

Student Safety, Our Shared Responsibility

Student Safety Enhancement Project Update

February 13, 2025



Purpose Today

Update the Board of Education on the district's work to further enhance student safety



In this presentation:

- Overview of the ***Student Safety, Our Shared Responsibility*** project
- Planned work for near, mid and long-term
- Collaboration with child safety experts
- Presentation from Ralston House

Student Safety, Our Shared Responsibility is:

A shared mission of staff, students, families and the community to enhance student safety within Jeffco.

Collaborating with **local child safety experts** to evaluate current safety practices and implement revisions or new initiatives to **create a safer and more supportive learning environment for all students.**



Child Safety Experts



By consulting with child safety experts in our community and continuing to collaborate with law enforcement agencies, we will ensure that Jeffco is following best practices.

- Ralston House
- CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates)
- Children's Hospital Colorado
- Jefferson Center for Mental Health
- U.S. Center for Safe Sport
- Colorado School Safety Center
- Colorado Department of Public Safety
- Child Sex Offender Internet Investigations Unit (Cheezo)
- And more...



Deliverable Actions and Timeline: Fortifying Safety in Jeffco



Review Existing Safety Practices

In partnership with child safety experts in our community, Jeffco is reviewing relevant safety practices.

Identify Safety Enhancement Projects

Student Safety, Our Shared Responsibility internal work groups are leading intentional projects with advice from child safety experts

Implement Enhancements

Student Safety, Our Shared Responsibility internal work groups will operationalize enhancement efforts in the short (0-3 months), mid (4-6 months) and long term (7-12 months).

Current Safety Practice Highlights



- Every employee must **pass a fingerprint-based CBI/FBI background check** before hiring.
- All employees must **complete annual training on identifying and reporting** child abuse and recognizing indicators of grooming behavior.
- All Jeffco principals and central leaders are required to **complete training on adult sexual misconduct**.
- Our schools and facilities follow **visitor management protocols**.

Current Safety Practice Highlights



- **Over 145 safety and security team members** work 24 hours a day to protect Jeffco students, staff, and families.
- Jeffco Public Schools **partners with area law enforcement agencies**, including through the School Resource Officer (SRO) program.
- Jeffco Public Schools provides **Safe2Tell** and an online **Title IX reporting system**.
- Each school designates an administrator to serve as a **Title IX lead** – more than half our schools have this in place today with the rest scheduled for later this year.



Current Safety Practice Highlights

- Jeffco's internet network firewalls **block access to inappropriate or harmful content** and prevent unauthorized access.
- **Policy GBEB/GBEB-R**, updated in consultation with the Colorado School Safety Resource Center, sets expectations for safe and healthy boundaries between staff and students.

Current Practice: Background Checks

All Jeffco employees are required by state law to have a fingerprint-based background check.

Licensed employees must be fingerprinted as part of the licensing application process with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). CDE reviews the background check from the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to determine if the applicant's criminal history meets the standards of licensure in accordance with Colorado law.

- CBI flags the individual with CDE and subsequent arrest notifications are shared with all school districts in the state via their online tracking portal that Jeffco Human Resources checks daily.

Non-Licensed employees are fingerprinted through Colorado Fingerprinting, a 3rd-party vendor, and Human Resources reviews the CBI/FBI records to determine suitability for employment.

- CBI flags the individual as a Jeffco employee and Jeffco Human Resources receives any subsequent arrest notifications

Current Practice: Background Checks

The Colorado Educator Licensing Act requires Colorado Department of Education to deny or revoke a teacher or administrator license when the applicant or license-holder has been convicted of:

- Felony child abuse;
- A crime of violence as defined in C.R.S. 18-1.3-406;
- A felony involving unlawful sexual behavior;
- Felony domestic violence;
- A felony drug offense; and
- Indecent exposure.

These same **minimum thresholds** are also applied to applicants seeking non-licensed positions in Jeffco. The district applies a higher standard than the CDE licensing minimums to determine eligibility for employment.

Current Practice: Background Checks

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

provides guidance for considerations in determining when criminal history should be used in evaluating a candidate for employment:

- The nature of the conviction and its relatedness to the job;
- Any information regarding rehabilitation;
- The time that has elapsed since the conviction.

Current Practice: Background Checks

Handling Employee Arrests

- If an employee is arrested, the Colorado Bureau of Investigation promptly notifies Jeffco as the employer of record for the fingerprinted employee.
- Human Resources, Legal Services and Senior Leadership consider the nature and severity of the offense and its job-relatedness to evaluate what options are appropriate for the arrested employee (i.e. termination, administrative leave, corrective action, transfer, demotion, etc).

Safety Work Groups: Near Term 0-3 month deliverables

- **Child Safety Advisors:** Consult with child safety experts from the community to review processes and systems.
- **Background and Reference Checks:** A review of current background check processes and expert evaluation will be conducted. A standardized reference check format will also be developed for new and existing employees who change positions.
- **Audit of Student and Staff Reporting Systems:** [Safe2Tell](#), [Title IX](#), [Mandatory Reporting](#) and [Handle with Care](#).

Safety Work Groups: Near Term 0-3 month deliverables

- **Expand Staff Sexual Misconduct Trainings:** In partnership with the Colorado School Safety Resource Center and Ralston House, expand training for staff on adult sexual misconduct (ASM), how to recognize ASM and how to report suspected ASM.
- **Expand Mandatory Reporter Training and Grooming Prevention Training:** We will also work with Ralston House to improve our mandatory reporter and grooming prevention trainings, including developing a specialized training for Athletic Directors, School Resource Officers, Principals, School Secretaries, Campus Supervisors and Coaches.

Safety Work Groups: Near Term

0-3 month deliverables

- **Evaluate Protocols and Procedures for Non-Employees Regularly in Buildings** including construction crews and building use/lease tenants.
- **Audit Student Safety Procedures of Overnight Athletic and Activities Trips:** Documentation and expert evaluation of, current practices.
- **Safe Student Summit:** This April 9 summit at Wheat Ridge High School will bring together child safety experts to guide families through a variety of interactive workshops.

Safety Work Groups: Mid-to-Long Term

4-12 month deliverables

- **Districtwide Visitor and Volunteer Management System:** Implement a robust and proven ID-based system to screen, track and monitor visitors and volunteers through identify verification, criminal record screening and access authorization for all visitors, volunteers, adult sponsors, and chaperones for student field trips and travel.
- **Technology Tool:** Explore additional technology tools that may help us improve student safety
- **Expanded Student Curriculum:** Review resources provided through our partners in law enforcement to determine the content for student curriculum.

Student Safety, Our Shared Responsibility



Looking to child safety experts in our community to guide us in making sure our schools are places of **safety, belonging and respect.**

Strong **partnerships between families, school and community** are vital to supporting a **safer and more supportive learning environment for all students.**

Taking every step possible to **fortify safety for all Jeffco students** is foundational and essential to delivering a world class education.



Establishing Partnerships with Child Safety Experts

- Ralston House
- CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates)
- Children's Hospital Colorado
- Jefferson Center for Mental Health
- U.S. Center for Safe Sport
- Colorado School Safety Center
- Colorado Department of Public Safety
- Child Sex Offender Internet Investigations Unit (Cheezo)
- And more...



We are reaching out to child safety experts in our community to serve as advisors and who can help educate our community at our Safe Student Summit.

Introducing Ralston House

Ralston House Child Advocacy Center

works with law enforcement, child protective services, district attorney's offices in the 1st and 17th Judicial Districts (Jefferson, Adams, Gilpin and Broomfield counties) and the community to provide a safe place to investigate child abuse and ensure victim services for children who have been physically or sexually abused or witnessed violence.





Ralston House

- Services
- Children and families served
- Treatment works
- **Perpetrators go where children are.**

*That is why school, sports organizations
and churches are prime targets.*



Statistics

- 1 in 6 girls
- 1 in 12 boys
- Only 30% of youth who are sexually abused report under age 18
- Average age of report is 52 years old
- **Less** than 10% of victims are abused by someone unknown to them



Prevention and Response

- Establish, review, share and enforce:
 - Policies
 - Boundaries
 - Reporting
- Communicate lessons learned and system changes to staff, caregivers and community
- Training



Reporting

- Identify and review boundary violations
- Support reporting
- Reduce barriers to reporting
- Training

Training and Resources



- Ralston House

<https://www.ralstonhouse.org>

- Free training for:
 - Professionals
 - Caregivers
 - Community



Appendix

- **CO4Kids** is the Colorado Department of Human Services' statewide initiative to provide awareness about Colorado's child welfare system.
- It focuses on **educating the public about the signs of child abuse and neglect, while raising awareness about the Hotline (844-264-5437)** to report concerns related to a child or youth.
- CO4Kids also strives to **strengthen families as a means of preventing abuse and neglect** from happening in the first place, helping all Colorado kids have a safe environment.
- Finally, the campaign is committed to **recruiting and retaining foster and adoptive parents**, so that when an out of home placement is unavoidable, a child has a safe place to thrive.

