

# School Safety Enhancement Committee

Session 1



# Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- Are Youth Safe?
- The Committee's Charge
- Our Approach & What We Know Already
- Proposed Workplan and Next Steps

# 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

# Introductions

Let's get to know each other by sharing "our whys"

Who are you?

Why are you here and willing to offer  
your valuable time to this work?

# Rules of the Road

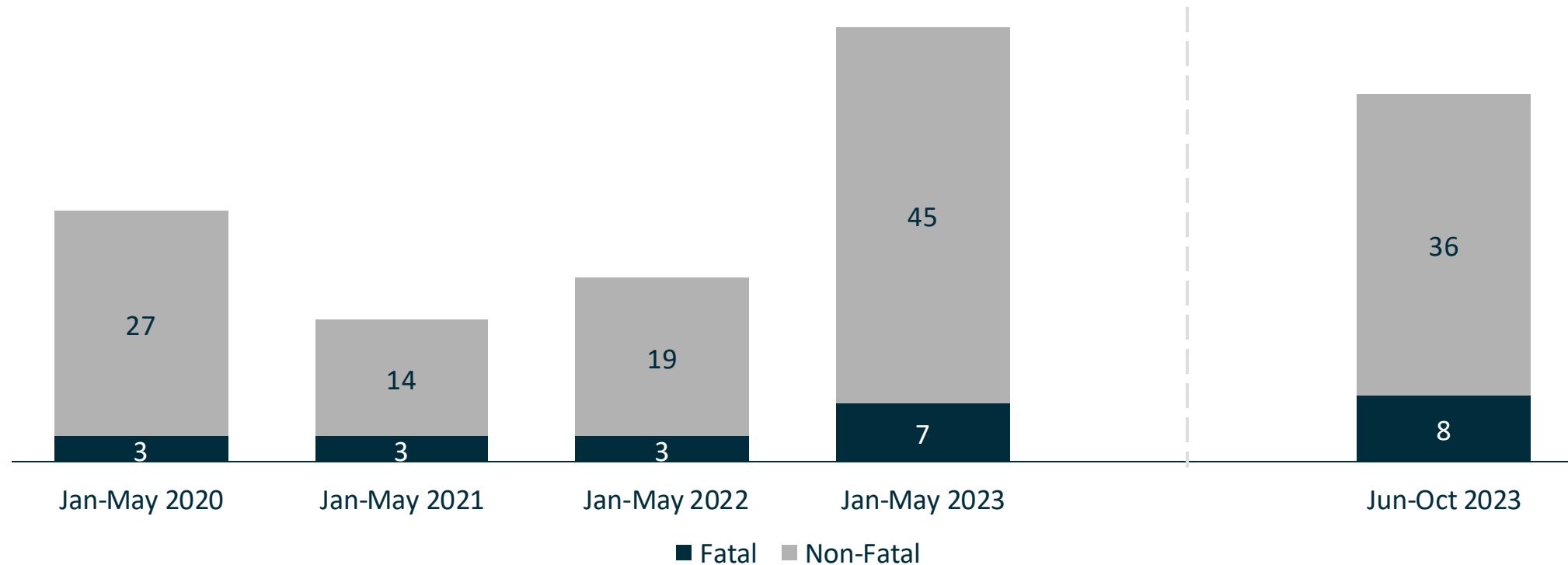
1. Be curious
2. Assume positive intent
3. Feel comfortable speaking in “rough draft” - we are all learners
4. Be concise, share airtime
5. It’s okay to disagree respectfully and openly, without being disagreeable
6. Expect and accept non-closure

*Any additions or changes recommended?*

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# We are seeing an increase in youth gunshot victims

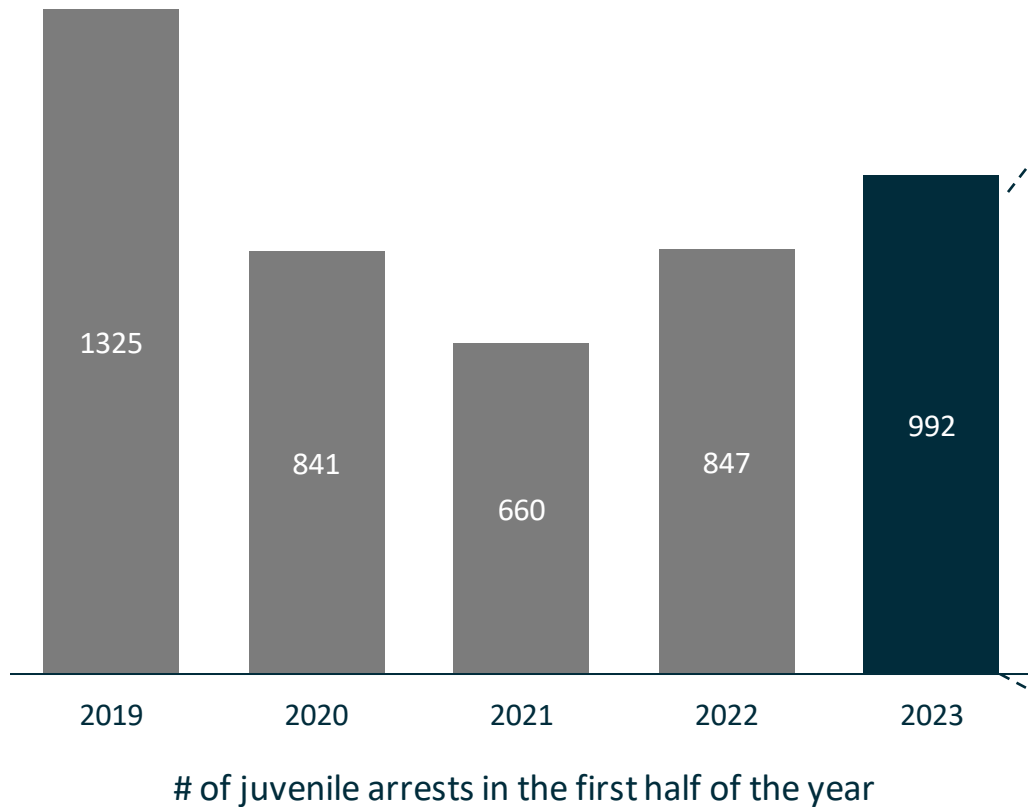


As of October, **15** young people (< age 18) have been shot and killed in 2023 and over **81** young people have been shot and survived.

Source: Metropolitan Police Department

# Arrests of those under age 18 are trending up, with gun and car-related arrests exceeding pre-pandemic levels

January - June



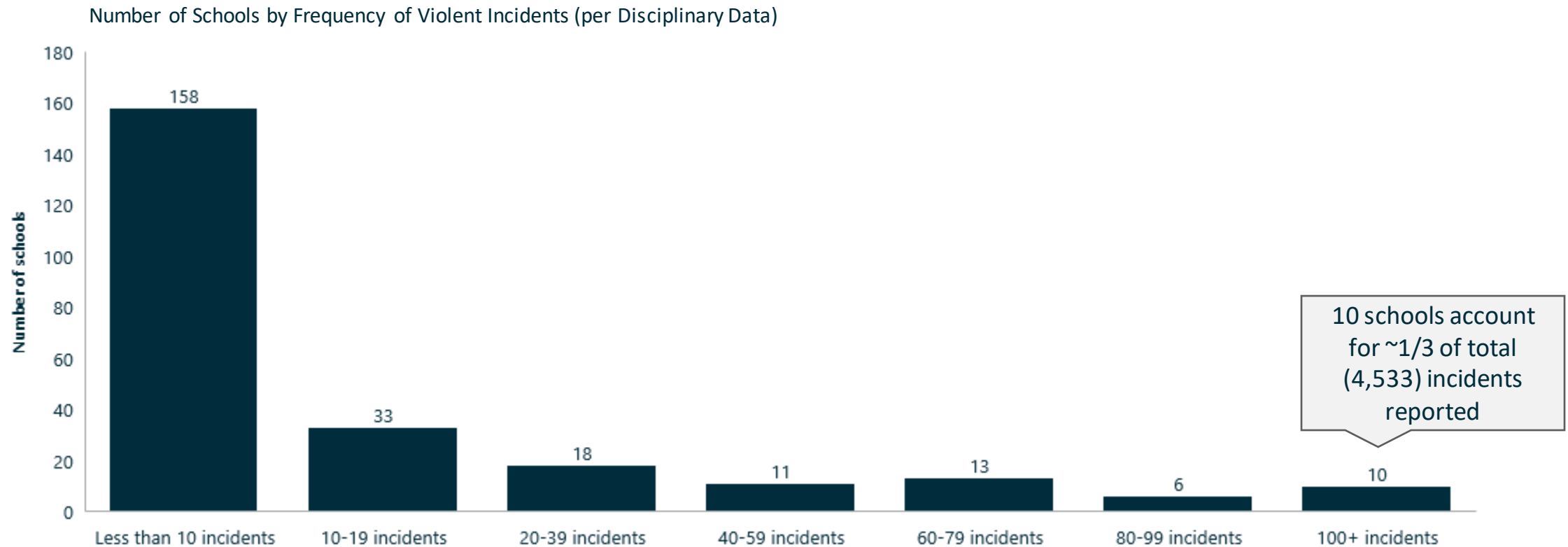
This includes...

- **Robbery:** 133 arrests
- **Simple Assault:** 101 arrests
- **Carrying a Pistol without a License:** 51 arrests  
*(up from 16 in 2019, pre-pandemic)*
- **Armed Carjacking:** 50 arrests  
*(up from 3 in 2019, pre-pandemic)*
- **Assault with a Dangerous Weapon:** 24 arrests
- **Unauthorized Use of a Vehicle- Act of violence:** 30 arrests

Source: Metropolitan Police Department



# Almost one-third of all violent incidents occurred in just 10 schools



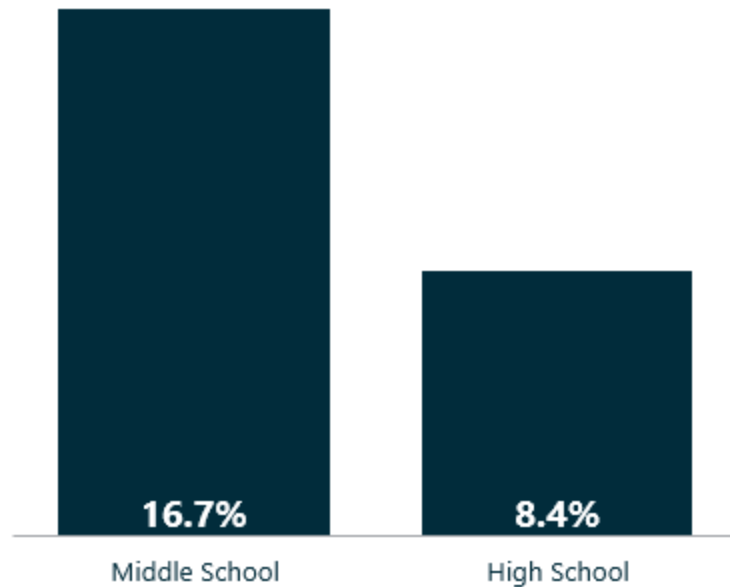
An incident is counted as an incident of violence when the primary or secondary reason indication for a disciplinary action is listed as one of the following:

(1) rape, attempted rape, and other sexual assault; (2) robbery with and without a weapon; (3) robbery with a firearm or explosive device; (4) physical attack or fight with and without a weapon; (5) physical attack or fight with a firearm or explosive device; (6) threats of physical attack with and without a weapon; (7) threats of physical attack with a firearm or explosive device; (8) possession of a firearm or explosive device; (9) use of a firearm or shooting; or (10) homicide

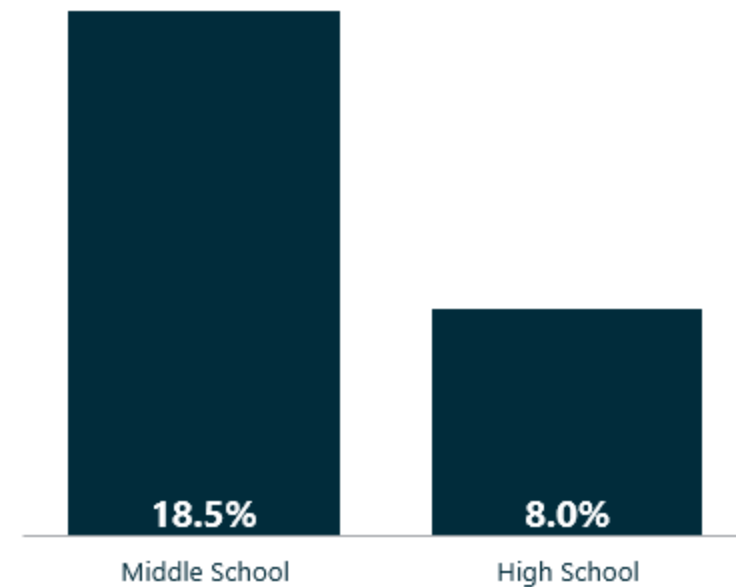
Source: 2022 DC School Report Card Discipline Data

# Many students do not feel safe at school, with middle schoolers expressing more concerns

% of students who missed one or more days of school because **they felt unsafe** during the prior 30 days



% of students who were afraid of **being beaten up at school** one or more times during the prior 12 months



Source: 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

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# School Safety Enhancement Committee's Charge

- To review and discuss the current state of school safety, ideal conditions for safe schools, the District's prevention and intervention strategies as well as incident follow up protocols.
- To determine potential recommendations to improve school safety.
- To publish a report in February 2024 detailing the Committee's recommendations for Council, the City Administrator and the Mayor.

# Specifically, the Committee shall, per the law, provide:

1. Recommended **staffing configurations** of a school safety team
2. Methods of **prevention and intervention** that can be used to minimize and respond to school safety incidents
3. Procedures for **enhancing campus security** without compromising the privacy of students, including appropriate uses of security cameras
4. Practices for **engaging students and parents** in each school community about safety needs and appropriate school response
5. Protocols for **coordination** between school-based employees, the Safe Passage, Safe Blocks program, and Safe Routes to School program
6. Recommended guidelines for the Metropolitan Police Department, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, the Office of Unified Communications, and the Fire and Emergency Medical Service Department to **share timely and reliable information about ongoing emergencies** with a principal of a District of Columbia Public School, public charter school, or private educational facility; and; a child development center program director or in home care owner or operator.

# For Discussion

**As you consider our charge, the initial overarching data, and your experiences: what are the most critical things for us to accomplish as a collective?**

1. What should we walk away with in February that will make this work a success?
2. What hasn't been mentioned yet that we need to consider?

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# Violence is more likely to occur in and around schools in the absence of important “protective factors”

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

## Individual

- Developed **social skills** and competences
- High **educational aspirations** and **achievement**
- Positive **social orientation**

## Peer and Social

- **Strong, positive relationships** at school
- **School climates** with clear rules, firm discipline and supervision
- Positive **peer group role models**
- Involvement in constructive **activities** in and after school

## Family

- 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

## Community

- Economic **opportunities**
- Socially organized **neighborhoods**
- Low concentrations of **poverty**
- Low levels of **transiency**

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



# How are we doing?

## Individual

### Protective factors

Developed social skills and competencies

### Examples of current work

- SEL programming
- Conflict resolution skill building
- Pandemic Supplement funding

### Example measures

- *Just **half** of students say they can self-regulate when someone is bothering them*

High educational aspirations and achievement

- Teacher development
- Multi-tiered system of supports
- High impact tutoring
- DCPS 6<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academies
- Public school choice

- ***20%** of students don't believe that going to school every day is very important*

Positive social orientation

- Mental health clinicians
- School climate work

- ***One in five** children in DC experience mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral challenges*
- ***One-third** of middle school girls have seriously thought about killing themselves*

Sources: DCPS Fall 2022 Panorama Survey; EmpowerK12 Spring 2022 Student Well-Being Survey; 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

# How are we doing?

## Peer and Social

### Protective factors

Strong, positive relationships at school

### Examples of current work

- SEL programming
- Conflict resolution skill building

### Example measures

- **12%** of students report being bullied most days
- Nearly **20%** of MS students report being electronically bullied

School climates with clear rules, firm discipline and supervision

- Restorative Justice programming
- School climate work

- **76%** of MS students feel safe at school
- Schools implementing RJ with rigor saw **20% fewer** out-of-school suspensions

Positive peer group role models

- Youth mental health ambassadors

- **6%** of high school students reported being a member of a gang or crew

Involvement in constructive activities in and after school

- OST and MADC grants
- DPR recreation
- Sports
- Internships

- **13% of DC** youth are unsupervised between 3-6PM

Sources: DCPS Fall 2022 Panorama Survey; EmpowerK12 Spring 2022 Student Well-Being Survey; 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey; OST Needs Assessment; OSSE 2021-22 Discipline Report

# How are we doing?

## Family

### Protective factors

### Examples of current work

### Example measures

Ability to discuss problems with parents

- DCPS Parent University
- Family engagement by schools

- *None available*

Presence of parent during daily transitions, home routines

- CFSA Triage Unit

- *In FY22 DHS served ~2,000 homeless youth*

Perceived high parental expectations about school performance

- School parent portals
- Every Day Labs Attendance Letters

- ***Two-thirds** of families agree that every day of absence can have an impact on a student's learning*

Family use of constructive strategies for coping with problems

- Family Success Centers
- DBH Family Wellness
- CFSA 211 Warm Line

- *~30% of MS and HS students witnessed violence in the home*
- ***Nearly half** of children have had adverse childhood experiences*

Sources: DCPS Incident Response Tool; 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey; DHS

# How are we doing?

## Community

### Protective factors

Economic opportunities

### Examples of current work

- Promotion of “Gateway Jobs”
- Employer-based job training

### Example measures

- *Unemployment in Wards 7 and 8 are **double** that of Wards 2 and 3*
- *Black unemployment in DC is nearly **7 times higher** than white unemployment*

Socially organized neighborhoods

- Comeback Plan
- DPR Ready2Plan plan
- Investment in new grocers East of the River

- *~79K East of the River residents live more than a mile from a grocery store*

Low concentrations of poverty

- Apprenticeships
- Employer-based job training

- *Residents in the most underserved neighborhoods have **~1/4 the income** of residents in the richest neighborhoods*

Low levels of transiency

- Black Homeownership Strike Force
- Affordable housing initiatives

- *In 2022, **65K people moved into DC** with a median income of \$51K*
- *In 2022, **63K people moved out of DC** with a median income of 64K*

Sources: DMPED Comeback Plan

# Protective factors can be reinforced through a variety of intervention levers that we will consider

## Protective factors

**Individual**

**Peer and social**

**Family**

**Community**



## Intervention levers

- Dedicated Staff & Personnel
- Staff Training & Capacity Building
- Programs and Services
- Policies & Protocols
- Communications Tools
- Physical infrastructure

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# We will consider the best intervention levers in the context of three “modes”

## Steady-state baseline mode

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

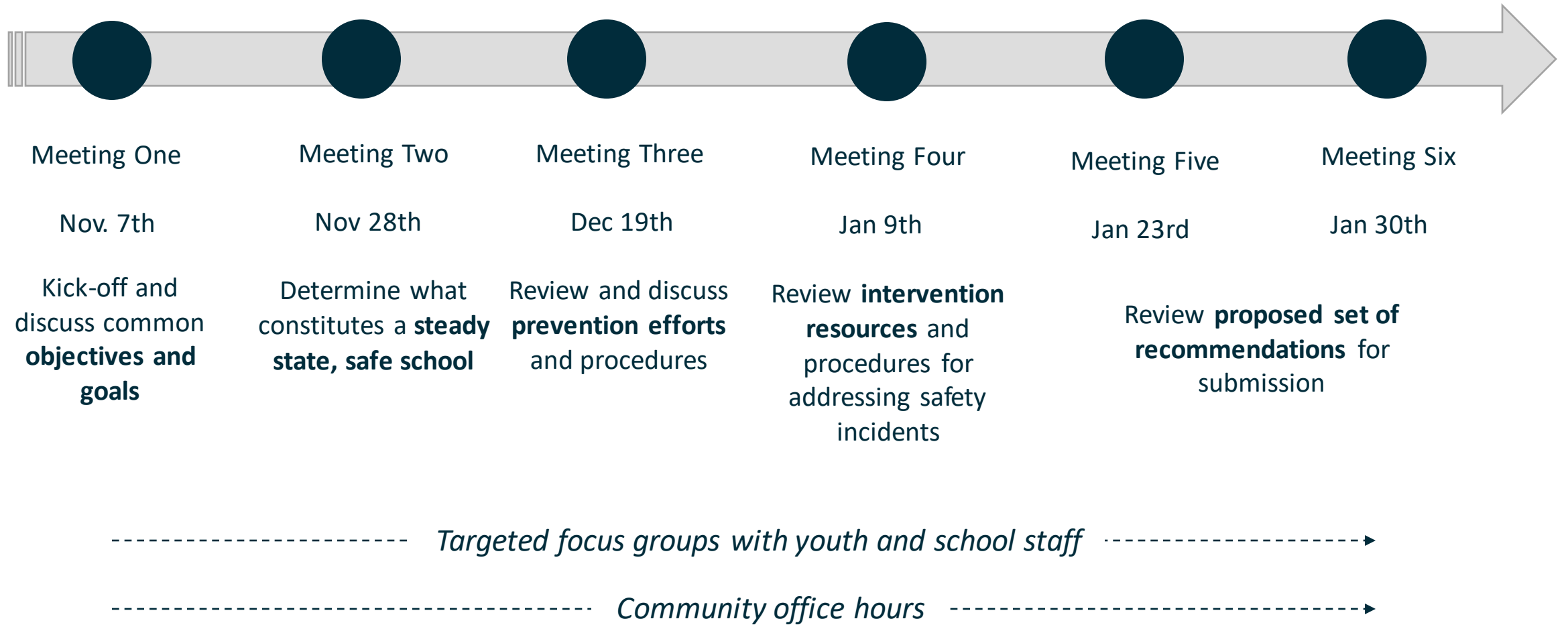
## Prevention mode

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

## Intervention mode

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

# Timeline through February





# Closing

Thank you for your attendance and participation.

**School Safety Enhancement Committee**  
**Session Two** will be held on **November 28th, 2023**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact [hillary.desir@dc.gov](mailto:hillary.desir@dc.gov)