



# JCPS Safety Plan

January 27, 2022

The Jefferson County Public School (JCPS) District has developed a multifaceted plan to support safety in our schools. Throughout the process, our goal of maintaining safe learning environments has remained unchanged. That is always the focus and priority. Like every other aspect of life over the past few years, the development of the plan was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We were in the middle of having more community dialogue about school safety when COVID hit. The pandemic limited our in-person options to talk to community members about how to move forward after the Louisville Metro Police and St. Matthews Police Departments removed their officers from our schools to place them back on patrol.

Of all the controversial issues that we have faced together in the past four years, this is one of the most challenging. We received encouragement from the Jefferson County Board of Education (JCBE) to explore innovative options for school safety that increase security while also providing the necessary supports for students and schools. We read the pertinent research. We visited other large urban school districts and reviewed the safety and security plans of even more. And we listened to community partners, parents, teachers, and administrators. Based on all of that input, we compiled this plan.

A key strategy was to bring back together focus groups to get input on the 2022 plan. Representatives from partner groups were involved in discussions before this plan. We received input from the following partners:

- Louisville Urban League
- NAACP, Louisville Branch
- LaCasita Center
- No More Red Dots
- 15th District Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Cities United
- Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS)
- ACLU of Kentucky
- Louisville Metro Police Department
- Superintendent's Student Advisory Council
- Community Missionary Baptist Church
- Louisville Metro Government
- University of Louisville
- Advisory Council for Racial Equity (ACRE)
- Jefferson County Teachers Association (JCTA) Black Teacher Caucus

We are reimagining the functions of our current security team. The plan calls for our current district security monitors to receive enhanced training to become sworn law enforcement officers, each serving a cluster of schools in a geographic area. They are called School Safety Officers (SSOs). In order to provide coverage for all schools, the plan doubles the number of officers from 15 district security monitors to 30 SSOs. They are not in a school the entire day, but could quickly respond to emergencies and incidents as needed.

The plan also includes the new school-based position of Safety Administrator for each middle and high school. This administrator would be involved in proactive steps leading to increased safety and security within a school; work to develop relationships of trust with and provide positive supports for students; and conduct threat assessments, including assessing security/social media threats to the school. The overarching purpose is to have a dedicated person with the needed training, capacities, and dispositions in each middle and high school who is focused—all day, every day—on making schools safer by improving systems and identifying ways to support the students, schools, and our community as a whole.

Extensive training will be the key to both of these positions with geographically based safety officers who are employed by JCPS and well-trained administrators who know our schools, students, and communities.



# Details of the Plan

## Job Descriptions and an Organizational Chart

The new Organizational Chart for Security and Investigations adds SSOs to the Security and Investigation department. There are currently 15 District Security Monitors who would move into SSO positions and then we would hire 15 more for a total of 30 SSOs. The organizational chart reflects the change from District Security Monitor to School Safety Officer. Details about purpose and scope of the SSOs are detailed in Policy 02.31 which can be found on the district website.

The plan also calls for retention of the five Security Officers who currently work at the district level and would not be assigned to schools. The pay grade in the job description has been adjusted to be in line with the SSOs.

The Safety Administrator is a position that is school-based and reports to the principal, so there is not an organizational chart that reflects it. All of these positions have job descriptions that will be available on the district website.

### This is an overview of the Safety Administrator position.

#### Purpose

The purpose of the Safety Administrator (SA) is to coordinate and support local school safety and to foster positive school culture and climate; to build relationships of trust with students and employees; and to maintain positive relationships with school stakeholders. Additionally, they will participate in maintaining a safe and orderly school environment. They will work closely with the District Security and Investigations Department and school staff to support students and staff. They will ensure alignment with Culture and Climate Department initiatives and priorities to maintain consistency across the District.

#### Scope of the Work

*The responsibilities listed below provide additional clarity of the day-to-day work of the Safety Administrator.*

- Collaborates with District and community stakeholders to identify, respond, and mitigate school safety issues
- Participates with the School Safety Team to implement District Threat Assessment procedures, protocols, and guidelines in response to threats (personal, virtual, etc.)
- Coordinates law-related investigations with campus administrators, Security and Investigations, and local law enforcement
- Oversees the school campus for safety purposes
- Fosters positive culture/climate, builds relationships of trust with students/staff, and maintains positive relationships with stakeholders
- Responds to issues regarding staff and student safety and coordinates with SSO on issues involving criminal activity
- Assists law enforcement agencies and District departments to ensure school safety
- Coordinates development, communication, updates, and implementation of the *School Safety and Emergency Procedures Manual* in coordination with the District School Safety Coordinator and campus administrators
- Coordinates State- and District-mandated school safety drills and addresses safety issues promptly
- Maintains Safe Crisis Management (SCM) certification and ensures that SCM team member certifications are current
- Attends required meetings with Culture and Climate Department
- Coordinates emergency personnel (EMS) when needed
- Coordinates security for extracurricular and school-sponsored events

## Oversight and Support

The Safety Administrators will be assigned to each middle and high school in the district and report directly to the principal. The principal will be responsible for hiring and evaluation of this staff member. Initial coordination of this new position will require additional support from district departments, including oversight and participation in the initial hiring and training process.

To ensure consistency, the JCPS Culture and Climate Department will provide additional support and oversight for Safety Administrators throughout implementation. This will mainly be in the form of training, but it will also include role clarity, safety planning, and compliance.

## Training

*Safety Administrators will be trained in the following areas within the first year of implementation. Training components will be revisited throughout each school year.*

- Cross-cultural communication
- Implicit bias training
- De-escalation
- Restorative practices
- Trauma-informed care
- Suicide Prevention
- Safe Crisis Management
- New employee training
- Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports
- Substance abuse resources
- Students with IDEA/504 protections
- Use of interpreters with English Learners (ELs) for effective/appropriate communication
- Student Support and Behavior Intervention Handbook (SSBIH)

## Recommended qualities

- Bachelor's degree
- Successful experience with leading operational responses
- Successful experience working with youth from diverse backgrounds
- Effective written and oral communication skills

## Assignment to Schools

After listening to feedback about equitable assignments, under the plan, we would assign Safety Administrators to all middle and high schools. For schools with two levels (Shawnee and Moore), we would assign a second Safety Administrator. And in order to align District support to the needs of schools, a second Safety Administrator would also be allotted to middle and high schools that are in Tier IV of the new school allocations (Doss, Iroquois, Valley, Western HS, Frost/Stuart, Knight, Olmsted North, Olmsted South, and Thomas Jefferson). The Safety Administrators would report to the principal at the school but be closely tied to the Culture and Climate Department, which, under the leadership of the Assistant Superintendent, would coordinate training and support for the Safety Administrators.

School Safety Officers would be assigned to a set of schools that are geographically close. Generally, the assignments would be between three to seven schools. Special consideration would be given to three alternative schools: Breckinridge-Metropolitan, Minor Daniels, and Waller-Williams. Each of these schools serve a very special population with unique needs. Therefore, we would assign each of these schools an SSO of their own. It will require close consideration to ensure that the right people are identified and hired to work with the students. This will allow these three schools to work with a dedicated partner.

## Budget

The budget for this project includes the personnel costs as well as equipment, insurance, etc. The SSO portion of the project has a total annual cost of \$2.06 million and the Safety Administrators cost is \$5.2 million. The total annual cost of the proposal is just over \$7.2 million.

We received feedback concerning support for elementary schools. We are confident that elementary schools will now have responsive support from their assigned area SSO. In elementary schools, the issue that they encounter most frequently that might require an SSO response is managing an incident with an angry parent. Having access to an SSO who is just minutes away to diffuse the situation will be a game changer. We are also adding two Safety Administrators to each elementary zone to support schools.

## Policy and Procedures

The Policy Committee has met three times in January 2022 and has closely reviewed each section of the policy. The committee's input is reflected in the final version of the policy. The committee is also reviewing the current set of procedures for SSOs and will continue their review work on this important project. Extensive work conducted by the committee in 2019 and 2020 forms the basis of these procedures, with changes to reflect the new, innovative structure of the Safety Plan.

## Feedback

We have received valuable feedback from our community partners. Suggestions that have been incorporated into the plan include providing training for SSOs on accessing translation services and interpreters when interacting with non-English-speaking families and professional-development (PD) sessions on suicide prevention and drug addiction services. We are also committed to establishing a Community Data Review Team that will meet regularly and examine data and look at trends. This mirrors the District's Advisory Committee for Racial Equity (ACRE), which was suggested by community partners during our work almost two years ago when we initiated this project, and it is still part of the proposal.

The JCPS Safety Plan has the potential to be a model for the nation. As other large, urban districts grapple with the same challenges that we do here in JCPS, we feel that this plan, with its dual positions, could be a model for emulation by others.