School Safety Enhancement Committee

Session 3

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Agenda

- **Welcome**
- Review of Example Recommendations
- Scenario-Based Small Group Discussion
- Compile Intervention Recommendations

Example Report Executive Summary:
Making our schools and students safer will require action in five areas

- Recognizing the impacts of the pandemic, we must strengthen our strong foundation of **student wellbeing and supports**. Every student and adult in secondary schools should be trained in **conflict de-escalation**, with opportunities to practice and refine those skills. In addition, all schools should strengthen **tiered mental health supports** through a combination of a full-time clinician for the most acute supports, and comprehensive preventative mental health work throughout the curriculum.

- We must also ensure students are building **healthy relationships with trusted adults.** Every secondary school in high-violence areas should be supported in establishing **mentorship** programs, so that each student has an assigned, relatable mentor; alongside mentoring, the District should scale up universal **after-school programming**, including full-time school-based programming.

- We recognize the increasing impact that **social media** plays on instigating and escalating conflicts. The District should support more active monitoring of students' social media accounts to address negative behaviors, including conflict escalation, threats, and cyber bullying and take actions to address those behaviors.

- In addition to these supports, there should be **greater accountability** within the system, including more therapeutic suspension options and mandatory alternative programming under the most serious disciplinary infractions, such as weapons possession.

- Finally, our agencies are deeply supporting the work happening outside of schools, and we must continue to strengthen and expand to support **all the school archetypes within our landscape**. Outside of school, **safe passage and transit** should be expanded in the highest-crime neighborhoods; and much stronger inter-agency, school-community **communications and response** procedures should be established to support, in particular, our smaller LEAs, and those in high-violence neighborhoods.

More specifically, our emerging recommendations fall into seven categories, representing our main levers to promote safer schools

	Category	Description
1	**Programs**	Programs and activities provided by schools, by CBOs, or by other non-profits.
2	**Services**	Direct services to schools provided by government agencies or external agencies.
3	**Policies**	Legislation, rulemaking or "small p" policies including LEA operating procedures.
4	**Communications**	Communications tools and processes, including standard operating procedures and sustained communication channels.
5	**Staff development**	Training including courses and workshops for school-based employees.
6	**Dedicated school safety staff**	School personnel directly responsible for safety work; safety as part of job description.
7	**Physical infrastructure**	Facilities' set-up and use, and equipment.

Note: Sources for recommendations include: safety enhancement working group sessions; youth focus groups; school leader interviews; LEA leader interviews; Public Safety and Justice agency discussions; national expert interviews.

4

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1 Programs – *Illustrative examples*

Safety enhancement work across our public-school ecosystem

School-based recommendations

- **Student conflict resolution**. Implement whole-school restorative practice curriculum and SEL integration in all middle and high schools. *(OSSE, LEAs)*

- **Universal after-school**. Adopt full-time universal after-school programming at all priority middle and high schools (those with high proportions of at-risk students and/or in safe passage priority areas); provide supplemental sports and extra-curricular programs at these schools as well; increase the number of opportunities in summer programming, including employment. *(OST, LEAs, CBOs)*

- **Mentorship**. Assign students to a trusted adult in the building to create strong relationships; create incentives for schools to partner with mentoring organizations.

- **Peer counselors**. Expand peer mentoring to include outings, community exposure and personal coaching (for mentor and mentee) including incentives

Community-based recommendations

- **Core neighborhood recreation after school and weekends**. Fund community-based organizations to provide core after-school recreation in all neighborhoods experiencing high rates of violence; expand DPR drop-in, after-school, evening and weekend programming at all relevant recreation centers; increase DPR mobile activations in all high-crime neighborhoods. *(OST, DPR)*

- **School shuttles to/from metro in high-crime areas.** Provide students short term transportation from schools to major metro/bus stop; work with WMATA to increase bus frequency in hot spot areas. (DFHV, WMATA)

- **Create common definitions and eligibility for hot spot school areas to coordinate routine and surge resource deployment.** Identifying high need schools can support in streamlining resources to address

Note: Sources for recommendations include: working group sessions; youth focus groups; school leader interviews; LEA leader interviews; Public Safety and Justice agency discussions; national expert interviews.

5

③ Policies – *Illustrative examples*

Safety enhancement work across our public-school ecosystem

School-based recommendations	Community-based recommendations

- **Develop policies that clarify consequences for e-bullying, threats, and harassment.**

- **Consider funds or incentives for schools to limit or eliminate cell phone use in schools.**

- **Staggered dismissals for neighborhood schools** to prevent mass dismissal at the same time.

- **Stronger data sharing with schools around student status**. Schools need to know if students have become justice involved to better support them academically and manage their evolving needs.

- **Mandate guardian attendance** for students returning from a suspension longer than 3 days.

- Mandate **placement in an alternative setting** for students who bring a weapon to school. This would enforce federal gun-free school policy and local law.

Note: Sources for recommendations include: working group sessions; youth focus groups; school leader interviews; LEA leader interviews; Public Safety and Justice agency discussions; national expert interviews.

6

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Agenda

- Welcome
- Review of Example Recommendations
- **Scenario-Based Small Group Discussion**
- Compile Intervention Recommendations

What we've been hearing in student focus groups

- **Students mostly feel safe in school** – students are primarily worried about their commute

- **Students appreciate security guards and weapons abatement** – they cited police, security guards and metal detectors as the top things that make them feel protected

- **Social media feels like it is out of adults' control** – students acknowledge that social media can create extreme peer pressure and is seeming always a source of conflict; they feel like its unstoppable

- **School staff know the science but not the art** of conflict resolution and restorative practices – students can articulate a schools' process for addressing conflict, suggesting adults know what to do but the number of teachers that students feel 'actually get it' is too low

Recap: Understanding the factors that can protect youth from violence is critical

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "protective factors" that may lessen the likelihood of youth violence*

Individual	Peer and Social	Family	Community
• Developed **social skills** and competences • High **educational aspirations** and **achievement** • Positive **social orientation**	• **Strong, positive relationships** at school • **School climates** with clear expectations, just discipline and supervision • Positive **peer group role models** • Involvement in constructive **activities** in and after school	• Ability to **discuss problems** with parents • **Presence of parent** during daily transitions, home routines • Perceived high **parental expectations** about school performance • Family use of **constructive strategies** for coping with problems	• Economic **opportunities** • Socially organized **neighborhoods** • Low concentrations of **poverty** • Low levels of **transiency**

* Adapted from CDC Violence Prevention, Risk and Protective Factors.

Recap: By considering the protective factors, we can determine the proper lever for lasting impact

Protective factors

Individual

Peer and social

Family

Community

Categories of Solutions

- Dedicated Staff and Personnel

- Staff Training and Capacity Building

- Programs and Services

- Policies and Protocols

- Communications Tools

- Physical Infrastructure

We will consider the best intervention levers in the context of three "modes"

Prevention mode

- What is needed to proactively identify and redirect students who may be at risk for becoming involved in unsafe activities, including acts of violence?

Intervention mode

- What is needed to address safety incidents that occur in and near schools?

Steady-state baseline mode

- What constitutes a steady state "safe school?"
- What resources and systems are needed as a baseline?

Scenario- Based Review of Intervention Efforts

In small groups, we'll read common school-based scenarios, review current intervention efforts and discuss possible recommendations that proactively intervene and redirect students who are involved in incidences of violence.

With your tablemates:

1. Read the scenario.

2. Consider how the threat of violence outlined could possibly be prevented.

3. Propose solutions that would prevent the described act of violence.

4. Determine if your proposed solution is a change to policy, programming, legislation, staffing, communications or infrastructure.

5. Detail the target group your proposed solution would impact.

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Questions for Consideration on Possible Solutions

Remember to consider the immediate circumstance and the underlying, root causes as you develop solutions. Refer back to the CDC protective factors.

1. Who are the necessary **staff and personnel** that should be available to respond?
2. What **trainings, knowledge/information or competencies** do school staff need to be effective?
3. What **programs and services** should be available to the youth, staff, or family to prevent the situation from escalating?
4. What types of **policies** can prevent the conflict outlined here?
5. What should **communication** look like; both interagency and between schools, public safety agency partners and community members?
6. How could the **physical infrastructure of the school building** contribute to preventing a situation as described in the scenario?

Scenario 1

School staff is aware of conflict between two students. These students are both well known and influential among their peers. Despite mediation and restorative efforts, the students continue to have conflict. In the morning, threats were exchanged between the two students.

During lunch, a fight breaks out between two students and escalated into a group brawl. Several staff members are paging for school security to respond to the cafeteria where students are actively fighting.

Scenario 1 Fact Sheet

Frequency of Incidents

- In SY 22-23, DCPS reported a total of 453 student on student fights and 116 group brawls

- Juvenile crime trends show that weapons and simple assault offenses peak during safe passage/school commute hours

Current Solutions: Examples

- DCPS high schools is staffed with a minimum number of 8 security officers and middle schools are staffed with a minimum of 4 security officers to support in crisis response, DCPCS have no minimum or security staffing requirement

- DCPS and DCPCS can contact the School Safety Division of MPD as well as the Watch Commander line to request officer support with group/family mediations

- Schools can lead the relevant students in a Restorative Justice (RJ) approach to de-escalation (177 of 240 schools on My School DC report using RJ; 40 schools are registered to receive OSSE's technical assistance and one-one coaching on RJ)

- School leaders can text the MPD text line at (202) 340-7059 with information about a potential conflict at the bus stop, for MPD to coordinate with MTPD and the school

- School communities and residents can text 696873 to report incidents to WMATA; text 50411 to report incidents to MPD

FOR DISCUSSION: Scenario Worksheet

Solution Type	Example Solutions	Impact on Protective Factors
Dedicated Staff & Personnel	MPD SROs or youth officers conduct home visits for students involved in group conflict	Individual Peer and Social Family
Staff Training & Capacity Building	Train all staff on crisis response and de-escalation to support classroom environments focused on learning after from incidences of violence	Individual Peer and Social
Programs & Services	Provide therapeutic community building activities for grade level teams to strengthen school-based friendships	Individual Peer and Social Community

FOR DISCUSSION: Scenario Worksheet

Solution Type	Example Solutions	Impact on Protective Factors
Policy	Create mandated transition meetings between student support and behavioral teams for students transferring LEAs	Peer and Social Community Individual
Communications Tools	Establish routine communication between neighborhood schools and public safety agencies during surges in neighborhood conflict	Peer and Social Community
Physical Building Infrastructure	Provide funding for schools to create therapeutic de-escalation spaces for mental health services	Individual Peer and Social

Scenario 2

School staff continue to be concerned about one of their Juniors. He has been chronically absent this school year and his attendance is irregular.

He has been involved in incidences of violence and is known to have conflict with students who attend neighboring schools. He often engages in acts of violence at school but has reached the maximum number of days of suspension allowed.

Scenario 2 Fact Sheet

Frequency of Incidents

- In SY 22-23 there were 7, 059 educational neglect reports submitted to CFSA, 237 were referred to CFSA Engage, 100 were investigated with 78 of those being substantiated

- From January to June of 2023, there have been 992 juvenile arrests

- According to OSSE's Discipline Report, high schools seriously impacted by violence have an incidence of violence rate of 62% (both DCPS and DCPS)

Current Solutions: Examples

- School can file educational neglect reports to the Child and Family Services Agency, and Court Social Services can refer students who need severe truancy intervention to the Office of Attorney General

- Schools can use CFSA warm line to gather resources and support for students

- School leaders and instructional teams can submit a Least Restrictive Environment Referral to have a student in question evaluated for a non-public placement, as appropriate for students with special needs

- School can work with their DBH clinician to meet with each student 1:1 when needed (note: due to staffing shortages, 67% of schools currently have a clinician)

- School can encourage families to enroll students in structured programming offered by OST, DPR and DCPL, intended to provide constructive recreation activities for students

FOR DISCUSSION: Scenario Worksheet

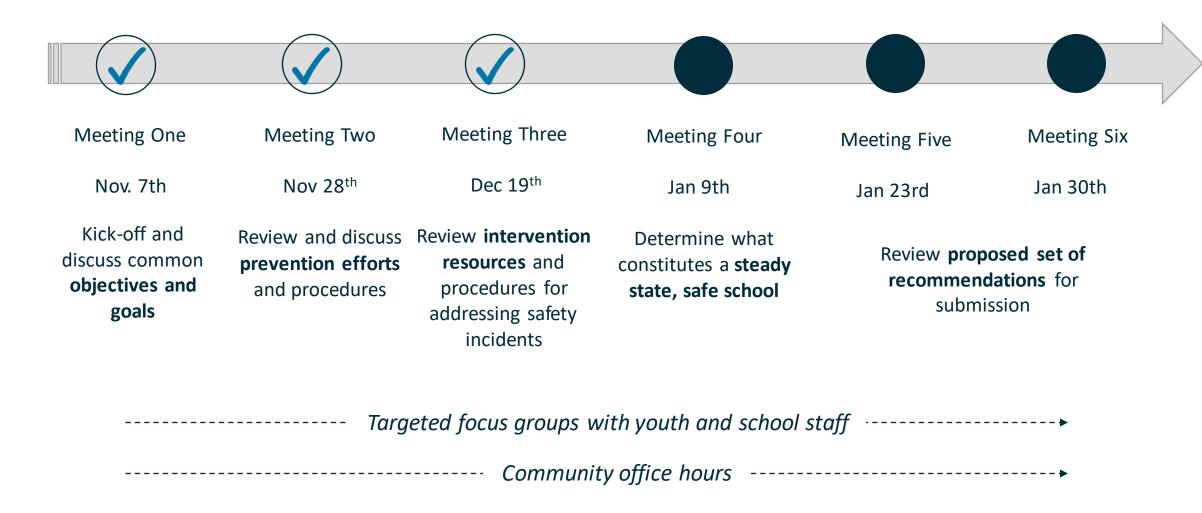| Solution Type	Example Solutions	Impact on Protective Factors
Dedicated Staff & Personnel		
Staff Training & Capacity Building	Mandate all school-based student support teams participate in family crisis intervention training	Family Community
Programs & Services	Create an incentive program where students can get a stipend for attending school consistently or meeting other benchmarks	Individual Peer and Social Community
	Establish an alternative school for students providing temporary, therapeutic programming for students	Individual Peer and Social

FOR DISCUSSION: Scenario Worksheet

Solution Type	Example Solutions	Impact on Protective Factors
Policy	School leaders require behavioral support staff to conduct mandatory check ins with targeted students	Individual Peer and Social
	Mandate CFSA and DBH and involve school representatives on family/case management teams to provide aligned supports	Community Peer and Social Family
Communications Tools		
Physical Building Infrastructure		

Timeline through February

Meeting One

Nov. 7th

Kick-off and discuss common **objectives and goals**

Meeting Two

Nov 28th

Review and discuss **prevention efforts** and procedures

Meeting Three

Dec 19th

Review **intervention resources** and procedures for addressing safety incidents

Meeting Four

Jan 9th

Determine what constitutes a **steady state, safe school**

Meeting Five

Jan 23rd

Review **proposed set of recommendations** for submission

Meeting Six

Jan 30th

Targeted focus groups with youth and school staff

Community office hours

Closing

Thank you for your attendance and participation.

School Safety Enhancement Committee

Session Four will be held on **January 9th, 2023**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact hillary.desir@dc.gov

Committee Members

1. **Ricky Brown**, Executive Director of School Safety and Security, District of Columbia Public Schools
2. **Dan Davis**, Student Advocate, State Board of Education
3. **John Carlos Green**, Community Engagement Manager, Public Charter School Board
4. **Simaya Hammon**, Banneker High School Student
5. **Nicole McDermott**, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice
6. **Dontrell Smith**, District of Columbia Public School Parent
7. **Mische' Walden**, School Counselor, Johnson Middle School
8. **Deitrich E. Williams**, District of Columbia Public School Parent
9. **Andre Wright**, Assistant Chief, School Safety Division, Metropolitan Police Department
10. **Tatiana Portillo,** Roosevelt STAY Student

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