



STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2023

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I. Introduction

PURPOSE & DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR THIS PLAN

DanversCARES has a history of success in the community as a program of the Town of Danvers managed by the Danvers Public Schools. In order to continue to address the evolving needs of children, youth, and families, it engaged in this strategic planning process to identify a clear, shared direction toward a stable future with continued impact. Desired outcomes for the planning process included:

- Increased awareness of DanversCARES' efforts and impact across the community and among key stakeholders
- Increased understanding of DanversCARES' value to the community
- Articulation of the unmet and emerging needs of youth and families
- Identification of existing and potential opportunities for connections across and synergies among complementary initiatives
- Identification of strategic goals, and refinement of DanversCARES' mission to ensure alignment with a future that meets the needs of children, youth, families, and the community
- Development of a short- and longer-term plan with interim steps to achieve this model

PLANNING PROCESS

The Steering Committee met in August 2017 to develop the planning framework, and the process was launched at the DanversCARES coalition meeting in September 2017. During October and November, data was collected about the needs of children, youth, families in Danvers and stakeholders' experiences with and perspectives on DanversCARES. In December 2017, The Steering Committee held a retreat to review and make meaning of the data, and develop strategic priority areas. From January 2018 to April 2018, goals and objectives were developed and refined, with the support of the Steering Committee and coalition members. The plan was completed in May 2018.

II. DanversCARES Vision, Mission, History & Approach

VISION

Our vision is for all Danvers children, youth, and families to achieve healthier decisions, healthier lives, and healthier futures.

MISSION

DanversCARES assists children, youth, and families in making healthy decisions by promoting a safe and healthy community, collaborating on programs and services, and leveraging resources.

HISTORY & APPROACH

DanversCARES is a partnership for a healthy community. DanversCARES started in the mid-1990s as a school-based health advisory committee with the vision to invite community partners to the table to support school-based health and physical education efforts. Since then, the group has evolved into a formal community-based coalition with representatives from across Danvers. Our coalition history began in 2005, when, in response to two youth alcohol-related incidents, a group of community stakeholders' lead by the school and police departments convened to address underage drinking as an initial community concern. In 2008, the coalition received a planning grant, hired a coalition development consultant, and formed common goals. That year, the coalition received a Drug Free Communities grant, and began in earnest, to study the problem, expand its community capacity, and implement evidence-based and environmental strategies to decrease youth substance use.

The coalition has evolved greatly since then. We have grown into a high-functioning, formalized community partnership. Central to our philosophy is the principle that partnerships are built on community involvement and designed to address local needs. This is done through collaborative dialogue, prioritizing concerns, and seeking partners and resources to support the work; everyone has something to contribute. We have a common vision, a strategic plan, and a history of implementing successful environmental strategies, including multiple local level policy changes. We have successfully leveraged community resources to grow local prevention leadership in our schools, police, churches, and community-based agencies. The coalition's success is demonstrated by Danvers' declining high school substance use rates and related risk factors. These results are attributed to our comprehensive community prevention strategies that range from raising awareness, building capacity, changing policies, and shifting social norms. DanversCARES is known statewide and nationally for our social marketing work, and has brought much local awareness to the issue of substance use prevention over the years.

DanversCARES is a program of the Town of Danvers, managed by the Danvers Public School Department, and funded by state and federal grants, local donations, and the Danvers Public Schools. Danvers Public Schools provides space, staff supervision, and support of fiscal functions such as accounting, payroll, and purchasing. In addition to Danvers Public Schools, leadership is multi-faceted. A Steering Committee and community chairperson govern our core partnership. The Steering Committee is charged with strategic advising of DanversCARES, oversight of its programming, its resource acquisition, its policy development, and its sustainability over time. It provides guidance and leadership for the coalition as a whole and ensures mission, vision, and goals are achieved. Our Core Partnership consists of a minimum of 12 sector representatives that meet monthly, at our public Community Partnership Meeting. Core Members are jointly responsible for the work of the coalition, participate in strategic planning, and in at least one committee. The Core Membership determines programmatic priorities each year. They are ambassadors to other members within their sectors. Two staff, a Project Director and a Youth Coordinator, support the work of committees providing tools, coordination, and technical assistance. The Project Director reports to the Superintendent of Schools.

III. DanversCARES & Community Context

To understand stakeholders' experiences with and perspectives on DanversCARES and to identify unmet and emerging the needs of youth and families, we collected a range of data from different sources, including:

- Assessment by DanversCARES Coalition and Town Administrators of strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results
- Surveys of Danvers Public Schools families ($n = 155$) and Danvers Public Schools faculty and staff ($n = 106$)
- Focus groups with youth ($n = 20$) and with Danvers Public Schools faculty and staff ($n = 10$)
- Interviews with community and regional informants ($n = 29$)

From this data collection and review, some clear and overarching themes emerged. The words most frequently used by stakeholders to describe DanversCARES include: caring, community – both awareness and collaboration, education/ educating, and positive. These words reflect the widespread recognition that DanversCARES is a unique and valuable asset that is making a significant impact on the community, and does so through its commitment to collaboration and a community-wide focus, its focus on awareness-building and education, its adaptability and responsiveness to community trends and emergent issues, and its attention to data, innovation, and evidence-based practices. In analyzing the data, the Steering Committee and coalition identified that DanversCARES should maintain and build on these significant strengths, and also address priority opportunities that include:

- Moving beyond a focus on substance use/ misuse to a holistic positive youth development approach that also includes health and wellness and social emotional learning
- Reaching children and youth across all grade levels, and particularly in the elementary schools and the four high schools
- Enhancing connections/ collaborations within schools and across the community, and particularly with the other Town Departments and community partners across sectors
- Deepening education and supports for parents/ caregivers

The full data set is available in Appendix A.

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IV. Strategic Priorities, Goals, Objectives, & Activities

In reviewing and analyzing the data, a few strategic priorities emerged for DanversCARES that served as the basis for developing goals, objectives, and key strategies:

- Increasing skills, assets, and competencies among children and youth
- Increasing capacity, collaboration, and ownership for coordination and delivery of services among partners
- Increasing recognition of and engagement with DanversCARES as a community resource

GOALS

Goals are long-term targets or directions of development; they identify what we want to accomplish over the next several years.

1. Increased positive youth development-related skills, assets, and competencies that enhance health and wellness, social emotional learning, and substance use/ misuse prevention among children and youth
2. Increased community-wide capacity, collaboration, and ownership to deliver coordinated services and provide resources
3. Increased recognition of DanversCARES as the unique go-to community resource for positive youth development for all children, youth, and families

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are concrete, measurable milestones on the way to achieving a Goal

Goal 1. Increased positive youth development-related skills, assets, and competencies that enhance health and wellness, social emotional learning, and substance use/ misuse prevention among children and youth

- 1. A. Children, youth, and families across Danvers are connected to comprehensive positive youth development programs, activities, and supports
- 1. B. Implement evidence-based principles/ model of positive youth development across activities and programs facilitated by DanversCARES and partners

Goal 2. Increased community-wide capacity, collaboration, and ownership to deliver coordinated services and provide resources

- 2. A. Children and youth are supported by healthy social and family relationships
- 2. B. Increased engagement and coordination across community
- 3. C. Common indicators and outcome measures are tracked across school, town, and community programs

Goal 3. Increased recognition of DanversCARES as the unique go-to community resource for positive youth development for all children, youth, and families

- 3. A. Mission and programs are known by and across the community
- 3. B. DanversCARES sustains a welcoming and inclusive approach committed to continuous improvement and innovation

KEY ACTIVITIES/ STRATEGIES

Activities/ strategies are the means by which we intend to accomplish each Objective.

Goal 1. Increased positive youth development-related skills, assets, and competencies that enhance health and wellness, social emotional learning, and substance use/ misuse prevention among children and youth

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- 1. A. Children, youth, and families across Danvers are connected to comprehensive positive youth development programs, activities, and supports
 - 1. A. 1. Evolve and increase programming at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, with focus on afterschool/ out-of-school time activities
- 1. B. Implement evidence-based principles/ model of positive youth development across activities and programs facilitated by DanversCARES and partners
 - 1. B. 1. Develop resource map of existing in- and out-of-school positive youth development opportunities and identify overlap and potential for partnership
 - 1. B. 2. Develop clearinghouse of DanversCARES-validated resources (both community resources) across issues and ages for youth, family, educators
 - 1. B. 3. Research examples of programs, innovation, and implementation within similar districts

Goal 2. Increased community-wide capacity, collaboration, and ownership to deliver coordinated services and provide resources

- 2. A. Children and youth are supported by healthy social and family relationships
 - 2. A. 1. Sustain and enhance programming to support parents and caregivers
 - 2. A. 2. Increase parent involvement through active engagement
- 2. B. Increased engagement and coordination across community
 - 2. B. 1. Increase interdepartmental collaboration and synergy with all town departments that work with youth
 - 2. B. 2. Develop/ enhance partnerships with local and regional partners committed to supporting and/or providing positive youth development
 - 2. B. 3. Identify and outreach to new and potential partners
 - 2. B. 4. Sustain and enhance engagement within schools across Danvers, including educator training and involvement in determining desired outcomes and continued collaborative relationship with student services
- 3. C. Common indicators and outcome measures are tracked across school, town, and community programs
 - 1. C. 1. Align outcome measures with school/ town plans and goals, including existing data, tools, curricula, definitions, professional development/ training

Goal 3. Increased recognition of DanversCARES as the unique go-to community resource for positive youth development for all children, youth, and families

- 3. A. Mission and programs are known by and across the community
 - 3. A. 1. Take advantage of existing opportunities to promote DanversCARES' slogan/ mission/ vision ("Healthier decisions, Healthier lives, Healthier futures")
 - 3. A. 2. Recognize, capture, and track the way DanversCARES partners communicate about DanversCARES and the partnership
 - 3. A. 3. Enhance commitment and capacity of DanversCARES partners to communicate about DanversCARES with their stakeholders
- 3. B. DanversCARES sustains a welcoming and inclusive approach committed to continuous improvement and innovation
 - 3. B. 1. Sustain monthly DanversCARES meetings in which partners and community members can participate
 - 3. B. 2. Sustain stable management and operations systems and processes
 - 3. B. 3. Codify decision-making processes, and revisit/ revise By-Laws accordingly
 - 3. B. 4. Clarify and enhance DanversCARES partnerships, including expectations and benefits

V. Plan Monitoring & Review

This Strategic Plan is intended to guide the coordinated efforts of DanversCARES staff, leadership, and partners. It is designed to be a living document to help guide our decisions and actions through the 2022-23 school year. As the local landscape shifts and/ or our context changes, the staff, leadership, and partners will return to this Strategic Plan to refine as necessary. To this end, we intend to reflect on progress toward implementation on a regular basis, with deeper reviews after years 1, 3, and 5.

STRATEGY FILTER

As part of the planning process, we developed a set of criteria to consider in helping us review existing efforts and determine whether to pursue new/ different initiatives, programs, projects, or directions:

- Does it align with our mission?
- Does it advance our goals, including our focus on positive youth development for children, youth, and families across Danvers?
- Do we have capacity to do it with fidelity?

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VI. Year 1 Implementation Plan

Possible considerations in developing Implementation Plans:

- What is DanversCARES already doing? How does what we are doing align with our strategy filter criteria?
- Who are we currently serving – how many children/ youth, at what grade level(s), in what school(s), etc. – and not serving?
- What are partners doing that DanversCARES may support and/or that could be involved?
- What capacity does DanversCARES staff have to do more? What more could partners do?
- What are priority/ high leverage opportunities to address first – and do they align with our strategy filter criteria?

Example:

Objective 1. A. Children, youth, and families across Danvers are connected to comprehensive positive youth development programs, activities, and supports			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 1. A. 1. Evolve and increase programming at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, with focus on afterschool/ out-of-school time activities 			
SY2018-19	SY2019-20	SY2020-21	SY2021-22
<p>Identify and review current programming offered by DanversCARES and partners at each grade level and who is being served/ not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop list of programming offered by DanversCARES and partners at each grade level and who is being served/ not (connects with 1.B.1.) <p>Identify priority opportunities to evolve/ increase programming and develop incremental multi-year plan for expansion</p> <p>Identify and work with partner(s) to articulate roles/ responsibilities and next steps (connects with 2.B.3.)</p>	<p>Initiate and publicize year 1 of program expansion</p> <p>Reflect on year 1 and articulate learnings to apply to year 2</p> <p>Update list of programming offered by DanversCARES and partners at each grade level and who is being served/ not</p>	<p>Initiate and publicize year 2 of program expansion</p> <p>Reflect on years 1 & 2 and articulate learnings to apply to year 3</p> <p>Update list of programming offered by DanversCARES and partners at each grade level and who is being served/ not</p>	<p>Initiate and publicize year 3 of program expansion</p> <p>Reflect on years 1, 2 & 3 and articulate learnings to apply to phase 4</p> <p>Update list of programming offered by DanversCARES and partners at each grade level and who is being served/ not</p>

VII. Attachments/ Appendices

- A. Data packet
- B. Steering Committee & Coalition members
- C. Other supporting information