



Safer Schools & School Communities: Spring 2024 report of the CO Safer Schools Initiative



Beginning in April of 2023, more than 250 stakeholders from across Colorado's education ecosystem, non-profit community and private sector met to identify opportunities to explore the multitude of issues that affect the safety of students, educators, staff and school communities through the Colorado Safer Schools Initiative (CSSI).

While the work and meetings of CSSI continue, members of CSSI have identified key steps that can be taken to improve the safety and well-being of educators and students. This report includes those interim recommendations for state and local leaders.

CSSI is convened by the Confluence Policy & Strategy Group (Confluence PSG) and the Public Education & Business Coalition (PEBC).



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As communities, educators and students respond to a continuing cycle of violence in, near or directly involving schools, there is an unmistakable need and growing call for a statewide collaborative effort to address the broad range of issues that all play a role in school safety and in reducing incidents of violence affecting schools and the students they serve. The most recent school shooting incidents and response from students, educators and communities make it overwhelmingly clear that meaningful change and a comprehensive approach to that change is necessary to ensure the wellbeing of our students and educators. While local and state officials appropriately focus on the immediate needs of students and the role of each state agency and a legislatively created working group begins its work examining a variety of state systems, there remains a critical need to convene a diverse coalition of local education leaders, community leaders, families and experts to thoughtfully examine the intersection of all of these efforts and the challenges that persist at each local level.

This is why Confluence Policy & Strategy Group (Confluence PSG) and the Public Education & Business Coalition (PEBC) formed the **Colorado Safer Schools Initiative (CSSI)**, a broad coalition and research initiative that has brought together system leaders, educators, students, parents, government officials, mental and behavioral health experts, law enforcement, security experts, counselors, community leaders, communications experts and others.

At the local level, many district, community and local leaders have been holding conversations and conducting reviews of local conditions and approaches to school safety. At the same time, the state School Safety Working Group (SSWG) was meeting throughout 2023 to examine findings of a 2019 report from the State Auditor and to take a deep look at the various state agencies, programs, grants and systems including the effectiveness of the state programs.

The CSSI was formed and its scope of inquiry designed to support and complement the work of the SSWG, of individual local leaders and of state leaders. By drawing on the expertise, perspectives and lived experiences of a statewide, diverse coalition, CSSI was designed and managed so that its findings could increase the capacity of these parallel efforts, learn from them and contribute to them.

CSSI's work is ongoing and to date, has only explored a portion of the issues that influence the safety and well-being of school communities. Informed by the discussions among more than 250 stakeholders over the past year, this report highlights opportunities for action at the state and local levels to improve school safety in several key areas CSSI members have examined and discussed. These areas include:

- The use of Trauma Informed Practices (TIPs) in school safety incidents and drills;
- The importance of TIPs in the work of School Resource Officers (SROs);
- The advantages of Co-Responder Models for school incidents or disturbances;
- The value of school partnerships with their local communities;
- The importance of student voice in school safety and other system change discussions.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH & BROAD SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS

The growing incidents of school violence involving students is not an education issue nor is it an issue for educators to solve, but the incidents – driven by a multitude of factors outside of schools – are a very real problem that plays out in and near schools with tragic outcomes for students, educators and families. Solving the situation won't be done by educators alone or with only one perspective or group of stakeholders at the table. To advance these conversations effectively, with a focus on actionable outcomes and recommendations, CSSI engages and convenes a diverse group of stakeholders from within and outside of education systems. Confluence PSG and PEBC are partnering to undertake this initiative with a commitment to facilitating a broad examination of the many factors affecting or playing a part in school safety.

Based on the convenors' expertise, extensive input from state and local leaders and the guidance of the CSSI Steering Committee, CSSI's initial scope of inquiry identified opportunity to serve the community through an exploration of:

- **Pandemic Effect on Students & Communities:** Learning sessions and discussions of how the school system interruption, broader effects and response to COVID-19 may contribute to violence involving students including how these factors have affected students, the mental health implications for students and educators, and the impact of the economic disruption on local communities;
- **Bullying & Isolation:** Exploring what opportunities peers, adults and others have to change behaviors that may lead to a student feeling bullied, isolated or unwelcome in their school community;
- **Threat Identification & Mitigation:** Discussion of the role of educators, counselors, law enforcement, other adults and of parents and students and how they all interact or play a role to identify a student who has not yet initiated an act of school violence but may be considering or planning to do so;
- **Out-Of-School Situations:** Exploration of the roles of partners in and out of the education ecosystem in identifying, responding to and addressing individuals that may be at risk of committing violence beyond the school setting;
- **Deterrence & Counseling:** Conversations about who has what role in identifying, intervening and counseling a student who may be on, or could move toward, a path of violence including strategies to engage students, educators and families in appropriate ways including potential or needed support or training;
- **School Discipline:** Discussion of how communities and school leaders can ensure disciplinary action is taken when warranted, is used appropriately and is not used disproportionately against certain groups of students with an honest dialogue about the role of the justice system and implications of its use;
- **School Resource Officers (SROs):** A dedicated set of discussions of the use of SROs, including the advantages and risks of uniformed or armed officers, of school employees

vs. local law enforcement, strategies to improve trust and where other professionals can be partnered with SROs or utilized;

- **Responder Models & Collaborations:** Learning and discussing various incident or situation co-responder models to understand the approaches that have been or could be used in various scenarios, benefits and challenges associated with different models and local needs to pilot or implement;
- **Press, Politics & Media including Social Media:** Learning about how those in the press, media and politics currently approach their role on issues from bullying to active threat, whether some may be contributing to the underlying conditions that lead to violence affecting students and a robust conversation among stakeholders of perceptions, needs and recommendations in these areas;
- **Community & School Connections:** Discussions of the role of community leaders, organizations, programs and community members in creating a climate to reduce conditions that lead to violence affecting students and in responding when such events occur;
- **Active Threat Response:** Presentations and discussions to better understand the tactics, strategies and response to an active threat including who is part of the response, the work of officials and field teams in this area, and national learnings that have informed current practices.

While access to guns is an undeniable factor, because of the debates already underway in the legislature and several, the historically polarizing nature of gun rights and gun control debates and the potential of those to distract from other crucial aspects of the school safety discussion, this has not been a primary topic for the CSSI during its first year. After working through other topics, the CSSI may invite experts or advocates representing diverse viewpoints to present to the group and a decision of whether and how to explore the gun access topic will be made by the membership.

KEY PARTNERS, STAKEHOLDERS & COLLABORATIONS

The input, thought-partnership and guidance of CSSI's Steering Committee was critical to helping structure conversations, identifying guest presenters and expanding the scope of perspectives represented in CSSI meetings. That 21 person body included representatives of multiple state government offices, school superintendents, professional associations, urban, suburban and rural educators and representatives, school districts, charter schools, private sector leaders, behavioral and mental health experts, school resource officers and others.

Starting with membership of more than 75 stakeholders from across the state, CSSI quickly grew to more than 250 individuals from across the state. While scheduling did not always allow all members to participate and some were focused on a more narrow set of issues, the consistent engagement of members in discussions has demonstrated the strong interest in and commitment to addressing these issues across the state.

The generous contribution of expertise from a variety of professionals and stakeholders with lived experience enabled the CSSI to dig deeply into a variety of topics. From panels with law enforcement and mental health experts discussing co-responder models to school officials, child development experts and security professionals discussing school safety drills and the role of School Resource Officers (SROs), members were able to engage in learning and discussions with those most directly affected or involved in a variety of issues relating to school safety. As importantly, time was allotted in each meeting for members to engage with one another, to share challenges, successes and ideas for future efforts.

THE PROCESS & CONVERSATIONS

Across the course of CSSI's meetings, more than 250 stakeholders engaged in various conversations. As would be expected in a group of this size, the degree of expertise or interest in each topic varied with some participants more focused on specific issues and others interested in the full range of discussions.

CSSI's convenors designed the arc of conversations across a continuum of learning and in response to topics of most interest to members while also considering where this group was uniquely positioned to add value to public conversations or local actions to enhance school safety and the well-being of educators, students and school staff and communities.

The ideas and recommendations contained in this report are intended as conversation starters and a summary of the ideas discussed by CSSI members over the course of a year. Our hope is that state and local leaders, communities and stakeholders will read this report and identify where they can be champions of the ideas offered and partners to CSSI and its participants.

The framework of topics was presented and received overwhelming support from the CSSI participants. The specific ideas contained in this report are the convenors' effort to summarize the discussions and translate them into a roadmap for action. An individual or organization's participation in CSSI or on the Steering Committee should not be viewed as endorsement or a vote in favor of any or all of the specific items included herein. With such a diverse group of stakeholders who all bring not only very unique professional or lived experiences but also different perspectives, knowledge of the levers of change and the wide variety of local context considerations, the convenors did not think it appropriate to seek a vote of support for each item. Instead, members were asked to support the overall framework and intention of the ideas and to then find ways to tailor those to their roles, communities and local needs. Support for that framework and approach was overwhelming.

CSSI IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES

The CSSI members identified opportunities for system-level change in each category of the coalition's areas of focus. Contained in this report are specific ideas for ways to take action on the ideas, opportunities and needs identified. For each, this report identifies the problem being addressed, high-level goals of proposed actions as well as the role of the state, the local role (school system, school building leaders, community and local partners) and potential pilots or learning opportunities associated with each recommendation.

As is discussed later in this report, CSSI is ongoing and will continue to explore a number of topics it has not yet had opportunity to engage deeply with and to expand discussions on topics already covered. In some cases, the work of CSSI is expected to shift to supporting pilots, scaling or further studying of ideas identified to date. Based on the conversations held from April of 2023 through March of 2024, the CSSI convenors have identified general consensus among members to support recommendations for action in six key areas. These areas are identified below and the opportunities for action are further discussed in this report.

School Incidents & Drills

1. Establish a set of best-practices for how to incorporate trauma-informed practices (TIPs) into every aspect of a school safety incident and drill;
2. Ensure our educators have adequate training and professional development opportunities relating to TIPs for safety incidents at every point along their professional learning;
3. Engage parents, families and communities in school plans for safety drills including, where appropriate, advance notification;
4. Identify and provide resources to the appropriate state and local agencies, offices and leaders to provide support to districts, Charter Management Organizations (CMO) and schools.

School Resource Officers

1. Work with statewide and local agencies and training providers to raise awareness of the importance of trauma-informed practices;
2. Identify opportunities to strengthen, scale or develop training and learning opportunities for School Resource Officers or other school safety personnel on the use of TIPs.
3. Establish that the use of TIPs by safety and security personnel is a best practice and incorporate its inclusion in appropriate state reports, oversight systems and supports.

Co-Responder Models

1. Provide grant or other formula funding to schools and school systems to support piloting, scaling and support of co-responder models;

2. Provide trainings and support through convenings, facilitated cohorts of practice and publication of guidance on multiple models of co-responder systems;
3. Collect and publish data on the effect of co-responder models relating to perception of the responders, the number of incidents in a school, repeat interactions and other data to assess model and response effectiveness.
4. Convene discussions with existing programs and with the Office of School Safety, to learn from and foster collaborations about what other resources or supports would be helpful.

Community Partnerships

1. Support the creation of a Community Liaison position within schools or school systems;
2. Provide guidance, training and other resources to support community liaisons and partnerships;
3. Establish, facilitate and provide support to a statewide cohort of Community Liaisons;
4. Create a funding pool that supports schools partnering with community organizations.

Mental Health Supports

1. Work with our Congressional delegation to secure federal funding to support mental, behavioral and substance use disorder supports in our schools and school communities;
2. Identify any and all opportunities to expand state support of the same including career pathway supports and incentives;
3. Convene a statewide working group of educators, mental and behavioral health experts, state and local government officials, private sector, non-profit and philanthropic leaders, community organizations and others to develop a statewide strategy for expanding mental health supports to our students and school staff;
4. Connect current research on mental health supports needed in school with actionable practices to effectively address and support the well-being of students.

Student Voice

1. Ensure student voice, perspective, and experience is meaningfully represented in processes to design, evaluate or revise systems relating to school safety and student well-being;
2. Provide guidance to policymakers at the state and local levels as well as school or school system leaders on effective ways to engage student voice in decision-making;
3. Elevate youth centered and led solutions related to school safety, belonging, and academic success.

SYSTEM CHANGES

The recommendations contained in this report focus on changes at both the state and local system level. This focus is based on the belief that system-level changes are necessary to create the conditions for bold action at the local level and that the transformational changes sought will be far more sustainable if they are part of system level changes in policies, regulations and practices than if they exist only through waivers, exemptions or pilot programs. In making recommendations for state action, there was broad consensus that the appropriate role of the state in most cases is to create the conditions for success at the local level, to provide support and resources needed at the local level and to facilitate collaboration and learning among educators and system leaders from across the state. While an appropriate role for oversight was identified for most recommendations, CSSI members emphasized oversight only insofar as it can be a mechanism of support and broadly discouraged the adoption of significant new compliance and enforcement regimes.

In many cases, members identified specific actions to be taken by state or local leaders to create the conditions necessary to allow and empower local leaders – whether at the school system or building level – to take actions that move the vision and goals identified forward. The actions range from policy changes through legislation, regulation or local school board action to expansion of supports and reallocation of resources at the state agency or local system levels to facilitation of collaborative opportunities, convening of groups for deep-dives into topics and development of partnerships across education and private sector leaders and organizations.

A number of the recommendations do carry fiscal implications. Members were conservative in making recommendations that call for additional funding or shifts in funding uses. Accordingly, where included in this report, CSSI members felt the funds are both necessary and bring with them the potential for significant, sustainable impact on safety and security for educators and students.

SCHOOL SAFETY INCIDENTS & DRILLS

The Problems We are Working To Solve

Safety incidents and drills are critical components of school safety plans, but they can also be distressing experiences for some students and educators. When preparing for or managing safety incidents and drills, it is essential to prioritize the use of trauma-informed practices. This includes ensuring that educators are adequately prepared to support their students during drills and incidents, as well as providing appropriate support to students who may experience trauma as a result of these events. By prioritizing trauma-informed practices, schools can create a trauma-informed culture of safety for all students and staff involved.

Trauma-informed practices should be incorporated into school safety incidents and drills.

To accomplish this, we should:

1. Establish a set of best-practices for how to incorporate trauma-informed practices (TIPs) into every aspect of a school safety incident and drill;
2. Ensure our educators have adequate training and professional development opportunities relating to TIPs for safety incidents at every point along the their professional learning;
3. Engage parents, families and communities in school plans for safety drills including, where appropriate, advance notification;
4. Identify and provide resources to the appropriate state and local agencies, offices and leaders to provide support to districts, Charter Management Organizations (CMO) and schools;

Many schools or school systems are already incorporating one or more of these approaches and strategies. Wherever possible, we should work collaboratively to learn from those efforts, to identify exemplars as well as shortcomings or challenges while recognizing the unique context of every school, school system and community.

School Safety Incidents & Drills : Recommendations Incorporate Use of Trauma Informed Practices

Goal: Maximize the effectiveness of school safety drills while reducing the negative effects including any associated trauma for students.

State Role or Action

- A. Create a working group of stakeholders with diverse backgrounds, perspectives and expertise to examine local approaches and national exemplars and develop a set of recommended best practices for incorporating TIPs into school safety drills and incidents;
- B. Provide training, guidance and support to local leaders on the use of TIPs;
- C. Set inclusion of TIPs as an expectation of school and school systems;
- D. Promote the importance of TIPs in communications, trainings and other outreach from each involved state agency;
- E. Consider TIP development in educator preparation program approval, including safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environments and other areas as currently in line with standards.

Local Role or Action

- A. Incorporate TIPs into all training, planning and management of any safety drill or incident response at every point from planning through incident, debriefing and follow-up;
- B. Ensure knowledge and use of TIPs is a key element of, onboarding and development for new staff and the continuing education or professional development of all staff.
- C. Communicate with families and school communities about the school's approach to school safety incidents or drills through a trauma-informed lens;
- D. Prioritize inclusion of mental & behavioral health experts in process and events, recognizing the difference in resources and personnel in different communities, particularly the challenges in rural school communities.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies & Learning Opportunities

- A. Pilot and study research informed approaches to delivering TIP training and incorporating TIP approaches into school safety incidents and drills;
- B. Provide technical assistance, training and supports to schools and school systems in the use of TIP approaches to school safety;
- C. Develop a resource bank of trauma-informed curriculum and training resources.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

The Problems We are Working To Solve

School resource officers (SROs) play a critical role in ensuring the safety and well-being of students, educators and school staff. The exact role SROs play and the structure of the SRO relationship with the school varies across the state due to a wide range of factors including resources and local considerations. In recent years, there have been growing debates in some school systems about the role and duties of SROs. Independent of any of these local discussions, the interactions of SROs with students can have a direct impact on the safety of students and of adults in the school community.

CSSI intends to continue a broad series of conversations that take into account many local factors and the wide range of duties assigned to SROs. Notwithstanding those future conversations during which we hope to surface models or recommendations for strengthening the effect of SRO presence in schools, discussions to date have elevated the importance of culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices in the work of SROs.

School Resource Officers should approach interactions with students relating to school safety, safety incidents or drills through a trauma-informed lens.

To accomplish this, we should:

1. Work with statewide and local agencies and training providers to raise awareness of the importance of trauma-informed practices;
2. Identify opportunities to strengthen, scale or develop training and learning opportunities for School Resource Officers or other school safety personnel on the use of TIPs.
3. Establish that the use of TIPs by safety and security personnel is a best practice and incorporate its inclusion in appropriate state reports, oversight systems and supports.

School Resource Officers : Recommendations

Establish Use of Trauma Informed Practices as Standard

Goal: Improve the well-being of students and the SRO-student relationship

State Role or Action

- A. Ensure that an understanding of TIPs is incorporated into any trainings offered by the state for School Resource Officers;
- B. Promote the use and training on TIPs to law enforcement partners and other agencies providing training or support to SROs;
- C. Provide model Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or language that school systems can use to incorporate the use of TIPs into their contractual relationship with school safety personnel.

Local Role or Action

- A. Ensure knowledge and use of TIPs is a key element of onboarding and training for new SROs and the continuing education and performance management systems of all SROs or other security personnel;
- B. Engage with district/CMO staff to develop roles, pathways and programs that reflect local needs and context for new positions and pathways related to school safety.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies & Learning Opportunities

- A. Piloting of training, curriculum and other direct technical assistance to support SRO understanding of, and incorporation of, TIPs into their role. Explore whether it is appropriate to provide technical assistance to develop multiple different approaches to learn from and scale;
- B. Work with SRO agencies, associations and training providers to support cross-training among SROs and other school staff with an emphasis on shared approaches to incorporating TIPs.

CO-RESPONDER MODELS

The Problems We are Working To Solve

Different types of disruptions or incidents in schools may be better addressed by different professionals. Unfortunately, often due to limited resources or long-established historic practices, some schools or school systems over-rely on the response of law enforcement or SROs to most if not all incidents as a first response. As educators noted in our discussions, in many cases, a joint response of behavioral health, mental health or other human services professionals with security personnel may be able to de-escalate situations or better address the incident. Several school systems have successfully developed such co-responder models with encouraging results in the short-term and long-term outcomes.

Any consideration of co-responder models needs to be built with all potential responders as part of the discussions including local fire, EMS, child welfare, mental and behavioral health, substance use, crisis intervention and other professionals. As with other issues discussed in this report, a culturally responsive and trauma-informed approach will strengthen all such models of incident response.

The use of co-responder models should be expanded and supported.

To accomplish this, we should:

1. Provide grant or other formula funding to schools and school systems to support piloting, scaling and support of co-responder models;
2. Provide trainings and support through convenings, facilitated cohorts of practice and publication of guidance on multiple models of co-responder systems;
3. Collect and publish data on the effect of co-responder models relating to perception of the responders, the number of incidents in a school, repeat interactions and other data to assess model and response effectiveness.
4. Convene discussions with existing programs and with the Office of School Safety, to learn from and foster collaborations about what other resources or supports would be helpful.

Co-Responder Models: Recommendations

Scale and Expand Co-Responder Models in Multiple Contexts

Goal: Improve incident responses and their effect on both school community safety and the well-being of individual students.

State Role or Action

- A. Establish a mechanism to fund, through legislative action or other means, and in partnership with appropriate state and local agencies, support for co-responder models;
- B. Provide trainings, guidance, and education materials for school or school system leaders on establishing and managing co-responder models;
- C. Promote and provide information and resources to local governments and local agencies on different co-responder models;
- D. Collect and publish data on the impacts of co-responder models on perceptions of the responders, the number of incidents in a school, repeat interactions, and other data to assess model and response effectiveness.

Local Role or Action

- A. Pilot, scale, or continue supporting the use of co-responder models;
- B. Educate and promote the structure, rationale, and advantages of co-responder models to school staff, families, and the school community.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies & Learning Opportunities

- A. Pilot different structures, trainings and approaches to co-responder models;
- B. Establish and support a cohort of practice to foster learning and collaboration among school systems and their partners developing, managing or scaling different models;
- C. Study and report on various models including the costs, challenges, benefits, empirical data on outcomes and the experiences of all involved in different approaches.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Problems We are Working To Solve

Many of the issues that ultimately lead to threats to the safety and well-being of students or educators originate in the communities that surround the schools. Similarly, the effects of any such incident often spills over into the community. Members of the local community can be powerful allies to schools in early identification of threats and in their response to incidents on school grounds. With the isolation that increased during the pandemic and the high staff turnover in some schools, there are many schools whose relationships with local community leaders, organizations and businesses could be strengthened.

Community leaders, businesses, organizations and residents are critical partners in creating a safer school environment. CSSI stakeholders see value in prioritizing partnership with each.

To accomplish this, we should:

1. Support the creation of a Community Liaison position within schools or school systems;
2. Provide guidance, training and other resources to support community liaisons and partnerships;
3. Establish, facilitate and provide support to a statewide cohort of Community Liaisons;
4. Create a funding pool that supports schools partnering with community organizations.

Community Partnerships : Recommendations

Support the Expansion of School – Community Partnerships

Goal: Strengthen school partnerships with their communities to enhance school and community safety and well-being.

State Role or Action

- A. Provide guidance, training, and other resources to support community liaisons and partnerships;
- B. Establish a funding mechanism to provide stipends to Community Liaisons in schools;
- C. Establish, facilitate, and provide support to a statewide cohort of Community Liaisons;
- D. Engage with district/CMO staff to develop roles, pathways, professional development and programs that reflect local needs and context for new positions and pathways;
- E. Create a statewide grant program (formula, not competitive) for schools to partner with community organizations, businesses, and out of school programs.

Local Role or Action

- A. Create and support the role of a Community Liaison who supports one or more schools in establishing or expanding community partnerships;
- B. Establish a funding mechanism to provide stipends to Community Liaisons in schools;
- C. Inventory & connect with community organizations in local school community + include them when discussing necessary partnership.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies & Learning Opportunities

- A. Piloting of a community liaison program in a school district or charter school system with a focus on school safety;
- B. Study schools and school systems that have strong ties with community organizations to establish and highlight best practices that have an effect on school safety;
- C. Micro grants or funding to incentivize community organizations and businesses willing to partner with schools and to provide technical assistance to the partnerships.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

The Problems We are Working To Solve

In recent years, there has been a growing need for mental health support among educators and other school staff. This is primarily due to the fact that they are encountering more and more highly escalated situations in the course of their work. Unfortunately, working through these types of situations can have negative effects on both the children in schools and the adults who are supporting them. It can lead to increased stress, burnout, and other mental health issues. As a result, it is becoming increasingly important for schools to provide adequate mental health resources and support to help their staff effectively manage these types of situations and maintain their own well-being. Mental health supports can include, but are not limited to more mental health personnel, professional development in emotional regulation for adults and students, and dedicated spaces for adults and children to diffuse after challenging situations.

Students, educators and school staff need greater, more timely and easier access to mental health supports and services in their schools and school communities.

To accomplish this, we should:

1. Work with our Congressional delegation to secure federal funding to support mental, behavioral and substance use disorder supports in our schools and school communities;
2. Identify any and all opportunities to expand state support of the same including career pathway supports and incentives;
3. Convene a statewide working group of educators, mental and behavioral health experts, state and local government officials, private sector, non-profit and philanthropic leaders, community organizations and others to develop a statewide strategy for expanding mental health supports to our students and school staff;
4. Connect current research on mental health supports needed in school with actionable practices to effectively address and support the well-being of students.

Mental Health Supports : Recommendations

Dramatically expand access for students, educators and school staff.

Goal: Improve the well-being of students and school staff.

State Role or Action

- A. Work with our Congressional delegation to secure federal funding to support mental, behavioral and substance use disorder supports in our schools and school communities;
- B. Identify any and all opportunities to expand state support of the same, including career pathway supports and incentives;
- C. Convene a statewide working group of educators, mental and behavioral health experts, state and local government officials, private sector, non-profit and philanthropic leaders, community organizations and others to develop a statewide strategy for expanding mental health supports to our students and school staff;
- D. Collaborate with partners to ensure coordinated efforts to expand the pool of available supports, particularly in our rural communities and smaller school systems.

Local Role or Action

- A. Establish mental health access as a high priority for the school system and leaders;
- B. Identify and engage all potential local partners including local government agencies, private sector providers and philanthropic organizations;
- C. Encourage schools to form working groups that create wellness plans and strategies for their educators and school communities
- D. Develop and implement professional development workshops tailored for educators, offering practical strategies for recognizing, managing, and responding to emotions in heightened contexts. These workshops should include quick-response techniques for various scenarios.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies & Learning Opportunities

- A. Design a series of interactive workshops focusing on emotional regulation techniques. These workshops will be tailored specifically for educators, addressing their unique stressors and challenges in heightened situations;
- B. Establish wellness centers within schools to give students a calm, quiet space to reflect and regulate housed with mental health providers;
- C. Provide technical assistance to districts and schools to create wellness plans and strategies for educators and school communities in order to pilot and test scalable strategies and solutions.

STUDENT VOICE

The Problems We are Working To Solve

Despite the laudable and growing effort to engage students in the decision-making process for many systems or policies that affect them, there remains a need to do even more. Expanded engagement of students at each point in the discussion from examining the problem or challenge to brainstorming of potential solutions, developing new systems and implementing change will strengthen the ideas and the outcomes. In addition to the need for greater opportunities for student voice, too often the voices represented are those already most active in school and community conversations. To have the most diverse perspectives and the most effective solutions, we should do even more to expand the universe of student voices engaged in these efforts. This means making it safe and comfortable for all students, including those with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences as well as those whose perspectives may not be in the majority among their peers.

Every system, policy and regulation affecting students should include student perspective and voice in its development and implementation.

To accomplish this, we should:

1. Ensure student voice, perspective, and experience is meaningfully represented in processes to design, evaluate or revise systems relating to school safety and student well-being;
2. Provide guidance to policymakers at the state and local levels as well as school or school system leaders on effective ways to engage student voice in decision-making;
3. Elevate youth centered and led solutions related to school safety, belonging, and academic success.

Student Voice: Recommendations

Expand the inclusion of diverse student voices in system design

Goal: Strengthen systems or policies and their outcomes by meaningfully including student voice in their design, implementation and management.

State Role or Action

- A. Ensure students representing a diversity of perspectives, lived experiences and personal backgrounds are included in all processes for creating, reviewing or redesigning policies, rules and systems relating to student safety and well-being;
- B. Provide guidance to local leaders on strategies, benefits and opportunities to expand the inclusion of student voice;

Local Role or Action

- A. Provide opportunities for meaningful student engagement, such as conferences, town halls, and school assemblies to discuss issues of school safety;
- B. Offer training and capacity-building opportunities for students to develop leadership, communication, and advocacy skills related to school safety and well-being;
- C. Partner with community organizations that promote safe spaces for youth;
- D. Implement peer support programs that train students to recognize signs of distress or safety concerns among their peers and provide appropriate support or referrals to school staff or resources;
- E. Create or utilize existing school climate survey data or anonymous reporting systems to disaggregate youth's beliefs about school safety related issues and their proposed solutions to create a culture of safety.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies & Learning Opportunities

- A. Provide direct support to establish a cohort of students in a district to create a peer support program with an emphasis on mental health supports, anti-bullying, and safe coping mechanisms;
- B. Establish a youth-led and centered program focused on school safety initiatives, empowering young people to propose, develop, and implement projects tailored to their specific safety concerns and needs within their schools;
- C. Engage the philanthropic community, school systems and government to convene and provide stipends for youth who want to engage in school safety policies.

NEXT STEPS FOR CSSI

2024 Conversations, Research & Learning

CSSI continues to meet monthly with some adjustments to schedule expected over the summer. In the second half of 2024, conversations, panels and presentations are expected to generally fit into two categories:

1. **Cohorts of Practice & Deep Dives.** Meetings are being planned that draw on member interest, 2024 legislative action and the findings of several other efforts including the School Safety Work Group (SSWG) and other task forces that intersect with the work of CSSI. These may include learnings from the school discipline task force, the SSWG recommendations and other topics identified by members interested in collaborating with peers to more deeply explore specific issues;
2. **Remaining CSSI Topics.** To date, CSSI has only been able to explore a portion of the issues relating to school safety identified in the original framework for CSSI and subsequently expanded based on member and Steering Committee input. In addition to being responsive to state and local leader requests and the input of members, among the topics still planned for discussion are:
 - a. Active Threat Response;
 - b. Press, Politics & Media (including social media);
 - c. Deterrence & Counseling;
 - d. The Role of School Resource Officers;
 - e. Bullying & Isolation;
 - f. School Discipline.

Pilots, Field Studies & Direct Supports

In addition to ongoing meetings of CSSI, Confluence PSG and PEBC intend to secure support for the pilots, field studies and supports discussed in each of the six areas addressed in this report and as may be requested by CSSI participants. As is discussed in the About the CSSI Convenors section of this report, the partners of this initiative have a long and successful history of supporting a continuous cycle of convening, studying or piloting, learning and advancing change. All involved in CSSI recognize that there is no single solution or end to the effort to improve school safety. There is a shared commitment to the continued work, to incremental progress and to always raising the bar of what is possible and the high standard to which we all hold ourselves on the most critical issues for our students.

ABOUT THE CSSI CONVENORS

Confluence & PEBC's History of Success

The partners leading this initiative have a proven track-record of partnering to tackle significant policy issues and areas of practice in education. PEBC President and CEO, Sue Sava and Confluence PSG President, Berrick Abramson most recently collaborated to create and lead the Colorado Early Childhood Education Workforce Coalition (ECEWC) which built on the success of their work together leading the Education System Resilience & Innovation Initiative (ESRII) during the COVID pandemic. The ECEWC gathered more than 50 stakeholders who met regularly to understand which areas of ECE workforce challenges were already being addressed at the state level and, with partner organizations, developed recommendations to address any gaps. These discussions included an exploration of how to recruit and retain educators, increase equity and diversity, develop meaningful career pathways, and provide fair compensation. ESRII was supported by a generous grant from The Morgridge Family Foundation and assembled more than 80 education system leaders, educators, government officials, and stakeholders from within and outside the education system to develop new approaches to improve support for the teaching workforce, deliver instruction that better prepares all students for the challenges of an ever-evolving world, and address issues within the education system that perpetuate inequities and achievement gaps that were only exacerbated during disruptive events like the COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendations of ESRII led to the introduction of CO SB21-185 which received unanimous, bipartisan support of the Joint Budget Committee for the appropriation of more than \$13 million annually for educator programs identified by ESRII. The bill was signed into law in June of 2021.

Abramson and Sava previously teamed up to lead the Colorado Educator Preparation Innovation Coalition (CO EduPIC). CO EduPIC convened key stakeholders involved with the training, employment and support of new teachers together with seasoned educators, experts in the field, government leaders and business leaders in a multi-phase initiative. CO EduPIC's work led to multiple pilots of new partnerships between education preparation providers (EPPs) and school systems focused on improving the classroom readiness of new teachers and strengthening the relationship between EPPs and schools. Funded by local philanthropic organizations including The Denver Foundation and Rose Foundation, the \$250,000 supported CO EduPIC's work that led to the passage of HB 1189 which provided \$600,000 in funding to expand residency pilot programs, and CO EduPIC member developed pilots received more than \$500,000 from federal and other grants, a return on investment of more than 5x the support received from the philanthropic community.

In addition to Sava and Abramson, the team includes PEBC Senior Director of Social Impact, Evan Kennedy, PEBC Director of Policy, Dr. Jamita Horton and Confluence PSG Policy Director, Carrie Steele in addition to the research, communications and other staff of each organization.

About Confluence PSG & the Center for Education & Workforce Policy (CFEWP)

Confluence PSG partners with government and private sector leaders to support policy and system change. Our team brings decades of experience to support our partners at every stage

of the process. Drawing on our expertise in the public and private sectors, we help identify the specific issue and mechanism of change, scope of action needed, associated challenges and the affected or involved stakeholders. Confluence works with clients to design and manage comprehensive collaborative processes to develop solutions with maximum buy-in and high likelihood for success. Confluence support government, private sector and non-profit clients in every aspect of stakeholder engagement, work group management, strategic planning, conflict navigation and policy development.

The Center for Education and Workforce Policy at Confluence PSG is working at the forefront of efforts to expand access to quality education, improve student outcomes, reimagine how instruction is delivered, align post-secondary and job-training opportunities with tomorrow's workforce needs and plan for the challenges of an evolving global economy. We offer experience and expertise in designing and convening productive conversations among diverse stakeholders on a wide array of complex issues in education policy and workforce development. Our projects address a range of objectives including reimagining how we recruit, retain and even structure the educator workforce, increasing access to high-quality courses and instruction that prepare students for success, supporting development of innovative learning experiences that meet the varied needs of students and fostering collaborations between the post-secondary education system and the private sector to ensure employees can develop the skills necessary to succeed in tomorrow's workforce while advancing their own careers.

About PEBC

PEBC strives to create schools and systems worthy of our children. Founded in Denver over four decades ago, PEBC represents a convergence of stakeholders determined to uplift learning opportunities for each and every student. Today, PEBC collaborates with teachers, schools and districts nationwide, catalyzing high quality instruction. PEBC's origins date back to 1983 and the release of the Nation at Risk report by The National Commission on Excellence in Education. The Commission, and PEBC, believed that the public education system was failing to meet the national need for a competitive workforce. With funding from the Ford Foundation, several communities created local education funds to concentrate efforts on quality teaching initiatives at PEBC. PEBC's team now works in 26 states to ensure that educators are worthy of the students they serve.

Initially PEBC's focus was on supporting teachers with literacy and reading comprehension instructional practices. In 1997, PEBC staff published the ground-breaking book *Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a Reader's Workshop* which drew thousands of teachers to Denver wanting to work with and observe PEBC staff applying literacy best practices in their own classrooms. The organization expanded its efforts to coach teachers nationally, and created its highly-respected PEBC Lab Classrooms. In 2004, PEBC expanded its focus to include professional learning in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) instructional best practices and launched the PEBC Teacher Residency program (formerly the Boettcher Teacher Residency merged with Stanley Teacher Prep in 2015). Today, PEBC has grown into an organization with an unrivaled reputation for its teacher residency programs, professional development model, its publications, and the expertise of its staff. PEBC is headquartered in Denver, CO, and works both locally and nationally. Its Board is comprised of business executives, school superintendents and a variety of community and professional organizations.

Colorado Safer Schools Initiative (CSSI)

Kick-Off Meeting: May 15, 2023 via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

<p>Welcome</p>	<p>PEBC President & CEO, Sue Sava welcomed members, gave a brief overview of partnership between PEBC and Confluence and gave an overview of two parallel and complementary efforts, including the School Safety Working Group (SSWG) and the Colorado Safer Schools Initiative (CSSI).</p>
<p>Introduction of Facilitation Team & CSSI Steering Committee Members</p>	<p>Confluence PSG President, Berrick Abramson discussed the facilitation and support team for the CSSI and described the role of their team as providing logistics support, meeting planning and facilitation and ensuring CSSI members receive the information and hear from perspectives necessary to conduct the work. Berrick emphasized that while they have extensive experience working with groups on school safety, their role is as a neutral facilitator, to ensure all perspectives are heard and relevant research or expertise is made available to the members.</p> <p>Berrick then gave an overview of the CSSI Steering Committee whose roles and responsibilities are to bring the insights, expertise and input of other members of their teams who are also active contributors.</p> <p>Berrick then introduced Evan Kennedy, PEBC Director of Strategic Initiatives and Public Policy, to facilitate member introductions.</p>
<p>Member Introductions</p>	<p>Attendance reached 70+ and included a diversity of voices from state government agencies, school districts, non-profits, the public sector, mental and behavioral health experts, and representatives from Colorado’s State Legislature and Congressional delegations.</p> <p>Evan Kennedy invited participants to introduce themselves by name, agency or organization, role etc. in Zoom chat. Participants were encouraged to share their thoughts about the first issue that comes to mind when thinking about school safety.</p> <p>Participants were encouraged to introduce themselves in more detail in breakout groups.</p>
<p>Work of the CSSI</p>	<p>Berrick provided an overview of the work ahead for the CSSI including the scope of inquiry to include, but not limited to, the exploration of:</p> <p>Current Context & Dynamics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemic Effect on Students & Communities <p>Deterrence, Intervention & Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterrence & Counseling • Bullying & Isolation • School Discipline • School Resource Officers (SROs) • Responder Models & Collaborations • Threat Identification & Mitigation • Active Threat Response <p>School Communities, Collaborations & Additional Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of Communities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-Of-School Situations • Press, Politics & Media including Social Media
Breakout Sessions	<p>4 breakout groups were formed with 3 categories to initiate discussions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conversations: What are we missing or needing to clarify, expand or revise? What topics have the most urgency or need to come early in sequencing? What topic has the most potential for impact if we get it right? • The information, Facts & Exemplars: What experts or perspectives do we need to hear? What research or models would you like to learn about? • The Voices & Perspectives: Who else should be at this table? Whose thoughts & opinions should we gather (via focus groups, panels, etc)
Next Steps	<p>More Voices at The Table: Evan Kennedy made a direct appeal to members to give thought to and provide names to folks who should join either the steering committee or the CSSI general membership. Evan provided a link to a nomination form in the chat which can also be found here.</p> <p>Jamboards and CSSI Work Input: Jamboards remained open for the rest of the week for attendees to continue sharing feedback and ideas. This folder contains links to each breakout room’s Jamboard and the “Post-Meeting” group. Participants were also encouraged to review the ideas shared in other groups.</p> <p>PowerPoint from the meeting has been uploaded to the CSSI Meeting 1 Folder here.</p> <p>The Confluence team explained next steps including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of minutes; • Scheduling of next CSSI Full Group Convening: (Confirmed for June 29, 1:30pm-3:00pm) • Expected timeline for first subcommittee meetings; • Invitation for members to connect with the project team; • Any gaps in perspectives critical to shaping the work of the CSSI should be sent to berrick@confluencepsg.com.

If you have questions about this meeting or upcoming meetings, please contact:

CSSI Team Leads

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Jamita Horton, Policy Manager, PEBC: jhorton@pebc.org

Colorado Safer Schools Initiative (CSSI)

Meeting 2: June 29, 2023 via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Welcome	PEBC President & CEO, Sue Sava, gave welcoming remarks.
Overview of Meeting by Confluence PSG	<p>Confluence PSG President, Berrick Abramson, gave an overview of the purpose of today's meeting, including the agenda below and description of two panel discussions that will be taking place.</p> <p>1:30 - 1:35: Welcome & Meeting Overview (<i>Sue Sava, Berrick Abramson</i>) 1:35 - 1:45: Legislative Perspective & Insights (<i>Berrick + Legislative Leaders</i>) 1:45 - 2:20: State of Student & Educator Mental Wellness Panel (<i>CPSG led panel</i>) 2:20 - 2:55: School Leader Priority Needs & Perspective Panel (<i>PEBC led panel</i>) 2:55 - 3:00: Next Steps (<i>Berrick</i>)</p>
Legislative Perspectives & Insights	Colorado Speaker of the House, Julie McCluskie, welcomed members to the CSSI and provided an update from Legislative Leadership.
Membership & Attendance	Attendance reached 70+ and included a diversity of voices from state government agencies, school districts, non-profits, the public sector, mental and behavioral health experts, and representatives from Colorado's State Legislature and Congressional delegations.
Introduction of Panel Discussions	<p>Berrick introduced the 2 panel discussions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State of Student & Educator Mental Wellness 2. School Leader Priority Needs & Perspective
Panel 1: State of Mental Wellness of Teachers & Students	<p>Panel discussed the state of mental wellness of teachers and students in schools in Colorado. The panelists included counselors, school leaders, and outside experts.</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amie Baca-Oehlert, President, Colorado Education Association (CEA) • Lana Huizar, Director of Equity, Summit School District • Nate Thompson, Director of Social, Emotional & Behavioral Services, Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) • Lisa Birdsong, Counselor, Hinkley High School. Aurora Public Schools • Janelle Winders, Colorado School Counselors Association Conference Committee Chair • Dr. Elaine Belanski, Center Director & Research Professor, Center for Rural School Health & Education,, Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver
Panel 2: School Leader Priority Needs & Perspectives	<p>Panel provided an opportunity for all participants to hear from school and school system leaders about their most pressing needs or areas of focus relating to school safety as they look to the start of the 2023 - 24 school year.</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karla Loria, Superintendent, Adams 14 School District • Tim Matlick, Executive Director, Jefferson Academy • Amanda Pouliot, Principal, Everett Middle School, JeffCO School District • Cindy Rimmer, Principal, Middle Park High School, East Grand School District • Mike Schmidt, Superintendent, Platte Valley School District
Next Steps	Scheduling: Next CSSI Meeting: August 1, 2023, 10:00am – 11:30am

	<p>Video Recording of June 29, 2023 meeting: https://youtu.be/aYJj9dyr0Gs</p> <p>Other materials including the PowerPoint, questions from members to the panelists have been uploaded to the CSSI Meeting 2 Folder here.</p> <p>Previous meeting materials can be found in the CSSI Meeting 1 Folder here.</p> <p>More Voices at The Table: CSSI membership continues to grow and now includes over 180 stakeholders from local, state and national government, school districts, non-profits, public and private sector, mental and behavioral health experts, youth voices, advocates and thought partners. An invitation was made to members to give thought to and provide names to folks who should join the CSSI general membership. A link to the nomination form for new CSSI members can be found here.</p> <p>Any gaps in perspectives critical to shaping the work of the CSSI should be sent to berrick@confluencepsg.com.</p>
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Jamita Horton, Policy Manager, PEBC: jhorton@pebc.org

Colorado Safer Schools Initiative (CSSI)

Meeting 3: August 1, 2023 via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Welcome	Confluence President, Berrick Abramson, gave welcoming remarks.
Overview of Meeting by Confluence PSG	<p>Berrick Abramson gave an overview of the purpose of today's meeting, including the agenda below and description of the panel discussion that will be taking place.</p> <p>10:00 - 10:10: Welcome & Meeting Overview (<i>Berrick</i>)</p> <p>10:10 - 10:40: Community and School Programs Panel (<i>Jamita & Evan, PEBC</i>)</p> <p>10:40 - 11:10: Breakout Group Discussions & Brainstorm</p> <p>11:10 - 11:25: Group Share-outs</p> <p>11:25 - 11:30: Next Steps (<i>Berrick</i>)</p>
Membership & Attendance	Attendance reached 55+ and included a diversity of voices from state government agencies, school districts, non-profits, the public sector, mental and behavioral health experts, youth, and representatives from Colorado's State Legislature and Congressional delegations.
Panel: Promising School Safety Practices & Community Partnerships	<p>Facilitated by PEBC's Director of Policy, Jamita Horton, the Panel discussed promising school safety practices and community partnerships. The panelists included school administrators, teachers, non-profit leaders and youth voices.</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Haller: Rocky Mountain Prep Southwest, Special Education Teacher • Ana Chavira: Glenwood Springs Elementary, Roaring Fork School District • Andrea Nieto: La Luz Education • Kaycee Headricks: Executive Director, Boys and Girls Club • Kristen Alsech: Colorado Youth Congress
Breakout Discussions	<p>3 Breakout Rooms were assigned and led by Berrick Abramson & Sue Sava (Room 1), Jamita Horton (Room 2), and Evan Kennedy (Room 3).</p> <p>Breakout Discussion Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel reflections and key takeaways; • Other locally driven programs or partnerships aligned with our work; • Ideas for replicating or scaling panel or group shared ideas; • Needs to scale or create in your school/community. <p>Outcome Goals of Discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5 ideas that could be piloted scaled or implemented at the school or system level;

Outcome Goals of Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships, resources or supports needed to create, replicate, or pilot.
Next Steps Video Recording & Meeting Materials	<p>Next CSSI Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 20, 2023: 3:30pm-5:00pm October 30, 2023: 3:30pm-5:00pm <p>Video Recording of August 1, 2023 Meeting: https://youtu.be/aZ76sW4pdOM</p> <p>Meeting Materials including the PowerPoint, Panel Discussion Jam Board & Breakout Group Jam Boards, have been uploaded to the CSSI Meeting 3 Folder Here.</p> <p><i>Previous meeting materials and video recordings can be accessed using the links below:</i></p> <p>CSSI Meeting 1</p> <p>CSSI Meeting 2</p>
More Voices at The Table	<p>CSSI membership continues to grow and now includes over 180 stakeholders from local, state and national government, school districts, non-profits, public and private sector, mental and behavioral health experts, youth voices, advocates and thought partners. An invitation was made to members to give thought to and provide names of folks who should join the CSSI general membership. A link to the nomination form for new CSSI members can be found here.</p> <p>Any gaps in perspectives critical to shaping the work of the CSSI should be sent to berrick@confluencepsg.com.</p>

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Colorado Safer Schools Initiative (CSSI)

Meeting 4: September 20, 2023 via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Welcome	Confluence President, Berrick Abramson, gave welcoming remarks.
Overview of Meeting by Confluence PSG	<p>Berrick Abramson gave an overview of the purpose of today's meeting, including the agenda below and description of the panel discussion that will be taking place.</p> <p>3:30 – 3:35: Welcome & Meeting Overview (<i>Berrick</i>)</p> <p>3:35 – 4:10: Youth Data Presentation + Breakouts (<i>PEBC + YouthScan</i>)</p> <p>4:15 – 4:55: Responder Models Panel Discussion (<i>CPSG + District Presenters</i>)</p> <p>4:55 – 5:00: Closing & Next Steps (<i>Berrick</i>)</p>
Membership & Attendance	<p>Membership in the CSSI has grown to 230+ statewide. Attendance reached 50+ and included a diversity of voices from state government agencies, school districts, non-profits, the public sector, mental and behavioral health experts, youth, and representatives from Colorado's State Legislature and Congressional delegations.</p> <p>Welcome remarks were provided by Colorado Senate Minority Leader, Sen. Paul Lundeen.</p>
<p>Presentation: Youth Data – What issues are impacting youth in Colorado</p> <p>Breakout Discussions</p>	<p>Presentation provided by YouthScan Project Director, Susie Roman. Facilitated by PEBC Policy Director, Jamita Horton. <i>The YouthScan presentation is Phase 1 in a series of engagements that the CSSI will facilitate with youth to provide insights on student perspective from multiple organizations who gather student opinions from various demographics and groups of students. A youth advisory group is currently being formed and the CSSI will ensure we bring the broadest possible diversity of youth perspectives to help inform the work.</i></p> <p>3 Breakout Rooms were assigned and led by Berrick Abramson (Room 1), Jamita Horton & Sue Sava (Room 2), and Evan Kennedy (Room 3).</p> <p>Breakout Discussion Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resonated with you? • What surprised you? • What implications do you see for your own context? <p>Outcome Goals of Discussions</p> <p>3-5 ideas of how this data has implications for your context.</p>
Panel Discussion: Responder	Panel Discussion on Responder Models facilitated by Confluence PSG president, Berrick Abramson.

<p>Models</p>	<p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thompson School District, Co-responder Model: Deputy Brendan Solano & Clinician Michelle Sylvester, Joe Vodjansky, Safety and Security Director. • Aurora Public Schools: Kevin Childs, Director of Safety & Security • Stacey Collis: Past President, Colorado Association of School Resource Officers, retired Lakewood PD SRO. <p>Outcome Goals of Discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on advantages & challenges of different models; • Strategies to adopt or tailor different responder models to various local contexts and conditions including identification of challenges and needed resources.
<p>Next Steps</p> <p>Meeting Materials</p>	<p>Next CSSI Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 30, 2023: 3:30pm-5:00pm <p>Materials from all past meetings of the Colorado Safer Schools Initiative, including PowerPoints, Presentations, Jam Board & Breakout Group Jam Boards, may be found under the regional coalitions tab on the Safer Schools Initiative website:</p> <p>https://saferschoolsinitiative.org/</p>
<p>More Voices at The Table</p>	<p>CSSI membership continues to grow and now includes over 230 stakeholders from local, state and national government, school districts, non-profits, public and private sector, mental and behavioral health experts, youth voices, advocates and thought partners. An invitation was made to members to give thought to and provide names of folks who should join the CSSI general membership. A link to the nomination form for new CSSI members can be found here.</p> <p><i>Any gaps in perspectives critical to shaping the work of the CSSI should be sent to berrick@confluencepsg.com.</i></p>

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Colorado Safer Schools Initiative (CSSI)

Meeting 5: October 30, 2023 via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Welcome	Confluence President, Berrick Abramson, gave welcoming remarks.
Overview of Meeting by Confluence PSG	<p>Berrick Abramson gave an overview of the purpose of today’s meeting, including the agenda below and description of the panel discussion that will be taking place.</p> <p>3:30 – 3:40: Welcome & Meeting Overview (<i>Berrick</i>); VIP Guest Remarks: Commissioner Susana Cordova. Senator Rachel Zenzinger</p> <p>3:40 - 4:10: Lockdown Drills: Considerations & Implications (Panel)</p> <p>4:10 - 4:20: Panel Q&A</p> <p>4:20 - 4:45: Panel Breakout Group Discussions</p> <p>4:45 - 4:55: Lightning Round Shareouts</p> <p>4:55 - 5:00: CSSI Next Steps, Nov & Dec preview (<i>Berrick</i>)</p>
Membership & Attendance	<p>Membership in the CSSI has grown to 250+ statewide. Attendance reached 50+ and included a diversity of voices from state government agencies, school districts, non-profits, the public sector, mental and behavioral health experts, youth, and representatives from Colorado’s State Legislature and Congressional delegations.</p> <p>Welcome remarks were provided by Colorado Commissioner of Education, Susana Cordova and State Senator Rachel Zenzinger.</p> <p>Representatives from several of Colorado’s Congressional delegation were also present.</p>
<p>Panel: Lockdown Drills – Approaches, Implications & Considerations</p> <p>Panel Goals</p>	<p>Panelists Included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pat Hamilton, COO of Adams 21 Five Star Schools • Shawna Fritzler, E.D. of DeAngelis Foundation • Michele Forstot Nadel, Psy.D. Licensed Psychologist • Donna Trujillo, Senio Education Specialist, Generation Schools Network <p>Panel Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What approaches are being taken or would be beneficial to ensure mental well-being of students, educators and communities? • What are some considerations in implementing trauma-informed practices (TIPs)? • How do various approaches (TIPs, pre-notification) effect students or educators? • What are elements across the continuum from planning through drill and post-event? <p>3 Breakout Rooms were assigned and led by Berrick Abramson, Jamita Horton, Evan Kennedy</p>

<p>Breakout Discussions</p>	<p>Breakout Discussion Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were your “ah-ha” moments or key takeaways? • What is similar or different vs. what takes place in your school? • What would you need to implement more trauma informed practices (TIPs)? • How is that different in classrooms vs. school vs. school system? • What if anything could be the role of the community? • What barriers would you need to overcome (resources, school culture, etc)? <p>Outcome Goals of Discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5 ideas of how the state or school district could support TIPs in drills • 1-2 things you can take action on independently to improve student experience during or after a lock-down drill or incident.
<p>Next Steps</p> <p>Meeting Materials</p>	<p>Next CSSI Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 28, 2023: 3:30pm-5:00pm (Alternative Placements, Justice Involved Youth, State Efforts Update) • December 13, 2023: 3:00pm-4:30pm (Draft CSSI Interim Report & Recommendations) <p>Materials from all past meetings of the Colorado Safer Schools Initiative, including PowerPoints, Presentations, Jam Board & Breakout Group Jam Boards, may be found under the regional coalitions tab on the Safer Schools Initiative website:</p> <p>https://saferschoolsinitiative.org/meeting-schedule-materials/</p>
<p>More Voices at The Table</p>	<p>CSSI membership continues to grow and now includes over 250 stakeholders from local, state and national government, school districts, non-profits, public and private sector, mental and behavioral health experts, youth voices, advocates and thought partners. An invitation was made to members to give thought to and provide names of folks who should join the CSSI general membership. A link to the nomination form for new CSSI members can be found here.</p> <p><i>Any gaps in perspectives critical to shaping the work of the CSSI should be sent to berrick@confluencepsg.com.</i></p>

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 Jamita Horton, Director of Policy, PEBC: jhorton@pebc.org

<p>Placements: Approaches, Implications & Considerations</p> <p>Group Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrick Bershinsky: Pikes Peak BOCES • James Ringer: Joshua School • Maureen Welch: Navigating Disability • Dr. Marc Gomes, Jeffco Public Schools <p>Topics, Discussion and Reflections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions for speakers • What connections do you make to what you know regarding alternative placements within your school/district? • What additional information or questions do you have about alternative placements and school safety that can help us go deeper on this topic in a future panel?
<p>Next Steps</p> <p>Meeting Materials</p>	<p>Next CSSI Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 13, 2023: 3:00pm-4:30pm (Draft CSSI Interim Report & Recommendations) • Stay tuned for 2024 dates! <p>Materials from all past meetings of the Colorado Safer Schools Initiative, including PowerPoints, Presentations, Jam Board & Breakout Group Jam Boards, may be found under the regional coalitions tab on the Safer Schools Initiative website:</p> <p>https://saferschoolsinitiative.org/meeting-schedule-materials/</p>
<p>More Voices at The Table</p>	<p>CSSI membership continues to grow and now includes over 250 stakeholders from local, state and national government, school districts, non-profits, public and private sector, mental and behavioral health experts, youth voices, advocates and thought partners. An invitation was made to members to give thought to and provide names of folks who should join the CSSI general membership. A link to the nomination form for new CSSI members can be found here. Additionally, we are seeking recommendations for youth aged 13-20 to participate in our coalition in a variety of ways. Please see this flyer for more information, and to nominate a youth to participate, use this form.</p> <p><i>Any gaps in perspectives critical to shaping the work of the CSSI should be sent to berrick@confluencepsg.com.</i></p>

If you have questions about this meeting or upcoming meetings, please contact:

CSSI Team Leads

Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
 Sue Sava, President, PEBC: ssava@pebc.org

CSSI Project Support Team

[Carrie Steele, Senior Project Manager, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group: carrie@confluencepsg.com](mailto:carrie@confluencepsg.com)
[Evan Kennedy, Senior Director, Strategic Impact, PEBC: ekennedy@pebc.org](mailto:ekennedy@pebc.org)
 Jamita Horton, Director of Policy, PEBC: jhorton@pebc.org

Colorado Safer Schools Initiative (CSSI)

Meeting 5: January 25, 2024 via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Welcome	Confluence President, Berrick Abramson, gave welcoming remarks.
Overview of Meeting by Confluence PSG	<p>Berrick Abramson gave an overview of the purpose of today’s meeting, including the agenda below and description of the panel discussion that will be taking place.</p> <p>3:30 - 3:35pm: Welcome & Meeting Overview</p> <p>3:35 – 4:05pm: Framework of Recommendations for Interim Report & Sharing of the SSWG Final Report</p> <p>4:05 - 4:30pm: Small Group Breakouts: Trauma Informed Practices & Student Voice & Community Partnerships</p> <p>4:30 - 4:55pm: Group Share Outs & Discussion</p> <p>4:55 - 5:00pm: CSSI Next Steps</p>
Membership & Attendance	Membership in the CSSI has grown to 250+ statewide. A diversity of voices from state government agencies, school districts, non-profits, the public sector, mental and behavioral health experts, youth, and representatives from Colorado’s State Legislature and Congressional delegations were represented.
Breakout Sessions	<p>2 Breakout Rooms were assigned and led by Berrick Abramson, Jamita Horton, Evan Kennedy, and Sue Sava</p> <p>Breakout Discussion Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma Informed Practices • Student Voice & Community Partnerships
Next Steps & Meeting Dates	<p>Next CSSI Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 28, 2024; 3:30pm-5:00pm • March 2024: There will not be a March meeting to allow members to fully enjoy their spring break vacations and time off • April 25, 2024; 3:30pm-5:00pm <p>CSSI Stakeholder Poll: Priority Topics for 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have not done so already, please complete the CSSI stakeholder poll to help inform which topics are the highest priority

<p>CSSI Poll</p> <p>Meeting Materials</p>	<p>to help ensure we are having the conversations most essential to pushing our collective work forward.</p> <p>Materials from all past meetings of the Colorado Safer Schools Initiative, including PowerPoints, Presentations, Jam Board & Breakout Group Jam Boards, may be found under the regional coalitions tab on the Safer Schools Initiative website:</p> <p>https://saferschoolsinitiative.org/meeting-schedule-materials/</p>
<p>More Voices at The Table</p> <p>Youth & Student Voice</p>	<p>CSSI membership continues to grow and now includes over 250 stakeholders from local, state and national government, school districts, non-profits, public and private sector, mental and behavioral health experts, youth voices, advocates and thought partners. An invitation was made to members to give thought to and provide names of folks who should join the CSSI general membership. A link to the nomination form for new CSSI members can be found here.</p> <p>We are seeking recommendations for youth ages 13-20 to participate in our collation in a variety of ways. Please see this flyer for more information, and to nominate a youth to participate, use this form.</p> <p><i>Any gaps in perspectives critical to shaping the work of the CSSI should be sent to berrick@confluencepsg.com.</i></p>

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CSSI Project Support Team

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 Jamita Horton, Director of Policy, PEBC: jhorton@pebc.org

Colorado Safer Schools Initiative (CSSI)

February 28, 2024 via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Welcome	Confluence President, Berrick Abramson, and PEBC President & CEO, Sue Sava, gave welcoming remarks.
Overview of Meeting by Confluence PSG	<p>Jamita Horton, PEBC Director of Policy, gave an overview of the purpose of today’s meeting, including the agenda below and description of the panel discussion that will be taking place.</p> <p>3:30 - 3:15pm: Welcome + Group Norms/Agreement</p> <p>3:15 - 4:45pm: Trauma-Informed Practices Panel</p> <p>4:45 - 4:50pm: Close Out + Look Ahead</p> <p>4:50 - 5:00pm: CSSI Next Steps</p>
Membership & Attendance	Membership in the CSSI has grown to 250+ statewide. A diversity of voices from state government agencies, school districts, non-profits, the public sector, mental and behavioral health experts, youth, and representatives from Colorado’s State Legislature and Congressional delegations were represented.
Panel Discussion: Trauma-Informed Practices	<p>A panel discussion about trauma-informed practices was facilitated by Brooke O’Drobinak, PEBC Director, Leadership and Strategic Impact.</p> <p>Guiding Question: How can trauma-informed practices foster a culture of safety for students?</p> <p>Purpose: Listen and learn from educators and district staff to understand actionable strategies to implement trauma-informed practices in various school settings to promote student well-being and academic success.</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DonDre “Don” Harris, School Social Worker/Social Emotional Learning Instructor, AUL Denver, Denver Public Schools • Melissa Lee, Behavioral Emotional Transitional Academic/Attendance Coordinator, Pagosa Springs Middle School, Archuleta County School District No. 50 Jt • Jessica May, 6th-8th grade Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher, Turner Middle School, Thompson School District, CO Teacher of the Year • Joanna Tripi, 1st Grade Teacher, Riverview Elementary, Thompson School District • Kelly Glick, PSD Mental Health and Trauma Education Specialist, Poudre School District <p>Panel Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you could pilot a program or scale a current program focused on trauma-informed programs in your school or district, what might that look like? • How do you partner with others in your school to support students who are experiencing trauma? How can community partnerships and resources be leveraged to support trauma-informed practices in schools? • Think back to a moment when you witnessed a student experience a trauma related crisis. In what ways did you handle the situation well? What might’ve been supportive from your school leader or district?

