



Columbia
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Student safety initiatives in CPS

OUR COURSE OF ACTION

2025 NSPRA Gold Medallion Award Submission

ENTRY CATEGORY: Special Communication Project/Campaign


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Type of District/Organization: PreK-12

Public Enrollment: 18,646

Number of Communication Staff: 7

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ABOUT

Columbia Public Schools (CPS) stands among Missouri's premier educational institutions and actively fosters academic excellence in a safe, inclusive environment.

As described on CPS About, the district prides itself on innovative programming, robust community partnerships, and an unwavering commitment to student well-being. Covering 303 square miles, Columbia's 39 schools and three support facilities make up the fourth-largest school district in the state by enrollment.

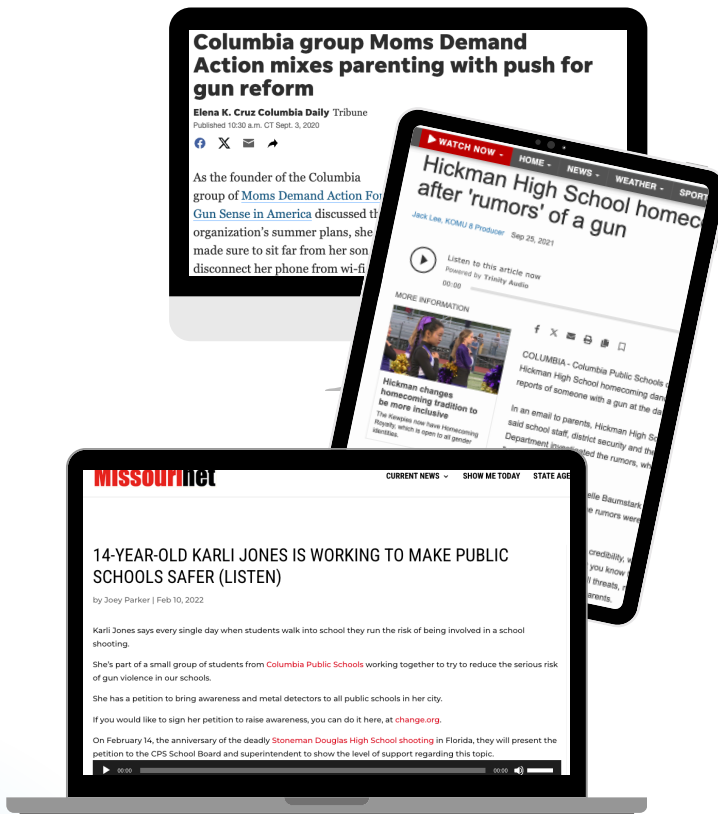
The Columbia Public Schools Community Relations Department enhances the education of all Columbia students. We tell the everyday story of CPS to our community. We develop and coordinate award-winning communications, educational partnerships, volunteers, and special events to best engage our community using all viable communication tools, tactics, and strategies. The Community Relations team maintains mutually beneficial relationships between the District and the many stakeholders it serves to reinforce the efforts of the District in preparing individual learners for success in life and provide meaningful experiences in safe and caring environments.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Recent security concerns and student calls for stronger measures prompted CPS to reevaluate its safety protocols. In response to evolving threats and student and community expectations, CPS embraced a proactive approach to implement a state-of-the-art weapons detection system. **The Community Relations team lead the communication initiatives connected to the implementation, adoption and ongoing use of the weapons detection system.**

RESEARCH

Research served as the foundation for CPS's strategic communication plan surrounding the implementation, adoption and continued use of a weapons detection system. CPS conducted both primary and secondary research, as well as qualitative and quantitative research, to define the overarching communication goal, identify key publics, and support decision-making.



METHODOLOGIES & CONSIDERATIONS

Primary Qualitative Research

- Student Voice: Students led petitions and organized walkouts demanding stronger protections against gun violence ([Missourinet, 2022](#), [KBIA, 2023](#)).
- Analyzed existing CPS safety information ([Simbli Board Meetings](#)).

Primary Quantitative Research

- Reviewed surveys from students, parents, and staff. ([Columbia Public Schools Community Perception Survey Report 2023](#) Presented at the CPS Board Work Session on January 18, 2024; [December 2023 Climate Survey](#))

Secondary Qualitative Research

- National and state reports documented increasing threats to school security ([Washington Post](#)).
- Reviewed NSPRA award winners on the topic including 2023 Golden Achievement Winner Scottsdale USD #48, Scottsdale, Arizona [Safety and Security DIG-IT](#) and Prince William County Public Schools, Manassas, Virginia [Safety Screening Technology Screening Communications Plan](#).
- Local media [KOMU](#), [KMIZ](#), [KRCG](#), and the [Columbia Daily Tribune](#).

Additional Research Considerations

- CPS defined the decision required: selecting a system that improves safety while maintaining an efficient entry process and communicating the implementation and adoption steps with primary and secondary publics.
- Existing research from previous CPS safety presentations and external reports supplemented primary data.
- CPS maintained a timeline that balanced scientific rigor with operational constraints.
- The district allocated staff time and district resources for communication initiatives data collection and analysis totaling \$3,200 (40 hours at \$80 per hour).

Research Findings

2023 Community Perception Survey Results:

Based on a 5-point weighted scale – where 5.00=A, 4.00=B, 3.00=C and 2.00=D – 14 of the 18 district factors – as well as the district’s overall performance (3.97) – received a score of 3.79 or higher. An overall score of 5.00 is only possible if all 300 respondents answered each statement with an A.

“The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event” received the top score of 4.31, followed by “Safety of students” (4.24) and “Quality of school facilities” (4.22).

Safety of students

Response	Percentage
A	41%
B	44%
C	8%
D	4%
F	<1%
Don’t know (not read)	3%

Factor	5-point scale rating/2023	Rating/ 2019	Rating/ 2017	Rating/ 2015	Rating/ 2013	Rating/ 2012
Safety of students	4.24	4.51	4.28	4.20	4.41	4.27

Publics:

- Primary Publics: Students, parents, and school staff across Battle, Hickman, and Rock Bridge high schools.
- Secondary Publics: Local law enforcement, community advocacy groups, and local media outlets.

Key Messages:

- Increase Knowledge: Explain how the non-invasive OPENGATE® system works and its benefits using various strategies and tactics.
- Change Opinions: Highlight CPS’s commitment to student safety and continuous security improvement.
- Encourage Desired Behavior: Motivate all stakeholders to participate in training, follow procedures, and support ongoing safety initiatives.

PLANNING

To bolster community confidence in the safety of district schools and to strengthen its position as a trusted source of information about its schools, The Community Relations Department in Columbia Public schools relied on the research to develop the communication plan to coincide with the Board of Education and district Safety and Security work to determine the best system. By working in concert with the selection process, the Community Relations Department was able to highlight student support for the initiative and build on community support.

LONG TERM GOAL: POSITION CPS AS A LEADER IN SCHOOL SAFETY.



Outcome Objective:

Increase understanding that the OPENGATE system will be used at district comprehensive high schools starting in the fall of 2024, website traffic, viewership of the district-produced video tutorial and at least 80 percent neutral media coverage between April 8, 2024, and August 20, 2024, the first day of the 2024-25 school year.

Process Objective:

Conduct comprehensive training sessions and continue to share additional information before the summer school system trial implementation and the full implementation on the first day of school in Fall 2024 as measured by a decrease in the wait times to move through the weapons detection system after the first day of school in Fall 2024.

Output Objective:

Distribute detailed communications to all stakeholders—ensuring every campus receives identical, clear instructions and updates before the initial system tests, the initial implementation, and the first day of school as measured by information shared with students, families, and staff and, secondarily, local media.

Strategy: Based on CPS research and national trends, CPS will continue to encourage high school student leaders to advocate for the new safety measures.

- **Tactic** – Schedule and execute system demonstrations before system selection, inviting student leaders to provide feedback.
- **Tactic** – Keep student leaders informed on the process of selection, implementation, and adoption of a weapons detection system through one-on-one communication, Board of Education meetings, CPSTV videos, and the district website to provide updates. Update the CPS website with FAQs and demonstration videos ([CPS Safety & Security](#)).
- **Tactic** – We will clearly articulate why students, staff, and visitors need to comply with the new safety procedures by clearly outlining expectations in all communication with students and families.
- **Tactic** – We will remind all of our key publics that the implementation of the new safety protocols is in response to student activism.

CPS will leverage local media and CPS communication channels to disseminate accurate, timely information on the new safety measures.

- **Tactic** – Schedule and execute system demonstrations before system selection, inviting media.
- **Tactic** – Keep media, staff, students, and families informed on the selection process, implementation, and adoption of a weapons detection system.
- **Tactic** – Use Board of Education meetings, CPSTV videos, and the district website to provide updates to media and respond to media questions. Update the CPS website with FAQs and demonstration videos ([CPS Safety & Security](#)).
- **Tactic** – CPS will distribute detailed letters to families, alerting them of the start date of the weapons detection system.

Roles and Responsibilities

Superintendent

- Address the weapon detection system selection and implementation plans in staff and media messaging, public and school board meetings.
- Keep school board members informed on the selection process.

CPS School Board Members

- Weapons detection system selection process.
- Listening sessions.
- Responsiveness to the questions and concerns of staff, students, families, and the community.

Cabinet Members

- Prioritize the review of weapon detection system proposals and share with all relevant staff members.
- Encourage the use of resources and communication tools the Community Relations Team created by school principals.

Chief Communication Officer

- Oversee all aspects of the weapon detection system communication initiatives, including research, data reviews and asset development.
- Write or review all superintendent and board messaging plus video scripts, website edits, Frequently Asked Questions, and other collateral.
- Coach administrators on implementation of the weapon detection system at the school level. Receive and review feedback shared by principals and assistant principals and provide updates on messaging if needed.
- Newsletter and school specific messaging.

Communication Manager

- Research weapon detection system communication trends and initiatives, campaigns and communication strategies.
- Write and create elements for the communication campaign, video and other content including the script, voicing the video and providing additional footage.
- Share approved video and still photos with media of the system in use.
- Monitor media messaging and social media responses..

Videographer

- Working with the Communication Manager and Director of Safety and Security, develop the story board and visual concept for the district produced explanation video.
- Shoot and edit video.

Website and Multimedia Manager

- Design website and update as needed.

Communication Budget

Total: \$9,924

CPS used current resources and dedicated staff time to complete the communication initiatives. The hours and rates below are estimates. Research **\$3,200** (40 hours at \$80 per hour). Communication Initiatives, specifically messages and FAQ, update the website, create and edit the video, and monitor the outcomes. **\$2,500** (25 hours at \$100 per hour) + **\$3,200** (40 hours at \$80 per hour) + **\$1,024** (32 hours at \$32/hour) = **\$6,724**

Communication Planning for Implementation began on April 9, 2024

Communication Overview: Created letters and FAQs for families, updated the CPS website, produced CPSTV instructional videos, and created b-roll for media to use. CPS assigned clear responsibilities for each action, as noted in the chart below, maintained strict timetables, and prepared contingency plans for unexpected technical issues. Weekly review meetings integrated stakeholder feedback and adjusted protocols as needed.



IMPLEMENTATION

SCHEDULE	TACTIC	PRIMARY AUDIENCE	KEY MESSAGES/CONSIDERATIONS	WAS TIMELINE MET?	MONITORING
April 11, 2023	Invite local media and student leaders to a demonstration.	Primary Students Secondary:Media	None: At this time, this was to learn more about how a system would work in our buildings and we did not have key messages established.	Yes	Monitored media coverage
December 11, 2023	Invite local media and student leaders to a demonstration.	Primary: Students Secondary: Media	None: At this time, this was to learn more about how a system would work in our buildings and we did not have key messages established.	Yes	Monitored media coverage
May 29, 2024	Initial message alerting students and families of the weapon detection system use for summer school. (see Additional Support Materials for samples)	Families	The message emphasized how the non-invasive OPENGATE system works and its benefits and reiterated the district's commitment to student and staff safety. Implementing prior to the start of the 2024-2025 school year will allow our teams time to learn the system and improve operations before all students return in the fall.	Yes	Superintendent, Chief of Schools, Director of Safety and Security and the summer school, principal reviewed the letter prior to sending it; feedback was very positive.
June 5, 2024	Website	Primary: Students, families Secondary:Local Media	Create a dedicated webpage on the district website detailing information on the weapons detection system and answers to frequently asked questions.	Yes	The website went live as planned and will be updated by the Community Relations team with additional materials as they are finalized.
June 20,2024	Video Creation begins Translated into Spanish closed captioning directly. (see Additional Support Materials for samples)	Primary: Students, families Secondary: Local Media	We developed, filmed and edited in house an explanatory video detailing how the weapon detection system works and sharing information anyone who is on our comprehensive high school campuses would need to know.	Yes	We had the Safety and Security team review the script prior to filming. They provided feedback and suggestions. We worked with the building principal on the day of filming to make sure we had an accurate representation of the process. Once we had a first draft, we again shared the video with the Safety and Security Team and the CCO for feedback.
By June 25, 2024	Add the video to the Weapon Detection page on the CPS website and begin sharing the link. (see Additional Support Materials for samples)	Primary:Staff, Students and Families.	Based on our research, we made sure to incorporate all of the frequently asked questions and visually demonstrate the steps for walking through the system and variable outcomes.	Yes	Monitored the webpage activity and number of times the video was viewed on the page directly and using the video on demand feature on our playback system. Combined Total web page views between June 5 and August 20, 2024: 498 Direct webpage video views: 78 *Of note, we transitioned to a new version of our cable access channel and do not have the on demand views of the video for this time period.
July 19, 2024	Update the Board of Education	Primary: Board Members Secondary:Primary: Staff, Students and Families.	Weapons Detection System Implementation and Training Similar to the visitor system, training and implementation work has been underway this summer for the launch of the weapons detection systems at Battle, Hickman, and Rock Bridge. The system was used for testing and training at Battle High. School during summer school and then launched at Hickman's combined summer school for Rock Bridge and Hickman toward the end of the summer school session. This allowed staff time to learn, practice, and adjust as we prepare for full implementation when students return in August. The Community Relations department created an informative video for the district and the community about the new system that is available on the district's website and will be shared with families in upcoming back-to-school communications.	Yes	The communication went to the Board via the Weekly Board Report email. (see Additional Support Materials)
August 16, 2024	Back-to-School Information	Primary: Media	Included in the New this Year section: Weapons Detection Systems at 3 high schools. Our three comprehensive high school buildings will be monitored by a touchless weapons detection system. In our continued effort to ensure the safety and security of all students, staff, and visitors we are implementing a weapons detection system. These touchless systems provide additional layers of protection to our staff, students, and visitors. The expectation is that students, and visitors, will enter the building through the designated entrance where the detection system is installed. Our trained building safety and security aids will be on hand to assist students, and visitors, entering the building. Students, and guests, may be asked to pass around items to building safety and security aids to assist in moving efficiently through the system. You can learn more about the systems on our website at: https://www.cpsk12.org/departments/safety-and-security/weapons-detection-system	Yes	Between August 16 and August 21, 2024, media outlets shared information on the weapons detection system 24 times. (see Additional Support Materials)
August 20, 2024	First Day of School	Primary: Media	Implementation of the new system will improve over the next few days as the process becomes more familiar. Battle High School has had the system in place the longest and had a smooth start today. There were some delays at both Hickman and Rock Bridge high schools as students became more familiar with items that alert the system and result in a secondary search of backpacks. As with any new system, it will take practice and patience as we work out the kinks and get everyone more familiar with the expectations. Additionally, shared the Google Drive with video of the system.	Yes	August 21,2024, media outlets shared information on the first day of the weapons detection system 14 times.

IMPLEMENTATION

SCHEDULE	TACTIC	PRIMARY AUDIENCE	KEY MESSAGES/CONSIDERATIONS	WAS TIMELINE MET?	MONITORING
September 18, 2024	Football Game Spectator Expectations and Safety	Primary: Students and Families Secondary:Media	For your safety, the Open gate weapons detection system will be in use during the game. We encourage you to read more about this system and other safety measures by visiting the district website.	Yes	We sent 9,412 emails with a delivery rate of 83 percent. *Note: Our system doesn't track open or clicks but 162 people viewed the linked page 225 times between September 18 and September 20 (the date of the game).
September 20, 2024	Update to the Board of Education from the Superintendent	Primary: Board Members	We had our first run of our Weapons Detection System at our football games and it went without any issues. There were approximately 2600 patrons who attended the game. A huge thank you to Mr Ken Gregory and his team for doing a magnificent job organizing the system. I also want to thank those school staff members, board members and cabinet members who showed up to help. Our motto was very evident this evening as everyone pitched in. We are now exploring the further use of our Weapons Detection at our large inter district events. No final plans have yet been made.	Yes	The communication went to the Board via the Weekly Board Report email.
October 24, 2024	Update to the Board of Education (see Additional Support Materials for samples)	Primary: Board Members Secondary: Primary: Staff, Students and Families.	Based on qualitative and quantitative feedback, we updated the Board on the implementation of the weapons detection system. The board meeting was broadcast live on CPSTV and the recording shared through our on-demand system.	Yes	The Board work session had an on-demand audience of 32 between 10/24/2024 and 2/28/2025 (see Additional Support Materials for breakdown).
September 20, 2024	Update to the Board of Education from the Superintendent	Primary: Board Members	We had our first run of our Weapons Detection System at our football games and it went without any issues. There were approximately 2600 patrons who attended the game. A huge thank you to Mr Ken Gregory and his team for doing a magnificent job organizing the system. I also want to thank those school staff members, board members and cabinet members who showed up to help. Our motto was very evident this evening as everyone pitched in. We are now exploring the further use of our Weapons Detection at our large inter district events. No final plans have yet been made.	Yes	The communication went to the Board via the Weekly Board Report email.

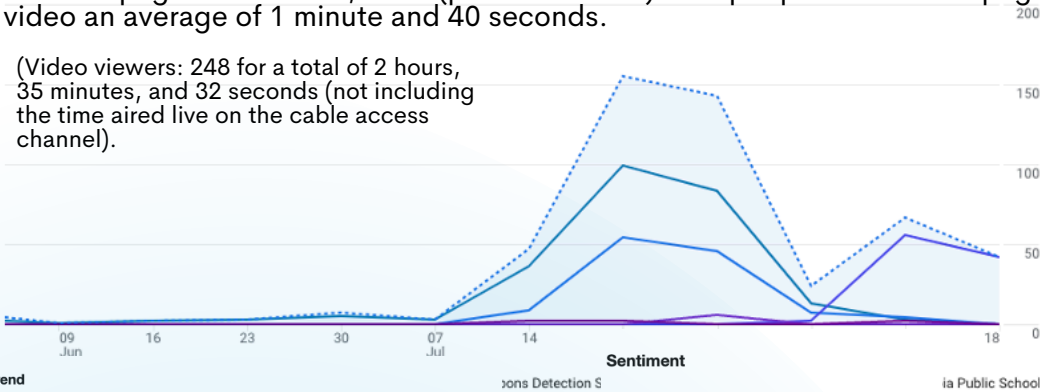
EVALUATION

As of February 28, 2025, the overall evaluation is still in process however, CPS has already achieved many of its initial objectives.

ACHIEVED Outcome Objective: Increase understanding that the weapon detection system will be used at district comprehensive high schools starting in the fall of 2024 as measured by website traffic, viewership of the district-produced video tutorial and at least 80 percent neutral media coverage between April 8, 2024, and August 20, 2024, the first day of the 2024-25 school year.

Website traffic to the page from June 5, 2024 (published date): 221 people viewed the page 498 times and watched the video an average of 1 minute and 40 seconds.

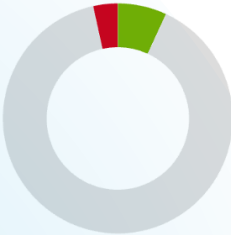
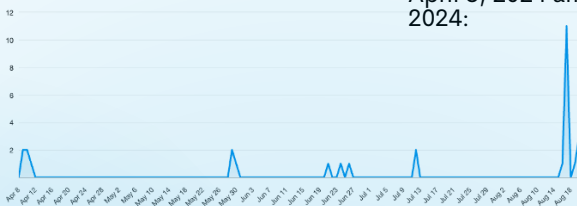
(Video viewers: 248 for a total of 2 hours, 35 minutes, and 32 seconds (not including the time aired live on the cable access channel).



Mentions Trend

Total Mentions
29
Previous period 30
Daily Average
0
Previous period 0

Media coverage between April 8, 2024 and August 20, 2024:



Positive 6.9% 2
Not Rated 0% 0
Neutral 89.7% 26
Negative 3.4% 1

EVALUATION

ACHIEVED AND ONGOING Process Objective: Conduct comprehensive training sessions and continue to share additional information prior to the summer school system implementation and the full implementation on the first day of school in Fall 2024 as measured by a decrease in the wait times to move through the weapon detection system after the first day of school in Fall 2024. For the first day of school, wait times were observed to be about "50 minutes past the bell to get every student in the classroom" (source: Adam Taylor presentation to the Board of Education [Work Session on October 24, 2024](#)). **After five days, all students can get into the building on time.**

ACHIEVED Output Objective: Distribute detailed communications to all stakeholders—ensuring every campus receives identical, clear instructions and updates prior to the initial system tests, the initial implementation, and the first day of school as measured by information shared with students, families, and staff and secondarily local media.

- **Messages regarding the first day of summer school, the 2024-25 school year first day, and the weapons detection system usage at the first football game were identical.**

Additional Ongoing Evaluation Methods:

Qualitative Analysis: We are hearing from families, students, and employees that the implementation of the weapon detection system is making them "feel safer in our building," and parents feel "safer sending their students to school every day."

- Specifically, as shown in the October 24, 2024, work session video, **"I'm a junior at Battle High School. How do you feel about the weapons detection system? I think it's safer for our school, I and it keeps the guns out of our school. And how do you feel like it's been going? I think at the beginning of the year it was like, kind of a lot, but now it's go a lot smoother."**

Quantitative Analysis: CPS is tracking data on the morning entry processing times and responses from students, parents, and staff.

- Initial Analysis: We reduced wait times for our **5,631 high school students from 35 minutes after the bell at 8:55 a.m. on August 20, 2024**. On August 21 all Hickman High School students were in the building by 9:40 a.m. and all Rock Bridge High School students by 8:58 a.m. On August 26, all 5,631 students were through before the 8:55 a.m. bell.
- We are continuing to monitor how long it takes students to get into buildings in the morning.
- There were no **delays due to the weapons detection** when implemented at our athletic events beginning on September 20, 2024. About 2,600 people attended the game and did not experience any delays.
- **"It is now part of the building, and we don't think about it anymore."**
- Anecdotal, as shown in the October 24, 2024, work session video: **"I'm actually really impressed with the way it's been handled because especially compared to those first few days, it's been going really smoothly. I'm able, like, for me personally, the way my classes work out, I have to come into the building out of the building back in like multiple times a day and it doesn't really feel like an extreme hindrance anymore."**

REFLECTION AND FUTURE EFFORTS

Though we communicated with staff, students, and families about the new entry process and expectations, we could have better communicated that there is a learning curve to expediting the process. We expected the first week to 10 days to be a difficult transition. We also could have better prepared our staff, students, and families to be patient as everyone learned the system.

The Communications team is preparing to introduce our incoming freshmen to the OPENGATE system for the 2025-26 school year. We will again need to communicate clearly with students and families the expectations for entering the building on jump start day (the day before school starts) and on the first day of school. We are investigating how we can leverage peer influence to assist in early adoption and ways to get freshmen familiar and comfortable before the first day they will be in the buildings. We plan to fully evaluate the 2024-25 school year data to gain additional insight before developing a strategy.

Conclusion

CPS achieved a significant milestone by implementing **a state-of-the-art weapons detection system** that enhances school safety while maintaining a positive learning environment. Through rigorous research, detailed planning, effective implementation, and robust evaluation, CPS now offers a national model that balances enhanced security with community engagement. The district remains committed to ongoing reviews and continuous improvement, ensuring that its approach to school safety evolves with emerging challenges.

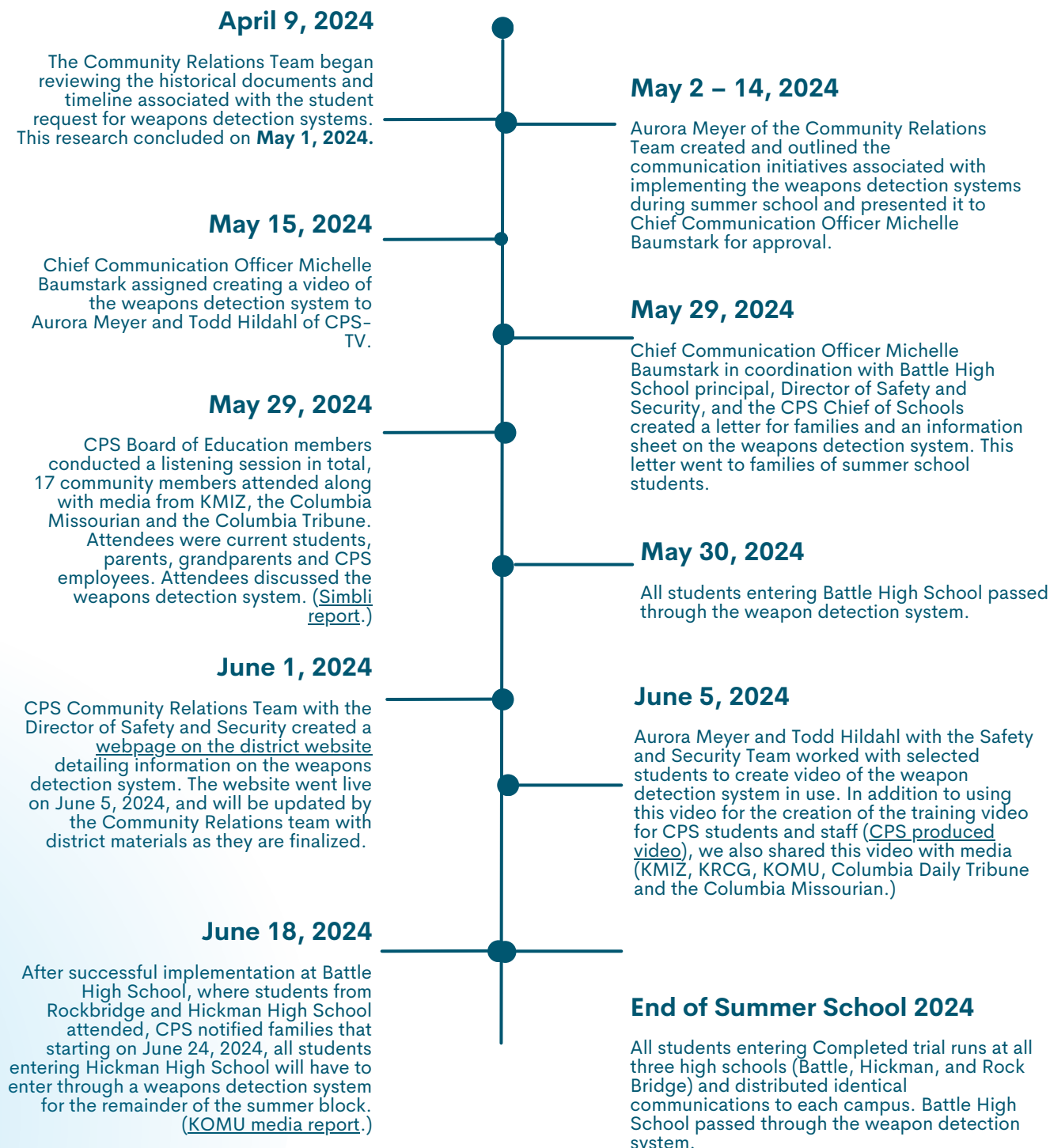
Additional Future Key Performance Indicators:

Reduction in Security Incidents: The district will provide year-over-year data on confiscated weapons and unauthorized items.

Entry Efficiency: CPS will continue to track morning processing times.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS

Timeline: Planning for Trial Implementation for Summer School

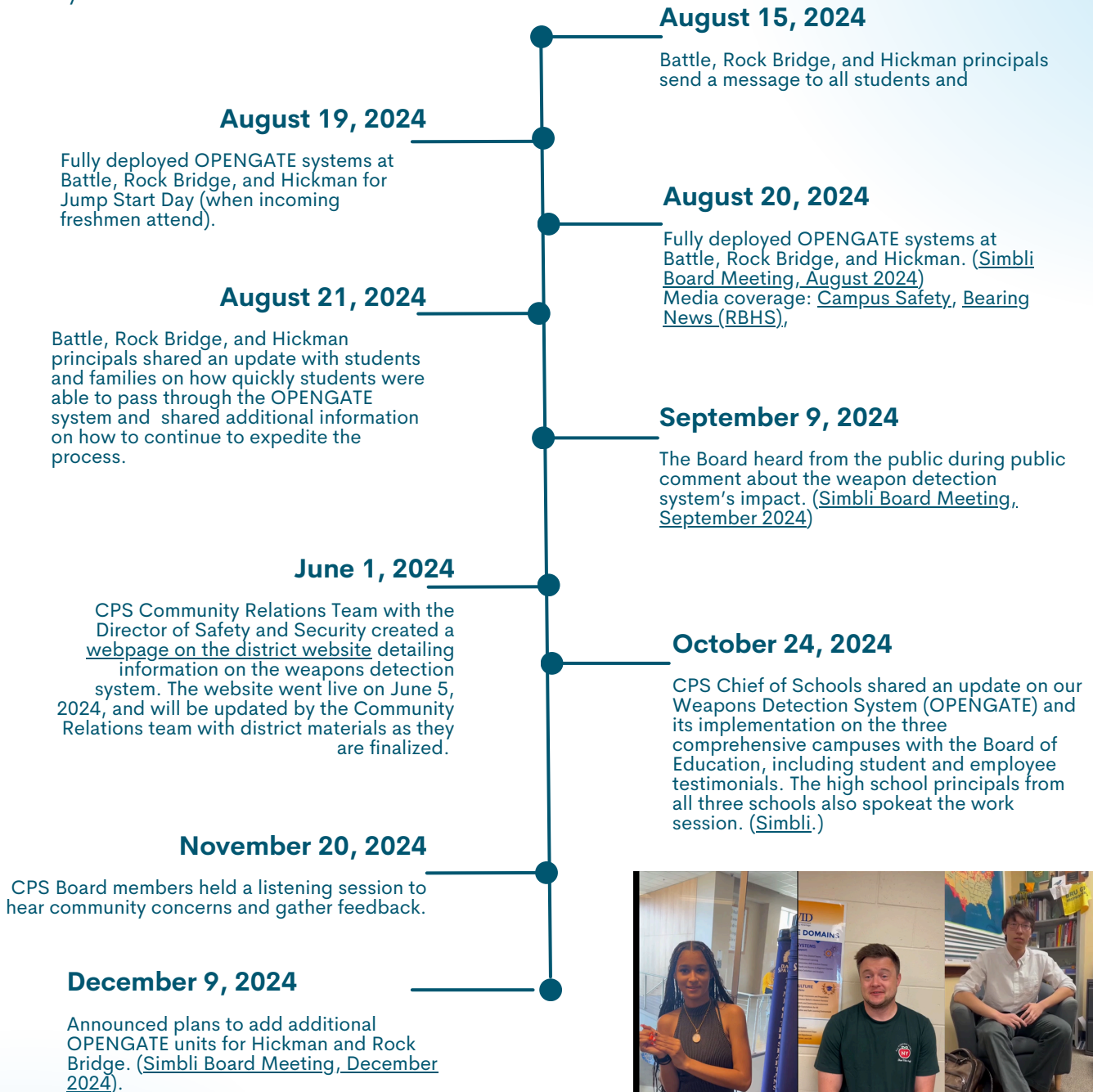


ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS

Timeline: Planning for Full Implementation on August 20, 2024

Starting August 1, 2024

All CPS at Battle, Hickman and ROck Bridge high schools received additional training on the OPENGATE system.



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS

Weapon Detection System
Battle High School Family Email

Dear Battle High School Families,

The safety of our students, staff, and visitors is our top priority. I'm writing to share some good news about a new detection system Columbia Public Schools has invested in, to increase safety and security at our high schools.

Earlier this spring, the Columbia Board of Education approved the purchase of a weapons detection system. Battle High School will begin using the system tomorrow with the start of summer school. Implementing prior to the start of the 2024-2025 school year will allow our teams time to learn the system and improve operations before all students return in the fall.

This non-invasive system is designed to detect weapons either on a person or inside their bag or backpack without slowing the normal flow of foot traffic into our buildings. It will be in place inside the entrances used by students and visitors each morning.

Beginning Thursday, May 30th, all students entering Battle High School will pass through the weapon detection system at the start of each school day. It will be monitored by administrators and our safety and security team who will help ensure the process moves smoothly and creates minimal disruptions.

As a reminder, weapons are not permitted on any Columbia Public School campus. Any student who violates that will be subject to discipline according to District Policy up to and including suspension from school.

We appreciate the combined efforts of the Board of Education, district safety and security staff, school administrators and staff for working to make this system possible. It is one more layer of protection that will keep our students, staff, and visitors safe while on our campus.

Additional information on building entry, the detection system, and frequently asked questions are attached to this message. Thank you for your support as we implement this new system.

Sincerely,
Aly Galbreath
Principal
Battle High School

May 29, 2024: Email to high school summer school students and Families

Sender

Grupe, Mary

Recipient

Dear Hickman Families,

I'm writing to share some essential learnings from the first day of implementing our new weapons detection system.

I can report that all students were safely through our entrance system by 9:40 this morning. While we anticipated some delays, we've actively reviewed and refined our processes throughout the day. We've already made adjustments that will help ensure a smoother experience tomorrow, and moving forward, students coming to school and returning from lunch will enter through the West entrance.

Here's how you can help us improve the start of school tomorrow:
Students should hold items likely to trigger the system before reaching the entrance. These items should be handed to a security team member, who will pass them around the system and return them to the student after they walk through. Everyday items that trigger the system include:
-Umbrellas
-Metal eyeglass containers
-Scientific calculators
-3-ring binders with metal spines
-Laptops

Consider using a clear plastic bag for this item; we don't want them to drop it.
Be mindful of metal accumulations: Any considerable metal accumulation on a person may set off the system. For example, multiple spiral-bound notebooks should be handed to the security team member.

Review backpacks: Please have your student go through their backpack tonight and remove any unnecessary items for school.

Move directly to class: After passing through the detection system, students should move immediately to their classrooms. Stopping at the end of the system creates unnecessary traffic jams.

Consider using a locker: The North Suite has lockers that can help students move through the system more efficiently, especially when returning from CACC or lunch.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we continue to refine this system. Our top priority is ensuring the safety and efficiency of our school environment.

I appreciate your support as we work to make this system better for everyone.

Sincerely,
Mary M. Grupe
Principal, Hickman High School

August 21: Email to HHS students and Families

Sharing essential learnings from the first day of implementing our new weapons detection system.



High School Weapons Detection System.

June 20, 2024: video highlighting how the OPENGATE weapons detection system works.

About

Departments

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Advancement via Individual Determination

Assessment, Intervention, and Data

Athletics

Business Services

Community Relations

Ensuring the safety and security of our students is our top priority. To enhance the security of our school campus, we will begin using the OPENGATE® weapons detection system at Battle, Hickman, and Rock Bridge high schools for the 2024-25 school year. This touchless system automatically screens individuals with backpacks and bags for potential threats and other prohibited items.

All students and visitors will be subject to screening as they enter the campus during regular school hours. If OPENGATE detects any prohibited items, a secondary search will be conducted. Any contraband found will be confiscated and result in school disciplinary action and/or legal consequences.

Key features of the OPENGATE® screening system include:

- Fast and automatic operation


June 25, 2024: website page with information and Frequently Asked Questions goes live.

09

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS

August 16: Email to media


Columbia Public Schools: First Day of School



Michelle Baumstark

Tuesday, August 20, 2024 at 4:46 PM

To: admin@buzcomm.com; bhauswirth@mailzimmer.com; saidij@missouri.edu; Tom@TheTomBradleyShow.com; [+23 more](#)

FDOS 24-25.pdf
36.7 KB

[Download](#) · [Preview](#)

Weapons Detection Systems at 3 high schools

Our three comprehensive high school buildings will be monitored by a touchless weapons detection system. In our continued effort to ensure the safety and security of all students, staff, and visitors we are implementing a weapons detection system. These touchless systems provide additional layers of protection to our staff, students, and visitors. The expectation is that students, and visitors, will enter the building through the designated entrance where the detection system is installed. Our trained building safety and security aids will be on hand to assist students, and visitors, entering the building. Students, and guests, may be asked to pass around items to building safety and security aids to assist in moving efficiently through the system.

You can learn more about the systems on our website at: <https://www.cpsk12.org/departments/safety-and-security/weapons-detection-system>

Implementation of the new system will improve over the next few days as the process becomes more familiar. Battle High School has had the system in place the longest and had a smooth start today. There were some delays at both Hickman and Rock Bridge high schools as students became more familiar with items that alert the system and result in a secondary search of backpacks. As with any new system, it will take practice and patience as we work out the kinks and get everyone more familiar with the expectations.

B-roll of the detection system is available at the following links:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19nrt5JZSYh4haKnfzntCEtw2qGRTufsA/view?usp=sharing>
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/136ES2>
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ndvral>

Sender Grupe, Mary

Recipient [/file/d/136ES2](#)
[/file/d/1Ndvral](#)

September 13, 2024: Email to HHS students and families

Dear Hickman Families,

I am excited to share some good news today. Thanks to the recent improvements in our weapons detection system, we have seen a significant improvement in the number of students arriving on time for class in the morning. For the last two weeks, every student who came to school before 8:55 AM made it to their instructional space promptly; we are moving in the right direction. Research consistently shows that being on time is critical to academic success, and we want to keep this momentum going. Here's why this is so important:

Why Punctuality Matters:

- **Academic Success:** Just 10 minutes of lost time each day adds up to nearly 30 hours of missed instruction in a year. Students who are regularly on time perform better in their classes and on tests.
- **Engagement and Focus:** Starting the day on time helps students feel more focused and ready to learn, leading to fewer distractions and more productive days.
- **Building Responsibility:** Punctuality is a life skill that teaches students self-discipline and respect for others. These habits will benefit them both now and in the future.

We know mornings can be hectic, and we truly appreciate your efforts to help your student arrive on time. To make things smoother, here are a few tips and reminders:

- Key Points to Remember:**
- **Arrival Time:** We ask that students arrive by 8:40 AM. This gives them enough time to pass through our weapons detection system and settle into class.
 - **Late Arrivals:** Students who arrive after 8:55 AM will be marked tardy and need to check in at the West Office.
 - **Attendance and School Events:** We'll tie attendance to participating in fun activities like dances and sporting events. We'll share more details soon.
 - **Incentives for Good Attendance:** We're excited to offer positive reinforcement for students who maintain strong attendance. Stay tuned for more on these exciting incentives.

If you're finding mornings challenging, we understand. Feel free to reach out if you need tips or resources to help with the morning routine. We are here to support you and your student every step of the way.

Our goal is to create a safe, welcoming, and effective learning environment for all students, and being on time is a big part of that. Thank you for your continued cooperation, and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Together, we can help every student Be Present, Be Connected, and Be Successful!

- Hickman Administrative Team

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS

Dr. Brian Yearwood, Superintendent, Report to the Board
September 20, 2024



This week

Board of Education Work Session and Executive Sessions
CMNEA Check-In Meeting with Cabinet and President Gilzow
Executive Leadership Meeting
Elementary Teacher Advisory Committee Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Board Meeting
SRO-Student Services Meeting

Weapons Detection System

We will be operating the weapons detection system at the Hickman-Battle football game this Friday night. This will be our first time operating the system for a large event. This game is expected to be highly attended and stadium capacity is just over 3,000. As with anything new and of this magnitude, there may be hiccups. We have reviewed our processes, have safety and security and administrative staff working the security entry point and we are optimistic for a successful first run. We also have our clear bag policy in place for the games being held this weekend.

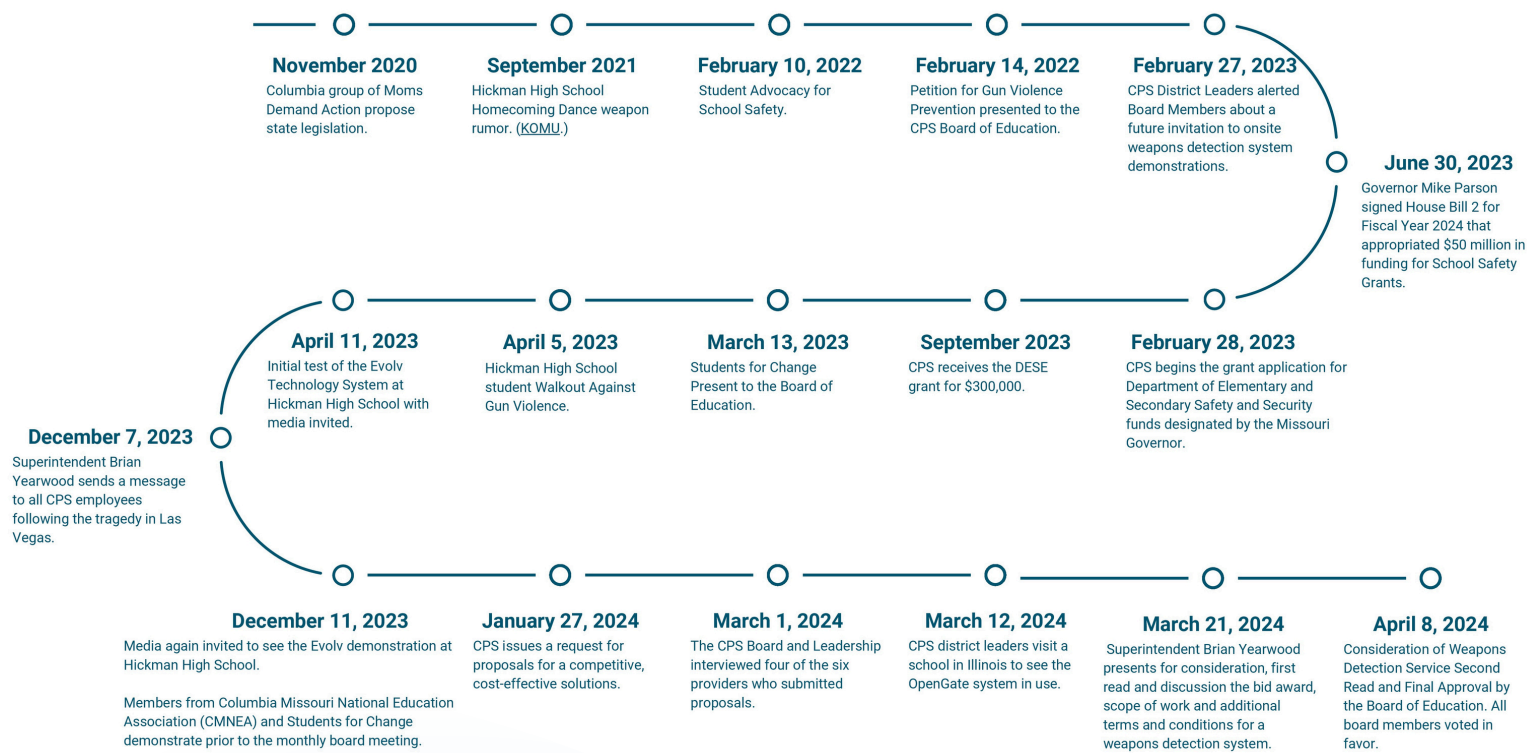
October 24, 2024: Board Work Session CPS-TV One Demand Audience Metrics.

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Date	Views	Time Viewed		
Oct 31, 2024 12:00:00 AM	1	00:12:00		
Nov 2, 2024 12:00:00 AM	7	00:03:48		
Nov 11, 2024 12:00:00 AM	1	00:00:32		
Nov 18, 2024 12:00:00 AM	12	00:02:56		
Nov 21, 2024 12:00:00 AM	1	00:00:00		
Dec 7, 2024 12:00:00 AM	1	00:00:00		
Dec 9, 2024 12:00:00 AM	1	00:22:55		
Dec 10, 2024 12:00:00 AM	1	00:00:00		
Dec 11, 2024 12:00:00 AM	1	01:28:26		
Dec 16, 2024 12:00:00 AM	1	00:00:04		
Dec 27, 2024 12:00:00 AM	1	00:00:12		
Feb 1, 2025 12:00:00 AM	1	00:00:00		
Feb 9, 2025 12:00:00 AM	1	00:20:47		
Feb 11, 2025 12:00:00 AM	1	00:00:00		
Feb 23, 2025 12:00:00 AM	1	00:00:00		

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS



Student safety initiatives in CPS: Historical Timeline



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS



Information Regarding Weapons Detection Systems in Schools

Information Regarding Weapons Detectors in Schools

This information contains:

- ☒ General Information
- ☒ Operation and Procedures
- ☒ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General Information:

The Columbia Board of Education voted to purchase and utilize a weapon detection system in our comprehensive high schools this past spring.

As the implementation begins this summer, Columbia Public Schools will be rolling out the system first at Battle High School. This will serve as an opportunity to train staff and improve the process prior to implementation at the other high schools. Additionally, due to construction this summer, Hickman and Rock Bridge are operating a combined summer school at Hickman High School. The weapon detection systems will be in place at all three comprehensive high schools at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.

The detection system will enhance current security measures that are already in place.

Columbia Public Schools is always evaluating its safety procedures and layers of security. The detectors will be a further deterrent and an added protection for our students and staff.

The district selected the Open Gate weapons detection system, which allows for efficient entry into a school building or school event while also thoroughly scanning for objects that could potentially inflict harm. The benefits of this system include:

- ☒ fast and automatic screening
- ☒ no removal of backpacks, purses, phones, and bags
- ☒ extreme transit flow with near-zero nuisance alarms
- ☒ quick to set up and install – units weigh only 25 lbs. with less than one minute of setup time
- ☒ indoor and outdoor operations

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS

The weapon detectors are a walk-through detection system, composed of two freestanding mobile pillars. They can be used at a variety of entrances or security checkpoint locations, including sporting events, graduations, or school dances.

This same system is being used in venues around our country, including airports, public events, schools, hospitals, theme parks, stadiums, performing arts centers, government buildings, NFL stadiums, and colleges and universities.

Students and visitors will not have to remove things such as keys, phones, lunch boxes, or water containers from their backpacks or pockets when walking through the detectors. Student laptops, other types of laptops, umbrellas, some eyeglass cases, and large notebooks will need to be carried and passed to staff as students move through the detectors. Laptops and large notebooks will cause the detector to alert because the shape and density of the metal spine are similar to a potential weapon. Since these items will not go through the detectors and will not be searched individually to ensure efficient entry into the building when the detectors are in use, students will no longer be allowed to carry zip-up binders/notebooks that could conceal a weapon.

Columbia Public Schools fully understands the first couple of days of implementation will require time to evaluate and potentially revise the procedures and protocols used in the training of staff. The intention is to work through as many of these procedures during our summer implementation at Battle High School. This time will allow the students and visitors to understand the process, as administrators and staff work through any needed changes. We want to maintain a welcoming environment while also providing proactive safety measures for everyone involved. We ask for everyone's patience during the initial implementation of this additional safety measure. We anticipate efficient processes and entrance into our schools where detectors are in use after the first several days of implementation.

Keeping schools safe while still maintaining a welcoming experience for students, visitors, or teachers is our main priority. We will still utilize a bus drop off and parent drop off entrance routine in each school as we have provided in the past.

Columbia Public Schools strives to foster a school climate where everyone takes school safety seriously and where discipline and consequences are sufficiently imposed when the safety of students and staff is compromised. Of equal importance is the proactive social-emotional and mental health support that is offered to students and staff.

Students and staff have a fundamental right to feel and be safe in our schools. Proactive weapon detectors are helping to keep schools safe allowing them to remain a place of learning.

Operation and Procedures

A dedicated safety and security team and school building staff take on the responsibility of greeting staff and students and handling detected threats.

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Entrance Example #1: A student arrives at school without any harmful instrument or objects that will cause an alert and they walk through the front doors of the school, walk through the detection system, and continue to their normal starting location for the school day.

Entrance Example #2: A student arrives at school with an instrument or object that resembles a weapon; or is concealing an actual weapon. They will walk through the front doors of the school, walk through the detection system, and the system will then alert with both a low-volume alarm and a visible red light, notifying staff of the potential threat. The student will be guided through the secondary screening protocol that involves a search of the student and their belongings. A hand-held metal detector may be used and additional assistance may be provided by the safety and security team or school staff.

FAQs:

How does the detection system work? The system utilizes two towers that students and staff walk through at a natural pace. If the towers turn green, no threat has been detected and the individual passes through without stopping. A staff member will assist in monitoring the screening to instantly identify if a potential threat has been detected. If the system identifies a potential threat, the tower will alert with a red light and sound. That individual can then undergo secondary screening.

What happens if the alarm on the system sounds? Staff will manage the detection system by utilizing their training in the system's implementation protocols. In most cases, the individual who sets the alarm off will go to a secondary screening location where the security team will check out the backpack and other belongings. A hand-held metal detector may be used and additional assistance may be provided by the safety and security team or school staff.

Why do laptops and large binders have to be taken out of backpacks? The metal spine of laptops and large notebooks will cause the detector to alert because the shape and density of the metal spine are similar to a potential weapon. Since these items will not go through the detectors and will not be searched individually to ensure efficient entry into the building when the detectors are in use.

Which schools will have the detectors? The weapon detection systems will be in place in comprehensive high schools at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year. Staff will be trained on the detectors before the actual implementation. Units can also be placed in other schools with an organized schedule or as needed if a situation deems necessary.

Will the detection system pick up knives? Yes, knives are included in the list of potential weapons the system is capable of detecting.

Will the detection system pick up vapes? Yes, the system is capable of detecting vapes and similar devices.

Is the detection system safe for people with an implanted or wearable medical device? In keeping with FDA guidance on Electronic Article Surveillance (EAS) and walk-through metal

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detectors, it is recommended that visitors and system operators with implantable or wearable medical devices consult their device manufacturer or physician for information relating to their own specific device. An alternative screening approach is recommended for anyone who has safety concerns.

Are these systems safe for long-term exposure, i.e. for children walking through daily or personnel staffing the system? The detection system uses extremely low-frequency radio waves (ELF) - a non-ionizing sensing modality - in compliance with the Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineer's (IEEE) 2019 guidance for safe operation with the general public, which applies to regular/occupational as well as infrequent exposure.

Is facial recognition utilized in the detection system? The technology does not use facial recognition. The system evaluates the items passing through it and, depending on the setting, will determine the possibility of an instrument or object that could potentially inflict harm.

How will they be monitored? System settings will be monitored and changed by administrators to allow the sensitivity of the detection system to be changed based on the objective of the screening. For example, the sensitivity can be set to detect a piece of metal as small as a paper clip.