



Media briefing paper

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[SPS Newsroom](#)

Update regarding student demonstration Monday, Nov. 14, 2022

Seattle Public Schools is providing this informational summary regarding the student-led anti-violence demonstration of Monday, Nov. 14, 2022.

This brief is designed to inform the school community and the broader public on:

- District support of student expression.
- Information relating to demonstration topics identified by students.

Student Civic Engagement and Protest Support of student rights

The district supports the right of students to express their views in a peaceful manner, including their constitutional right to peacefully protest. This student right is formally acknowledged in [Board Policy 3223, Freedom of Assembly](#)

Additional mental health supports in schools

The most recent bargaining agreement (more information available through [this link to the SPS website](#)) reached by Seattle Public Schools and Seattle Education Association includes additional staff positions to support students, educators, and schools.

This includes:

- Mental health supports for secondary students, with an additional 0.5 FTE social worker at comprehensive K-8, middle, and high schools this school year.
- Five certificated nurses in 2023-24.
- Supports workload relief and additional support by lowering the counselor-to-student ratio at our highest need secondary schools, from one counselor for every 375 students to one counselor for every 350 students.
- Supports workload relief by lowering the staff-to-student ratio for speech language specialists to one specialist for every 46 students this year and then to one specialist for every 44 students the following two years (currently at one for every 47 students).
- Adds an additional Racial Equity Advancement Specialist position in 2023-24 school year to support school-based race and equity teams.

The district recognizes student focus on a 200:1 student: counselor ratio. Work will continue to be refined as necessary to support modifications in staffing levels. This includes central office working with key labor partners and stakeholders.

Safe Storage of Substances Campaign

SPS advocates a district-wide and community-wide focus on significantly limiting the availability of substances. Data shows that substance availability is one of the most consistent predictors of substance abuse among youth. Further, many young people report that they find and try drugs and alcohol at home. SPS supports a three-tiered focus:

- Safely store substances, using locks and secure storage containers.
- Keep track of all substances and dispose of those substances (medications) that are no longer needed or have expired. Community drop-boxes for disposal are available. You can learn more by [visiting the website takebackyourmeds.org](https://www.takebackyourmeds.org).
- Talk with youth. Families are urged to help youth make healthy decisions by talking about substance use and setting clear expectations. You can learn more by [visiting the website starttalkingnow.org](https://www.starttalkingnow.org).

Gun safety More must be done

SPS has a long-held commitment to increased gun safety for the protection of students, youth, and people everywhere. SPS recognizes student-led action as a critical element of the call for change. In addition to advocating for students and families to engage in the call for more gun safety, SPS also has established policies and procedures with a focus on keeping students safe.

- School safety plans are updated annually.
- Schools conduct monthly emergency drills (e.g., practicing lockdown or shelter-in-place).

- Working toward limiting access at all schools, including the installation of buzzer systems and the use of key cards. Some of these tactics are not feasible at all schools, and focus on alternative methods is necessary.
- Use of a School Threat Assessment Team and a school-based safety committee to continually work toward updating and modifying safety plans whenever necessary.

You can learn more about the SPS Board of Directors resolution calling for lawmakers to increase student safety by [visiting the SPS website here](#).

SPS Safety & Security Department

The mission of the [Safety and Security Department](#) is to assist the District in maximizing academic achievement for all students through the maintenance of a safe and secure environment.

The department upholds a primary three-tiered focus:

- **Prevention & Mitigation** - The department researches and recommends best practices related to school safety and security, develops necessary prevention programs, and assists schools and administrators in evaluating school safety data.
- **Preparedness** - provides information and training in security and safety issues. Training topics include first aid, verbal de-escalation and conflict management, critical incident management, child abuse, and other safety courses.
- **Response** - monitors and responds to schools 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The alarm office monitors district alarms and systems, monitors and responds to suspicious activities, and coordinates with community emergency responders during off hours.

As outlined in [SPS Board Policy 0030](#), the district has made eight commitments to the success of every student in each school. These include:

- Equitable access.
- Racial equity analysis.
- Workforce equity.
- Professional development.
- Welcoming school environments.

Supt. proposes new safety initiative

In his weekly comments at the SPS Board of Directors meeting held Nov. 9 ([viewed here on the SPS Board's YouTube channel](#)), Superintendent Brent Jones introduced a new safety initiative comprised of three elements:

- A district-wide safety and security audit.
- Creation of a community action team (including SPD and City of Seattle).
- Launch of a Child Well-being Council.

More information about this initiative will be available soon.

Supt. reaches out to community

Dr. Jones sent a letter to the Ingraham High School and SPS community last week following the tragic event of Nov. 8. To read this previously published and shared communication, you can [follow this link on the SPS website](#).

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