



Reimagining School Safety Without School Police

Part 3 of a 3 part series | MORE AT: researchforaction.org/police

Introduction

Our “Police in Pennsylvania Schools” series highlights evidence of how policing in schools can reinforce structural racism that persists [throughout the education system](#). In [Brief #1](#) we reported the lack of evidence that police *improve* school safety compared to the **clear evidence** that police presence disproportionately harms Black and Hispanic students, as these students are disciplined and arrested at greater rates for the same or less serious behavior as white students¹ and in turn suffer from both short and long-term negative impacts from experiencing criminal charges.² In [Brief #2](#), we examined the **prevalence and disparities** of school policing in Pennsylvania, finding that schools with more students of color also spend more resources on police and that these disparities are mirrored in school-based referral and arrest rates, which are among the highest in the country.

Structural racism is defined by the Aspen Institute as “a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “whiteness” and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time.”

As the American Civil Liberties Union points out, staffing and spending on police comes [at the expense of other key staff and resources](#). This adds to structural inequalities as Pennsylvania schools already receive what the Education Law Center calls “[inadequate, inequitable, and racially segregated](#)” funding. The **pervasiveness** of structural racism and high **prevalence** of school policing in Pennsylvania schools suggest that a school safety approach that is safe and supportive for all students, without the negative consequences³ that can come with having police in schools, will require a comprehensive shift.

Some [school systems in Pennsylvania](#) and [across the country](#) are examining their school safety strategies and developing new plans that foster a positive school climate by implementing more comprehensive supports without relying on police. While research on the effectiveness of these approaches on school safety is still emerging, in this third brief in our series we describe a range of comprehensive initiatives and the strategies they adopt to move schools away from relying on policing. Importantly, the physical presence of police is just one of many components of policing and surveillance that reinforce structural racism in schools. While initiatives primarily discuss school police staffing, they are generally focused on reducing reliance on all forms of policing, surveillance, and exclusion and toward comprehensive approaches to safe and just educational environments for all students.

We begin with an overview of initiatives developed to reduce reliance on police, highlighting the specific well-established practices they incorporate. We then provide a more detailed description of those practices: community schools, trauma-informed schools, positive behavioral interventions and supports, restorative justice, and social-emotional learning. In an Appendix, we summarize lessons from these initiatives that may support other communities seeking to reimagine school safety in their school systems.



Initiatives to Promote School Safety and Reduce Reliance on School Police

We identified and reviewed eight recent initiatives from across the country that seek to promote school safety without reliance on police. Table 1 provides a brief overview of each initiative. The comprehensive approaches of these initiatives reflect an understanding that safety and discipline practices are all interconnected and contribute to school climate. We present these initiatives in alphabetical order.

Table 1. Initiatives to promote school safety and reduce reliance on school police

INITIATIVE	OVERVIEW	PROMISING APPROACHES OR PRACTICES
<p>The Abolitionist Teaching Network's Guide for Racial Justice and Abolitionist Social and Emotional Learning (2020)</p>	<p>This guide provides recommendations to promote a just school community through an “abolitionist” approach to social-emotional learning. The guide describes a healing-centered and culturally responsive approach to social-emotional learning, fully integrated into all aspects of the school. The guide offers recommendations, or “demands,” related to staff hiring and support; school culture, discipline, and policing practices; and accountability and oversight.</p>	<p>This initiative focuses on culturally responsive social-emotional learning and healing-centered practices.</p>
<p>The Advancement Project and Philadelphia Student Union's #NoCopsNoGuns: Police Are Not The Answer to School Shootings (2018)</p>	<p>This proposal provides recommendations for investing in school safety solutions and removing school police. Recommendations include shifting funding from school police to school safety solutions such as mental and emotional health services, counselors and social workers, and restorative justice practices. The Advancement Project and Alliance for Educational Justice also developed “We Came to Learn: A Call to Action for Police Free Schools,” which provides recommendations to implement best practices for collecting data, reporting school policing incidents, and revising existing MOUs between schools and police departments. It is contextualized by a thorough history of the use of police in schools.</p>	<p>This plan recommends the use of expanded restorative justice practices.</p>
<p>Black Organizing Project's The People's Plan for Police-Free Schools (2019)</p>	<p>This multi-part plan seeks to reduce school policing by increasing support staff and focusing security roles on peace-keeping and mentoring. This “community-driven” plan focused on Oakland Unified School District has four parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove law enforcement from schools, 2. Restructure the role of school security to focus on peace-keeping and mentoring, 3. Reallocate funds used for school policing to hiring mental and behavioral health and special education staff, and 4. Establish a community oversight committee. 	<p>This plan draws on trauma-informed and restorative justice practices.</p>
<p>Dignity in Schools Campaign's Model Code for Education and Dignity: Presenting a Human Rights Framework for Schools (2019)</p>	<p>This framework is designed to create a supportive educational environment by focusing on human-rights. This comprehensive framework is broken up into five chapters which include principles and recommended policies: Education, Participation, Dignity, Freedom from Discrimination, and Monitoring & Accountability. The Dignity chapter provides guidelines for building positive school culture while calling for the end to the regular presence of law enforcement in schools and alternatives to zero-tolerance discipline policies. Dignity in Schools also recommends ending the regular presence of law enforcement in “Counselors Not Cops” which builds on the Model Code.</p>	<p>This framework draws on trauma-informed and healing-centered practices, restorative justice, and school-wide positive behavior supports and focuses on social-emotional learning. The framework asserts that these school-wide practices must be culturally responsive.</p>

INITIATIVE	OVERVIEW	PROMISING APPROACHES OR PRACTICES
The Education Trust and National Women’s Law Center’s “And they cared”: How to Create Better, Safer learning Environments for Girls of Color (2020)	This guide highlights and defines practices that can be used to shift away from exclusionary discipline, including use of police in schools, and improve school climate to help address the needs of girls of color- especially Black girls. The guide provides a checklist for school community members to assess existing systems and make changes towards a more positive school climate. The guide acknowledges that these critical steps take time and dedication from school systems. Oakland Unified School District and Chicago Public School District reforms are highlighted in this guide.	This guide highlights culturally responsive restorative justice and social-emotional learning.
Girls for Gender Equity’s Police-Free Schools Toolkit (2020)	This toolkit provides guidance and resources for making decisions about police-free schools. The kit focuses on school staffing, school budgeting, and professional development practices. It also provides a historical context regarding school policing and makes the case that police reform efforts are insufficient.	This tool kit draws on culturally responsive, healing-centered, social-emotional learning rooted in restorative practices, positive youth development and with a focus on health and wellness.
The Healing-Centered Schools Working Group’s Community Roadmap to Bring Healing-Centered Schools to the Bronx (2020)	This approach focuses on building on existing student and staff strengths to create a positive school climate that meets students’ needs. Proactive and holistic support for students and staff, equity, and anti-racism are essential priorities of this initiative. Recommendations include creating school-based partnerships that provide essential holistic supports to meet students’ needs, providing greater attention to staff wellness, implementing social-emotional learning, adopting preventative strategies and non-punitive responses to disruptive behavior, and amplifying student and family voice.	This approach draws on trauma-informed, healing-centered, restorative justice, and community schools frameworks. It also focuses on social-emotional learning.
UrbEd’s Reimagining School Safety (2020)	This set of recommendations aims to shift the goals and strategies for school security. This approach outlines recommendations on how to redistribute budgets away from School Resource Officers and toward support staff, programs for students such as arts and afterschool programming, and medical staff; ensure transparency and oversight; and increase staff training to support cultural competency and anti-racism.	This plan draws on trauma-informed and restorative justice practices and calls for cultural competency.

Promising Practices

The holistic and comprehensive initiatives for safe and just schools summarized above include one or more well-established approaches for improving school climate. In Table 2, we provide a brief description of these specific approaches.

The initiatives in Table 1 commonly emphasize the importance of implementing these approaches with an anti-racist lens and cultural competence. Cultural competence and responsiveness involve awareness and acceptance of cultural differences, understanding of one’s own culture and how it affects behavior and values, understanding students’ cultures, and adapting policies and practices to ensure that all cultures are accepted and included.⁴

Table 2. Overview of promising approaches or practices to improving school climate and safety

PRACTICES	OVERVIEW
<p>Community Schools</p>	<p>Community schools initiatives are intended to “adopt a broad and varying range of services to address the comprehensive needs of students, families, and communities,”⁵ needs that are often not met because of a systematic lack of access to resources. Community schools show promise in promoting a positive school climate.⁶ For example, these schools provide services such as school-based physical and mental health care that can improve attendance, behavior, grades, and overall school climate. Efforts that promote family and community engagement can build stronger home-school connections and relationships and promote a positive school climate.⁷ Researchers have developed a toolkit for advancing community schools as a strategy to improve schools.⁸</p>
<p>Trauma-informed Schools (Related terms: trauma-sensitive, trauma-responsive, healing-centered)</p>	<p>In a trauma-informed school, “all teachers, school administrators, staff, students, families, and community members recognize and respond to the behavioral, emotional, relational, and academic impact of traumatic stress on those within the school system.” A trauma-informed school might adopt a framework (such as the National Child Traumatic Stress Network framework), provide professional development for all levels of staff, and collaborate with community partners. Though research is limited, trauma-informed practices show promise in a variety of outcomes including increased school engagement and decreased disciplinary referrals.⁹</p> <p>Healing-centered approaches are similar to trauma-informed approaches. These approaches 1) focus on healing rather than the trauma and 2) may be more likely to address the root causes of trauma while supporting students who experience trauma.¹⁰</p>
<p>Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (Related terms: school-wide positive behavioral supports)</p>	<p>Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a widely-implemented multi-tiered behavior management system that focuses on teaching behaviors that are acceptable to the school community and preventing behaviors seen as unacceptable.¹¹ To be most effective, this practice must be culturally responsive, as determinations about behaviors that are acceptable or unacceptable are shaped by cultural values. A culturally-responsive PBIS empowers students, families, and the community to determine desirable behaviors.¹² PBIS shows promise in improving school climate and student behavior.¹³</p>
<p>Restorative Justice (Related terms: restorative practices, restorative approaches)</p>	<p>Restorative justice is a “non-punitive” approach to handling conflict that involves proactively building and repairing healthy relationships. Although practices vary, they are rooted in dialogue, responsibility, and making changes.¹⁴ A restorative justice coordinator can support educators and other staff and the implementation of this approach.¹⁵ Restorative justice practices can be implemented in response to an incident or implemented throughout the school after universal training on restorative justice principles. Though research is limited, restorative justice has shown promise in improving school climate (including decreasing bullying, fighting, and suspensions) and increasing family and community engagement and school connectedness.¹⁶</p>
<p>Social-Emotional Learning</p>	<p>Social-emotional learning (SEL) seeks to build five kinds of competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) to promote positive behaviors. Widely-implemented school-based SEL programs can be classroom-based and led by teachers or other personnel or have multiple components (for example, schoolwide policies and practices to promote SEL or programs that involve families). These programs often include 1) instruction in social-emotional skills through modeling, practice, and application and 2) the development of positive and caring school and classroom communities learning environments where students feel valued and motivated. These programs have been found to reduce conduct problems and improve academic performance.¹⁷ Importantly, educators and advocates emphasize that social-emotional learning must be implemented with a critical lens on the sociopolitical context¹⁸ and the social norms enforced, and teachers and other staff should participate in social-emotional learning as well. Dena Simmons, assistant director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, explained that it is essential for teachers to work “to understand themselves, recognize their power and privilege and identity” as they do this work.¹⁹</p>

Conclusion

Given the evidence that policing in schools is rooted in²⁰ and reinforces structural racism, schools can and should consider approaches to school safety and discipline that promote supportive and just environments for all students. This brief provides an overview of eight initiatives that seek to create those environments and describes well-established approaches that they adopt. School communities seeking to implement such an initiative should examine a range of data to set informed target goals and develop matching strategies. Data should include perspectives from across the community – including students, teachers, and families- on school safety and how to promote and supportive and just educational environment. The Appendix provides additional guidance related to the process of reimagining school safety, reducing reliance on school police, and working to address structural racism in their school communities.



Appendix: Recommendations for the Reimagining School Safety Process

Based on our research, we developed this Appendix to provide some guidance that school communities can use as they reimagine school safety. These recommendations echo themes in complementary guides such as the [Pennsylvania Equity and Inclusion Toolkit](#) and the National Center for Safe Supportive Learning Environments' [Educator's Action Planning Guide](#).

Systematic efforts to reimagine school safety might include following three phases:

1. Initial Review of Available Data to Identify School Safety Strengths, Challenges, and Root Causes
2. Determine Action Steps in Three School Safety Focus Areas:
 - a. Community Collaboration
 - b. School Safety Policy and Practice
 - c. Staffing and Training
3. Ongoing Evaluation of Strategies and Progress

We describe each below.

Phase 1: Initial Review of Available Data to Identify School Safety Strengths, Challenges, and Root Causes

Data collection and analysis should be the foundation of any policy reform, including school safety. When reimaging school safety, school communities, or public-school systems, should use data to identify key issues and develop a shared vision for school safety. To start this process effectively, school communities can conduct an initial review of data that is commonly leveraged in the initiatives. Given in the interconnections among school safety, school climate, and school police, the initial data review should be inclusive of a range of safety and climate indicators. This initial data review will provide opportunities to:

1. Examine existing data to learn more about the impact of school discipline policies and practices.
2. Identify intended and unintended consequences of school safety policy. Where adverse consequences exist, answer critical questions about root causes.
3. Determine what additional data is needed to ensure a complete and nuanced picture of school safety policy and practice and their effects. This additional data could include:
 - a. Student/teacher/faculty survey results to better understand perceptions of school safety and climate.
 - b. Student/teacher/faculty/community focus groups to better understand perceptions of school safety and climate.
 - c. School budget and expenditures for school safety strategies.
4. Establish a system for periodic data collection and public reporting of key school safety indicators with reoccurring review.
5. Set goals for school safety.
6. Develop a plan that describes specific strategies and resources to achieve those goals.

In Table A1, we identify sample questions to assist school communities in the initial data collection and review process.

Table A1. Phase 1 Sample Examining Questions and Recommended Data to Review

SAMPLE EXAMINING QUESTIONS²¹

- What are our current goals for school safety?
- What strategies are currently implemented to achieve those goals?
- What specific school safety strategies rely on or utilize police?
- What are the consequences of our current school safety strategies?
- What portion of our school budget is spent on school safety strategies? What is the cost of each strategy?
- To what extent do our strategies address the varied and complex needs of our students and staff to prevent school safety issues? To what extent are strategies punitive?
- What data exists on the impact of our current school safety strategies on our students (for example, arrests, referrals to law enforcement, school discipline reports, teacher referrals)?
- Are there disparate impacts of current school safety strategies on some student demographic groups? If so, where are the disparate impacts occurring?
- Are our current discipline practices reinforcing inequities? Are we aware of the short- and long-term impacts our practices may be having on Black and Hispanic students? Other traditionally marginalized groups?
- How do students, teachers, and administrators perceive school safety and existing school safety strategies?
- Do students, teachers, and administrators have a shared understanding of how conflicts are resolved in the school community?
- How do policing practices show up in our work? How does our school system police students even without the use of police officers?
- Which school safety strategies are being implemented well? Which need improvement? How do we know?
- Do our school safety goals need to be revised? If so, how?
- What strategies and resources might be needed to achieve our school safety goals?

RECOMMENDED DATA REVIEW²²

- Determine what quantitative data is currently available and what additional data is needed to understand the impact of school discipline policies and practices.
- Collect quantitative data on the impact of SROs/law enforcement for the district and/or specific schools, including referrals to law enforcement and school-related arrests.
- Disaggregate and analyze data by school/grade, age, race, gender, disability, English learners or immigrant/refugee or national origin, court-involved youth, students in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and cross-categorization.
- Determine what qualitative data is available now to learn more about the impact of school discipline policies and practices.
- Collect qualitative data on the impact of SROs/law enforcement on students and school safety.
- Design student/staff/family surveys through collective community input and review to better understand perceptions of school safety and climate.
- Distribute student/staff/family surveys to better understand perceptions of school safety and climate.
- Conduct student/teacher/faculty/community focus groups to better understand perceptions of school safety and climate.
- Collect data on school budget and expenditures for school safety strategies.

Phase 2: Determine Action Steps in Three School Safety Focus Areas

Following the initial data collection and analysis phase, school communities generally focus on the following three school safety areas: Community Involvement, School Safety Policy and Practice, and Staffing and Training.

These areas of focus are interconnected and considered pieces of a comprehensive strategy to reduce reliance on school police and increase the safety and supports available to students, teachers, and others in schools. Table A2 describes each focus area.

Table A2. Focus Area Descriptions

FOCUS AREA	DESCRIPTION
Community Collaboration	An examination of opportunities for community input as well as community oversight and decision-making.
School Safety Policy and Practice	An examination of district agreements with local law enforcement, student discipline policies, comprehensive supports available to students, and how policies are followed in practice. This can include an examination of supports for students, disciplinary policies, policing practices, oversight policies, and school budgeting and resources.
Staffing and Training	An examination of staff demographic composition, staff roles, staff training for expected roles, and staffing needs across the entire school community.

Three-Step Approach to Examining and Reforming School Safety Policy

Drawing from the initiatives, we suggest the following three-step approach as school communities examine each focus area:



In line with this suggestion, the following three tables provide 1) sample questions for school communities to examine, 2) recommendations for further data collection and analysis, and 3) action steps to consider for each focus area.

Focus Area A: Community Collaboration

SAMPLE EXAMINING QUESTIONS²³

- How do we currently involve the community in discussions around school safety?
- How are community members involved in our schools?
- Who attends and participates in our school board meetings? What barriers to participation exist?
- How do we include or reach families whose primary language is not language in discussions of school safety?
- To what extent do employees of the school/district live in the local community?
- How can community members access the data on the impact of our school safety strategies? Specifically, how can community members access data on arrests, referrals to law enforcement, school discipline, school budget, and expenditures?
- How much of our school budget is allocated for community engagement?

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED DATA REVIEW²⁴

- Review district or school level opportunities for community input, oversight, and decision-making around school safety, the occurrence of identified opportunities, and community participation.
- Review insights from community focus groups to better understand perceptions of school safety and climate.
- Distribute community surveys to better understand community members’ perceptions of involvement, oversight, and decision-making.

ACTION STEPS TO CONSIDER²⁵

- Make data around school safety public and easily accessible for community members on a regular basis.
- Adopt cycles of regular community feedback on school safety policies and practices.
- Ensure community oversight (for example, a task force) in monitoring, assessing, and reshaping school discipline policies and practices.

SAMPLE EXAMINING QUESTIONS²⁶

- What measures do we have in place to support students and prevent conflict, violence, and crime?
- To what extent are our current policies and practices preventative vs. punitive?
- To what extent do our current policies and practices cause harm?
- To what extent are current policies harmful towards students of particular races, ethnicities, or gender identities?
- Are policies clear and accessible to all students and families?
- Is there strong rationale for policies, or are they in place to enforce conformity?
- Do any policies (for example, dress code policies) implicitly target students of particular genders, races, or ethnicities?
- What social-emotional and mental health support do we provide? Are these supports isolated or fully integrated into all aspects of the school day? If we use a social and emotional learning curriculum, is the curriculum culturally responsive?
- How are we currently using law enforcement in our school(s)? How does this compare to the written agreement?
- Are specific staff members or school building using law enforcement more or less than other staff members or school buildings?
- What happens before and after an incident involving law enforcement occurs?
- What are the implications of the current agreement with local law enforcement?
- How was our current agreement with local enforcement developed? Who was involved in making this agreement?
- Are students' privacy rights protected by restricting police access to education records?

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED DATA REVIEW²⁷

- Review school policies regarding school safety and student discipline.
- Review district agreement with local law enforcement.
- Examine incident reports involving law enforcement.
- Review policies regarding oversight of law enforcement.
- Interpret student/teacher/faculty survey results from phase one to better understand how school safety policies are used in practice and possible consequences of policies.
- Interpret student/teacher/faculty survey results from phase one to better understand the effectiveness of or need for preventative strategies and social-emotional and mental health supports for students.
- Review insights from student/teacher/faculty focus groups from phase one to better understand how school safety policies are used in practice and possible consequences of policies.
- Review insights from student/teacher/faculty focus groups from phase one to better understand the effectiveness of or need for preventive strategies and social-emotional and mental health supports for students.
- Review district spending for various safety strategies.

ACTION STEPS TO CONSIDER²⁸

- Determine short- and long-term policy changes as the school community may determine some changes should occur over time due to factors such as existing contracts, training requirements, available funding, and student/community needs.
- Revise agreements with police department to ensure consistency with community-guided school safety goals and strategies.
- Adjust procedures for calling law enforcement to only those required by law.
- Determine distribution of funding for various school safety and climate strategies, with a focus on those supported by careful data review.
- Identify the funding that could be saved or reallocated by ending contracts with police and determine how the district could reinvest funding in the student support services.
- Implement preventive strategies and supports for students' emotional and behavioral needs, such as providing counseling or wrap-around services during school hours or providing training to teachers and faculty on de-escalation strategies for students in crisis.
- Adopt school-wide behavioral interventions such as restorative justice practices or positive behavior interventions and supports (See Table 2 for descriptions of these practices).
- Communicate to the public how policy changes were decided, what data was collected and reviewed, and how the policy change connects with long term goals for school safety and climate.

ACTION STEPS TO CONSIDER²⁹

- Use funding saved from ending police contract to hire student support staff members such as restorative justice coordinators or guidance counselors.
- Train all school staff in strategies to support students and preventive approaches to reduce conflict including de-escalation, trauma-informed approaches, and how to support students with disabilities.
- Provide therapy for school staff.
- Provide opportunities for all district employees to engage in anti-bias, anti-racist, and cultural competency training.
- Increase collaboration between student support service providers such as counselors, social workers, school security personnel, and classroom teachers.
- Communicate to staff the ways in which training connects to policy changes to improve school safety.
- Clarify staff roles and/or hire additional staff members such as social workers, counselors, and behavior interventionists to provide adequate support and implement preventive approaches.
- Ensure school-based mental health staffing levels are adequate to support students and teachers while meeting the recommended student to school counselor ratio of 250 to 1.³⁰

SAMPLE EXAMINING QUESTIONS³¹

- To what extent does our staffing reflect our priorities for school safety and student support?
- What staff positions currently exist with a primary focus on student support (for example, counselors, social workers, behavioral interventionists)?
- What positions are currently under-staffed in our school(s)? What role might those positions play in school safety?
- How often are staff trained in support strategies?
- What additional training and professional development are needed to ensure staff possess the necessary expertise to implement the schools school safety strategies (e.g., de-escalation strategies, trauma-informed approaches, and supporting students with disabilities during conflicts)?
- What data have we collected to evaluate the effectiveness of current training models?

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED DATA REVIEW³²

- Review current staff demographic composition and roles.
- Examine incident reports involving staff including referrals to law enforcement.
- Review school policies surrounding professional development and training for all faculty and staff.
- Review content, occurrence, and participation for professional development and trainings around preventive strategies and social-emotional and mental health supports for students.
- Interpret teacher/faculty survey results to better understand preparedness of faculty and staff in utilizing preventive strategies and delivering comprehensive supports for students.
- Review insights from teacher/faculty focus groups to better understand preparedness of faculty and staff in utilizing preventive strategies and delivering comprehensive supports for students.

Phase 3: Ongoing Evaluation of Strategies and Progress

As school communities implement strategies to reimagine school safety, new needs or issues may arise.³³ Best practice includes routine evaluation, and school communities should consider incorporating the following recommendations:

1. **Establish evaluation teams or committees.** Evaluation teams described in the initiatives include: Healing-Centered School's Transformation Teams, the Black Organizing Project's Community Oversight Committees, Girls for Gender Equity's School Culture Teams, Dignity in School's School Climate and Culture Committees and Community Monitoring Committees. The teams are established to create processes of collecting key data on school climate, discipline, and safety, analyze the data on a routine basis, and intervene if issues arise. Some of the committees recommended are developed to ensure community involvement in both monitoring and evaluating the implementation of new school climate and safety initiatives.
2. **Routinely assess the impact of changes and report on progress.** Routine reporting of evaluation measures serves as a benchmark to progress on new school climate and safety goals. The initiatives provide a range of recommended reporting including bi-monthly, quarterly, and yearly. Reports should include data on safety incidents, student suspension, arrest rates, interaction with police, and other measures that highlight progress on school climate and safety goals. Reports should be made public for the entire community and easily accessible.³⁴
3. **Ensure community involvement in the evaluation process.** Students, parents and guardians, as well as additional community members, should play a key role in the evaluation process. Examples of involvement include community discussions, parent/guardian led forums or discussions, community participation in evaluation committees, and parent/guardian led assessments to fully review the supports offered by the school community.³⁵

Ongoing evaluation can help school communities measure the success of strategies implemented and refine their approach. This brief and [the first brief](#) of this series show that existing research regarding school safety initiatives is limited. However, there *is* clear evidence that practices can lead to adverse consequences for students of color. School communities willing to reimagine school safety can inform effective school safety initiatives through ongoing, thorough, equity-focused evaluations.

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Endnotes

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- 3 For example, there have been some highly-publicized examples of violence associated with police in Philadelphia and Allegheny County schools. Student experiences like these can be missed in traditional evaluations. In 2008, a high school in West Philadelphia with a predominantly Black student population faced a lockdown during which over 30 armed police officers came into the school. This lockdown began because school police told two students who were late to school to go home because they were not in uniform. The students tried to enter anyway. Students were locked in classrooms, in the lunchroom, and in hallways. Over 20 students were arrested during this incident. In 2016, at another Philadelphia high school with a primarily Black student population, a student was told by a school police officer that he could not use the bathroom without a pass. The student responded with frustration and anger, throwing an orange. The officer responded with violence. In 2017, five Black students and their parents sued an Allegheny County high school with evidence that the school resource officer used excessive force over several years, shoving a student into a locker and shocked him with a stun gun, punching another student and knocking out his tooth, and "body-slammings" a student.
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- 22 The data review recommendations for phase 1 review are drawn from *UrbEd, Dignity in Schools Campaign, The Advancement Project, Alliance for Educational Justice, the Black Organizing Project, The Education Trust and National Women's Law Center, Girls for Gender Equity, Inc., and Healing-Centered Schools* initiatives as well as from examples in our media scan of public school entities conducting this work. Readers can refer to the *National Center for Safe Supportive Learning Environments' Educator's Action Planning Guide* for more resources on how to conduct such a review.
- 23 The sample examining questions for Community Involvement draw from *Healing-Centered Schools, Dignity in Schools Campaign, UrbEd, Girls for Gender Equity, Inc., and the Black Organizing Project* initiatives.
- 24 Data review recommendations for Community Involvement draw from *Healing-Centered Schools, Dignity in Schools Campaign, UrbEd, and the Black Organizing Project* initiatives.
- 25 Action Steps for Community Involvement draw from recommendations by *Healing-Centered Schools, Girls for Gender Equity, Inc., The Abolitionist Teaching Network, and Dignity in Schools Campaign* initiatives.
- 26 The sample examining questions for School Safety Policy and Practice draw from *Healing-Centered Schools, Dignity in Schools campaign, Black Organizing Project, The Abolitionist Teaching Network, and Advancement Project and Alliance for Educational Justice* initiatives.
- 27 Data Review Recommendations for School Safety Policy and Practice draw from recommendations by *Healing-Centered Schools, Dignity in Schools campaign, Black Organizing Project, and Advancement Project and Alliance for Educational Justice* initiatives.
- 28 Action steps for Community Involvement draw from recommendations by *UrbEd, Dignity in Schools Campaign, The Education Trust and National Women's Law Center, and The Advancement Project and Alliance for Educational Justice* initiatives, as well as from examples in our media scan of public school entities conducting this work.
- 29 Action Steps for Staffing and Training draw from recommendations by *UrbEd, The Black Organizing Project, Abolitionist Teaching Network, and Healing-Centered Schools* initiatives as well as *Oakland Unified School District* as highlighted by *The Education Trust and Women's National Law Center*.
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- 32 Data review recommendations for staffing and training draw from by *UrbEd, The Black Organizing Project, and Healing-Centered Schools* initiatives.
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- 34 *UrbEd, Healing-Centered Schools, Dignity in Schools Campaign, and The Black Organizing Project Initiatives* note the importance of routine and public reporting of school safety and climate measures.
- 35 *Dignity in Schools, Healing-Centered Schools, The Abolitionist Teaching Network, and The Black Organizing Project Initiatives* note the importance of community involvement in the evaluation process.