

June 28, 2023

Dear Digital Pioneers Academy Community,

It is with great sadness that I write to inform you of the death of Jaylin Osborne, a member of our 8th grade. Jaylin was a bright student and dedicated friend and big brother. He was a hard working and curious scholar who was seen as a leader among his classmates. He had hoped to join the DPA football team in the fall. Our deepest condolences go out to his family and friends. I cannot imagine what they are going through right now.

We are making grief counselors available tomorrow, June 29th, at our 12th Street campus at 709 12th Street SE from 11:00am - 2:00pm. We will have virtual counseling options available as requested. Please talk to someone if you need help processing this tragic loss.

Once again, we are forced as a DPA community to grapple with the horrific reality of our city's youth violence epidemic. This year alone, we have lost four students to gun violence off campus and outside of our supervision. This reality must change.

There is nothing more important to me than your child's safety. At school, our team of caring educators can keep our scholars safe, engaged and cared for. Outside of the school walls, our influence is limited. As parents, I know you feel the same. Right now, the city is not safe, and violence usually increases in the summer when young people are out unsupervised.

That's why I'm making the recommendation that you keep your children indoors in the evening and in supervised activities during the day.

I'm an educator, not an activist, but it's clear that right now the city is in crisis, and we must do more to protect our young people. In the days and weeks ahead, I will be meeting with city officials and civic leaders to demand more is done to improve public safety in our neighborhoods.

My deepest condolences to the Osborne family. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers, and please pray for a safer city for our young people.

Sincerely,

Mashea M. Ashton

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Founder & CEO