



THE FACT SHEET

An Information Resource

Following the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, information has been expected, requested and provided by Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) to the public. This heartbreaking tragedy has prompted reviews of District systems, protocols, programs and records. In this climate of voluminous demands for information, the District has strived to respond as quickly as possible with the information available at the time. When new information is discovered, the District has shared updates as part of our ongoing commitment to transparency.

In light of aggressive media coverage, we have also seen information about the District misrepresented. We want to ensure the public has correct and accurate information, as well as context regarding the District's operations.

Broward County Public Schools is the second largest school system in Florida and the sixth largest in the nation; it is complex and broad. While we do our best to respond to inquiries in a timely manner, information is not always available at the moment news media and others make their requests. To help bridge this gap and assist in providing accurate information and resources to the public regarding District operations and activities, including issues associated with the Marjory Stoneman Douglas tragedy, BCPS is introducing THE FACT SHEET.

THE FACT SHEET will be segmented according to topic/subject matter, updated regularly and distributed broadly – as we introduce this resource to the varied audiences who care about our school community. THE FACT SHEET is intended to provide details, context and information that is reliable and brings clarity.

In the weeks ahead, THE FACT SHEET will provide updates about safety and security, District programs, budget issues and events over the summer – as well as preparation for the new school year, which begins for students on Wednesday, August 15, 2018.

DATE: Tuesday, May 22, 2018

Topic: Information Requests

- Reports alleging that the District has refused to release information to news media or provide information requested by investigating authorities are simply inaccurate. In the days, weeks and months following this tragedy, the District has responded to hundreds of news media requests and provided information within the boundaries of legal restrictions and prohibitions.
- The District has provided and continues to fulfill requests for records from investigating agencies, including the Broward County State Attorney's Office, Broward County Sheriff's Office, Coral Springs Police Department, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and the Florida House of Representatives, as well as local commissions that have been established to review the facts related to this tragedy.
- Of all individuals and groups involved in Nikolas Cruz's behavioral issues, the Broward County Public Schools system, perhaps more than any other outlet or person, addressed, provided and adjusted numerous behavioral, therapeutic and educational services and programs for him in order to help him. From his first days in school, decision-making regarding Cruz's needs was conducted by teams, including his mother, all with the goal of helping him find a positive path forward.

Topic: Misrepresentations

- Despite media reports, at no time did Broward County Public Schools "predict" that Nicolas Cruz could be a "model student." Like many students who show improvement in behavioral programs designed to help students cope and function, counselors' comments can include information that refer to possible outcomes should improvements continue in a consistent and measurable way.
- As required by law, Broward County Public Schools has correctly and properly posted public meeting notices as we have always done. News reports implying or stating otherwise are incorrect.
- Superintendent Robert W. Runcie has a history of being accessible and responsive to news media, and he has continued to be so after the tragedy. While privacy laws prohibit Broward County Public Schools, and Superintendent Runcie, from releasing student information to reporters, their complaints of inaccessibility are incorrect.

- As is always the case in fast-moving and complex crises situations and events progress, information changes. When possible and when new information is learned, Broward County Public Schools has provided that new data to the public and in good faith.
- Negative commentary from constituents is part of a public official's job. However, the heightened political climate the community is experiencing has inspired some individuals to cross a threshold in terms of vitriol. Superintendent Runcie is not required, but chooses, to use social media to share information or sometimes provide an uplifting thought. Those individuals seeking to use Superintendent Runcie's social media channel for spreading profanity, hostile or hate speech or false information have been and will continue to be blocked.

Topic: Student Discipline and Critical Incident Reporting

- The Superintendent has reminded school leaders that District protocols require the accurate reporting of all student disciplinary infractions in the District's official student data repositories, Total Educational Resource Management System (TERMS) and the Discipline Management System (DMS).
- Additionally, schools must document the appropriate interventions and supports for the victims and offenders for every incident. All incidents involving paramedics, law enforcement and/or the fire department must be reported to the District's Office of School Performance & Accountability (OSPA) when they occur.
- When the 2018/19 school year begins, audits of school discipline and records will become a regular function of the District's Audit Department.

Topic: The PROMISE program

- The PROMISE program, which stands for Preventing Recidivism through Opportunities, Mentoring, Interventions, Supports & Education, works with students who are only involved in **non-violent** infractions. It is just one of many programs and services available to meet students' personal, social, emotional and behavioral needs.
- In 2013, the District partnered with numerous agencies and community leaders to develop the Collaborative Agreement on School Discipline. Among the District's partners: local law enforcement, Division of Juvenile Justice, NAACP, The Advancement Project, Public Defenders Office, State Attorney's Office, State Representatives, Juvenile Court System, Teachers Union, Children's Services Council, local universities, parent affiliate groups, District advisory groups and others.



- Students in the PROMISE program, which focuses on intervention and prevention, receive behavioral supports, counseling and mentoring according to their individual needs and in an environment focused on helping them make better choices.
- There are specific guidelines and School Board policies regarding the non-violent, misdemeanor types of infractions that are eligible for the PROMISE program. Weapons infractions are **NOT** eligible for the PROMISE program.
- PROMISE provides a number of interventions for students including counseling, conflict resolution and social skills instruction, direct instruction, tutoring and other academic assistance, prevention activities in the areas of violence, gangs and drugs, direct communication with parents and referral services to other county agencies, as needed.
- PROMISE provides students and families with extended behavioral supports; a system for addressing victims' rights as part of a restorative justice process; and referrals to the Juvenile Justice system for students and families who do not comply with and complete the PROMISE program.
- Through the PROMISE program, hundreds of families have been connected with critical social services integral to their students' success.
- The District's position with the PROMISE program and school discipline reform efforts, in partnership with local law enforcement, has always been explicitly clear – we support and cooperate with law enforcement in doing its job in addressing school safety.