

School Safety Update

Overview

Downey Unified School District provided a comprehensive overview of its school safety efforts, highlighting the District's commitment to creating safe, welcoming, and supportive learning environments where students feel seen, connected, and ready to learn. The presentation emphasized a proactive approach that combines physical security measures, emergency preparedness, student support services, mental health resources, and strong partnerships with families and public safety agencies.

Building a Culture of Safety and Belonging

The District's safety approach is grounded in fostering positive school culture and student connectedness. Through school culture initiatives, social-emotional learning, character education, and relationship-building strategies, Downey Unified works to ensure students feel welcomed, valued, and supported. The District emphasized that belonging and student engagement are foundational components of school safety.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Downey Unified utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to address student academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.

- Tier 1: Universal supports provided to all students through schoolwide expectations, character education, and wellness initiatives.
- Tier 2: Targeted interventions for students requiring additional support through counseling, small groups, and intervention services.
- Tier 3: Intensive individualized supports for students with the highest levels of need.

Security Infrastructure and Technology

The District continues to invest in security technology and facility improvements that enhance campus safety, including:

- 977 Cisco Meraki smart cameras installed across district campuses and facilities to support visibility and incident review.
- 98 vape sensors installed in secondary student restrooms to monitor areas where cameras cannot be placed.
- Districtwide mass notification systems utilizing IP speaker networks and emergency communications technology.
- Visitor management and access control systems, including controlled entry points, electronic badge access, intercom systems, and the Raptor Visitor Management System.

Emergency Preparedness

Downey Unified regularly reviews and updates emergency protocols and preparedness procedures.

Key initiatives include:

- Annual fire, earthquake, and disaster preparedness drills.
- Participation in the California Great ShakeOut earthquake drill.
- Comprehensive lockdown and lockout procedures developed and revised in collaboration with the Downey Police Department.
- Emergency supplies, communication systems, and district Emergency Operations Center (EOC) resources.
- Staff training and preparedness exercises throughout the year.

Student Safety and Prevention Programs

The District provides ongoing education and prevention efforts focused on student wellbeing and responsible decision-making, including:

- Bullying Prevention Week activities.
- Cyber Safety Weeks for students at all grade levels.
- Character education initiatives.
- Fentanyl awareness education for students, staff, and families.
- School safety reporting and awareness campaigns encouraging students to report concerns.

Behavioral Supports and School Discipline

The District utilizes Behavior Review Interview Team (BRIT) meetings to support students involved in significant behavior incidents. These meetings bring together students, families, administrators, and support personnel to develop plans that promote student success and positive school engagement.

Weather and Environmental Safety

Downey Unified monitors weather conditions and follows established protocols to protect students and staff during extreme weather events.

Safety measures include:

- Adherence to Board Policy 5141.75 regarding weather safety.
- Use of Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) monitoring for athletic activities.
- Utilization of weather-monitoring technology and applications to support informed decision-making regarding outdoor activities.

Mental Health and Wellness Supports

The District continues to prioritize student wellness through a comprehensive network of support services, including:

- School counselors.
- School psychologists.
- Nursing services.
- Clinical school therapists.
- Crisis response teams.
- Wellness centers and wellness spaces at schools.
- Partnerships with community agencies that provide additional support services to students and families.

Community Partnerships

School safety efforts are strengthened through ongoing collaboration with community partners, including:

- Downey Police Department, including School Resource Officers, safety trainings, and campus response planning.
- Downey Fire Department, including emergency preparedness support, training exercises, and educational programming.
- Monthly administrator collaboration meetings focused on safety protocols, attendance, school culture, behavior supports, and student wellbeing.

Conclusion

Downey Unified School District's comprehensive safety program combines prevention, preparedness, intervention, and partnership. Through investments in security infrastructure, emergency preparedness, student support services, and positive school culture, the District remains committed to ensuring every student learns in a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment.