



## Communication Department

15701 E. First Ave.  
Suite 208  
Aurora, CO 80011

Phone  
303-365-7805

FAX  
303-326-1939

Web  
[aurorak12.org](http://aurorak12.org)

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Dear APS Community,

A year ago, I stood in the Hinkley High School parking lot helping our Nutrition Services team hand out Thanksgiving meals to our community. Today, that same parking lot was the scene of yet another act of gun violence in our community, traumatizing our children and staff.

At this time, police report that three APS students were shot in the Hinkley parking lot. Police say that one was likely the initial shooter.

I am thankful for the quick actions of our APS Campus Security team who took immediate protective action and implemented life saving measures. I am also thankful for the Aurora Police Department and their quick response to the scene and for our staff who kept students calm and safe in our school in the midst of uncertain circumstances. It was thanks to all of you that we were able to get students released from Hinkley safely and as calmly as possible.

To our students, I want you to know that every day you are in our schools, you are surrounded by a team who loves you and who will work relentlessly to provide you with a safe and healthy learning environment. Please reach out when you need help or a trusted adult to turn to.

To our staff, I could not be more proud to serve this community alongside you. This school year has been incredibly challenging and I see all of the extra hours, thought and heart that you pour into our students and community. You are the fighting spirit that keeps our students hopeful and inspired.

To our parents, we know you are our partners and we need your support to make our community safe for our kids. Over the Thanksgiving break, please talk with your children. As a reminder, counselors are available 24 hours a day through Colorado Crisis Services at 1-844-493-8255. Violence is never the answer. We need to talk, listen and find understanding with others even when we disagree. We have shared this [online resource](#) from the National Association of School Psychologists with you before. It may be helpful as you talk to your children at home about acts of violence.

To our Aurora community, we ask that you work to make every part of our community a safe haven for kids. We want every part of Aurora to be a place where kids feel safe, find opportunity and see role models for how to become healthy, successful and engaged members of our diverse world. We need each and every one of you to answer this call.

There are no words to accurately convey all of the hurt, anger, sadness and worry that we are feeling. I ask you to channel these emotions into helping our community heal and get stronger. Let us work together to make our community safer, better and more hopeful for our future.

After we take this break for the Thanksgiving holiday, please know that we will welcome our students back with open arms. We will provide additional security and mental health supports at schools as needed and we will continue to

prioritize student safety and wellbeing. Please have a safe holiday and be thankful, as I am, for the many people around us who want to see amazing outcomes for all of our kids.

-Superintendent Rico Munn