DPS has partnered with Denver Health Pediatrics to open and operate our School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs). School-Based Health Centers are primary care clinics housed in schools that offer medical, mental health, dental, and behavioral health services to DPS students and their school-aged siblings. In addition, SBHCs also offer health education and insurance enrollment/advising services. Currently, Denver Health Pediatrics operates 19 SBHCs 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**

**Current State:** 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.

**Future State:** DPS will be partnering with the city of Denver to:

- Complete a 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 youth violence prevention: 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 the city budget process, support strategic increases for initiatives outlined and protect programming dollars during cuts.

## CRISIS RESPONSE RETROSPECTIVES

**Current State:** 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 come together to assess the situation, strategize a game plan, and loop in other agencies as needed. Then at monthly meetings, the group reflects on the crisis response, identifies potential process improvements, and discusses long-term support for communities facing crises while proactively mitigating risk.

**Future State:** This process was rolled out in March 2023, therefore, we will continue to iterate on its design and effectiveness in the coming years.

**APPENDIX**

**COMMUNITY INPUT AND DATA**

**Data Overview**

- [Full Feedback and Synthesis](#)
  - [Superintendent Advisory Council](#)
  - [Thought Exchange results](#) - Version 1.0
  - [Town Hall Engagement](#)
  - [Thought Exchange results](#) - Version 2.0
- [Qualitative Analysis Summary](#)

**Ideas We Heard and Where They are Reflected in the Plan**

We heard a number of themes and ideas that we incorporated into the plan.

<b>Theme/Idea</b>	<b>Location</b>
Revise the discipline matrix	<a href="#">Discipline Practices and Policies</a> -> Future State
Use weapons detection systems in schools	<a href="#">Weapons Detection Systems</a>
Share an action plan that outlines what will happen by when, what the measure of success will be and how/when it will be measured	<a href="#">Executive Summary</a> : Identifies timeline of when it will be developed
SROs - both for and against	<a href="#">School Resource Officers</a>
Increased mental health supports	<a href="#">Mental Health Supports</a> -> Future State
Outline what is currently happening and what will be in place in the future	Each section has a "Current State" and a "Future State" outlined
Provide specific information about what will be implemented in the 23-24 school year	<a href="#">23-24 Commitments</a>
Make it more easily digestible with bullet	Edited throughout

points, simpler language, and fewer words	
Provide a chart with all trainings including what/who the trainings is for and if it is required	<a href="#">Trainings and Professional Learning</a>

### **Ideas We Heard and Why They are not Reflected in the Plan**

We've considered your input and feedback and here is how we have/have not incorporated into the plan

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
Clear backpacks	We received conflicting feedback on a strategy like this - some community members are in favor and just as many are opposed; there is also significant research that indicates this is not an effective strategy to prevent weapons from coming into the building and detract from the limited time adults have to effectively supervise and engage with students.
Students who are on a safety plan should attend a different school and not be allowed to attend a traditional school.	Free and appropriate public education (FAPE) is a fundamental right that ensures equal access to education without discrimination, regardless of an individual's background, abilities, or circumstances.
Reducing class sizes and caseloads	Reducing class sizes alone does not address all aspects of school safety. Other factors, such as comprehensive safety policies, well-trained staff, adequate resources, effective communication, and supportive school environments, also play significant roles in promoting and maintaining a safe school environment. We are confident that school leaders along with their staffs, teachers, Collaborative School Committees can collaborate to draft a budget that keeps class sizes in a manageable and safe range.

<p>Allow school leaders, as opposed to district leaders, decision making power regarding transfer students (district and non-district) into their schools.</p>	<p>As discussed in the previous part of the plan, Denver Public Schools is a choice district, and parents have the right to choose the school that is best for them. By centrally managing the administrative transfer process the district can not only operate with fidelity, but also control for compliance issues, legal requirements, and mitigate instances of implicit or explicit bias, amongst other factors that school leaders may not be aware or equipped to navigate.</p>
<p>Teachers and staff should have free unlimited sessions with a therapist (BetterHelp?). And not based on "events". Five sessions per incident is not sufficient.</p>	<p>We acknowledge that the provision of five sessions may not always be sufficient to adequately address the mental health needs of our staff. Consequently, we deeply understand the significance of offering additional resources to support their overall well-being. In line with this understanding, we are fully committed to actively exploring diverse avenues to effectively meet this need.</p> <p>Additionally, it is important to note that in the case of workplace incidents, sessions under workman's compensation are provided without limitation.</p>
<p>Have armed DPD officers conduct searches</p>	<p>Ordinarily, a police search must be based upon "probable cause." Probable cause is defined as a reasonable basis for believing that a violation of the law has occurred or that evidence of a violation is present in the place to be searched. However, this standard does not apply to searches conducted by school officials. Rather, for a search on school property, in a school vehicle, or at a school event to be proper, the search must merely be objectively reasonable under the circumstances. Thus, police officers can only perform a small fraction of the searches that school officials can carry out. Requiring police</p>



	officers to conduct searches would have a negative impact on school safety.
How much does this plan cost?	<a href="#">Financial Impact</a>

## RESOURCES

### 23-24 Commitments

A [summary of all of the actions](#) and initiatives that will be in place for the 23-24 school year

### DPS Mental Health Scope and Limits

[Overview of School Based Mental Health Professionals](#) (School Social Workers, School Psychologists/Interns) Scope and Limits to service provisions

### Trainings and Professional Learning

An [overview of all training](#) offered for the 23-24 school year intended to promote Physical and Psychological Safety for Student and Adults

### Safety Processes Resources

A document designed to be used by DPS employees with definitions, roles and responsibilities for all [safety processes](#) to support prevention and response to safety concerns

## PLAN CREATION RESOURCES

### Community Voice

- [Board Memo Directive](#)
- [Legislation: Federal and State](#)
- [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](#))
- [DCTA School Safety Statement](#)
- [DSL A School Safety Statement](#)
- [DSL A Survey Data](#)
- [Mental Health team report](#)

- **Community Advisory Panel Organizations:** RootED, Spark the Change Colorado, Montbello Organizing Committee, Movimiento Poder, Families Forward, Life-Line Colorado / Urban Impact, African Chamber of Commerce, African Leadership Group, Black Family Advisory Council, Lifespan Local, Mental Health Center of Denver, Servicios De La Raza, The Spring Institute, Clayton Early Learning, Southwest Denver Coalition, Faithbridge

## 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](#) provides residents with an effortless, accessible way to navigate city services.
  - The [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](#) 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 \(PDF, 4MB\)](#) and [Spanish \(PDF, 4MB\)](#). It is a helpful guide for locating the services.
  - The Behavioral Health Solutions Center provides treatment-focused, voluntary safe haven for adults experiencing a behavioral health crisis. 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](#), under contract to the [Denver Department of Public Health & Environment](#), 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.

- [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. Services can be accessed by calling 1.844.493.TALK or by texting 'TALK' to 38255.