

Memo

To: BVSD Board of Education

From: District Accountability Committee (DAC)

Date: October 13, 2020

Re: Recommendations on Use of School Resource Officers (SROs) in BVSD Schools

To fulfill the DAC responsibility: C.R.S. 22-11-302(1)(f) - *The district accountability committee shall, provide input to the local school board concerning the creation and enforcement of its school conduct and discipline code.*

Process

The BVSD District Accountability Committee convened virtually on August 18, 2020 for a presentation on the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program. Initial feedback was provided and a subcommittee was formed for a deeper review and discussion. In order to allow for greater participation by historically under-represented and racial/ethnic minority parents, members of the Latino Parent Advisory Council (CAPL) were invited to participate on the subcommittee. This subcommittee met virtually on 5 occasions and worked asynchronously to review materials provided by the district and to research alternative strategies. The subcommittee recommendations were presented to the DAC on October 6, 2020 and approved by unanimous vote.

Recommendations

The DAC and CAPL recommend BVSD prioritize and expand efforts around equity and culturally responsive practices that promote the wellbeing of all students, as outlined in theme 4 of the Strategic Plan. In this vein, the district should work to address disparities among vulnerable populations, improve mental health supports and make procedural changes toward restorative justice that align with recent policy (JC/JD) changes. The DAC and CAPL strongly encourage the district to work toward substantially improving accountability and transparency in the application of school discipline and referrals to law enforcement.

- **The DAC recommends the district end the existing SRO program and remove SROs from all district schools. The district should work with community partners, including local law enforcement, to devise community-supported school safety plans as mandated by state law.**
Justification: At present, the district has not developed a system of accountability or oversight for the SRO program to ensure it supports district policy, equity and socio-emotional development goals or that it positively impacts students' sense of safety. The SRO role is defined as, "first and foremost" a police officer¹, suggesting their orientation to students may be fundamentally from a law enforcement perspective while the majority of issues driving SRO contacts are related to substance abuse and/or mental health issues. Under the current program, SROs receive limited developmentally appropriate training regarding working with diverse student populations, addressing mental health needs of youth, and mentoring of youth. The existing data² suggests there are disproportionate impacts on students of color,³ and extant literature suggests that SRO programs may reduce perceptions of safety in students of color⁴. Lastly, suspensions and criminal referrals create long-term negative life consequences for students, including higher risk of incarceration as adults.⁵
- **The DAC recommends expanded use of culturally competent, trauma-informed health professionals (mental health, public health, substance abuse, etc.) in schools and an increased use of existing proactive intervention and prevention programs. The DAC encourages BVSD to**

¹ <https://bouldercolorado.gov/police/school-resource-officers-2>

² [https://go.boarddocs.com/co/bvbsd/Board.nsf/files/BTFNSQ608546/\\$file/School%20Resource%20Officer%20Presentation%20September%202020.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/co/bvbsd/Board.nsf/files/BTFNSQ608546/$file/School%20Resource%20Officer%20Presentation%20September%202020.pdf)

³ <https://ed.stanford.edu/news/racial-disparities-school-discipline-are-linked-achievement-gap-between-black-and-white>

⁴ As cited in the literature review provided by BVSD to the DAC

⁵ The School to Prison Pipeline: Long-Run Impacts of School Suspensions on Adult Crime (NBER Working Paper 26257), Andrew Bacher-Hicks, Stephen B. Billings, and David J. Deming

seek out partnerships with community organizations providing similar services to offset costs.

Justification: Health professionals can assist in prevention programming, crisis intervention, conflict resolution, de-escalation, and help identify institutional structures that create disparities in the use of disciplinary referrals. Improvements in these areas paired with implementation of proactive strategies and interventions can reduce the need for out of school disciplinary outcomes and referrals to the criminal justice system.

- Expedite the roll out of additional mental health and social and emotional learning support at the secondary level (as recommended repeatedly in DAC budget recommendations) in the form of culturally competent, trauma-informed licensed mental health professionals.
 - Explore partnerships with local public health/mental health agencies for crisis intervention and prevention programming for schools, establishing clear accountability and reporting mechanisms. This builds on the Strategic Theme 3 (5a) of the BVSD Strategic Plan.
 - Develop school wide training/programming focused on conflict resolution/de-escalation and cultural competence, and expand institutional structures of accountability to address disparities in the use of disciplinary referrals.
 - Expand district-wide implementation of restorative justice programs. Consider building on, and rolling out, New Vista's pilot experience with restorative justice practices to other secondary schools.
- **The DAC recommends BVSD improve transparency, accountability and equity in disciplinary practices. To improve transparency the district, including the DAC and SACs, should review the qualitative and quantitative data generated in Infinite Campus annually.** *Justification:* Implementation of discipline in BVSD disproportionately affects Black and Latinx students who are 3-4 times more likely to be suspended for behavioral incidents, are more likely to be disciplined for subjective infractions, and are disciplined more harshly than white students for the same behavior. Schools did not consistently track discipline, particularly for vulnerable populations, and the district declined to share detailed and disaggregated discipline data when requested.
 - The DAC commends the district for its creation of the Discipline Matrix and for new requirements for tracking disciplinary data via the Infinite Campus system. A uniform system for disciplinary action, referral, and accountability at the school and classroom level will help remove subjective bias and identify teachers and schools who disproportionately refer vulnerable students for disciplinary actions and law enforcement. The DAC encourages continued transparency and evaluation of data generated from the Discipline Matrix. The district should ensure that in addition to disciplinary data the Infinite Campus system also collects appropriate demographic data at the incident level.
 - All BVSD schools should track disciplinary and law enforcement referral data, evaluate disproportionalities across vulnerable populations (race/ethnicity, special education identification, 504 plan, emerging bilingual, gender identity, meal assistance, etc.), and annually publish a discipline equity scorecard for the district and individual schools, to improve transparency.⁶ Consider partnering with research institutions for increased objectivity and consistent tracking.
 - Reduce disparities in disciplinary referrals and ensure that discipline referrals are proportional to student representation in the school population, maintaining a 0-3% suspension target rate (target adopted by Denver Public Schools) across all groups, schools and classrooms.⁷

⁶ <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/addressing-root-causes-disparities-school-discipline>

⁷ Anyon et al. "[Denver Public Schools accountability report: Update on racial disparities in school discipline](#)," project report from DU-DPS Researcher Practitioner Partnership on Disparities in School Discipline 2017-2018,

SRO Subcommittee Members

Member	School	Member	School
Simitrio Carrazco CAPL	University Hill ES	Ana Lilia Lujan, CAPL	University Hill ES, Boulder HS
Jorge Chavez, DAC	Escuela Bilingüe Pioneer ES	Adriana Paola Palacios Luna, CAPL	Boulder High School
John Clasby, DAC	Coal Creek Elementary School	Amy Lynn, DAC	Angevine MS, Ryan STEAM ES
Lesly Feaux, CAPL	Peak to Peak	Nicole Rajpal, DAC	Southern Hills MS, Foothill ES
Ana Fernandez Frank, CAPL	Platt MS, Boulder HS	Kevin Reardon, DAC	Centaurus High School
Ralph Frid, DAC	Alicia Sanchez Elementary School	Jamillah Richmond, DAC, POCC	Whittier Elementary School
Kristine Johnson, DAC	Fairview High School	Anna Segur, CAPL	University Hill ES, Centennial MS
Summer King, DAC	Superior Elementary School	Conor Seyle, DAC	Louisville Elementary School
Noemi Lastiri, CAPL	Crest View ES Centennial MS	Karen Zeid, DAC	New Vista High School

*CAPL (Latino Parent Advisory Council); POCC (Parents of Color Council), DAC (District Accountability Com.)

Special thanks to Kathleen Sullivan, BVSD Legal Counsel and Rob Price, Assistant Superintendent of Operational Services.