

NOTES
August 1, 2023
1:30 - 3:30 PM
Virtual meeting



COLORADO
School Safety Resource Center
Department of Public Safety

Meeting Attendees:

Advisory Board Members: (checked)

Present on Google Meets:

Kelly Abbott	
Kevin Armstrong	Christina Monaco
Todd Bittner	Susan Morris
Carolena Guiral Steen	Lorrie Odom
Lena Heilmann	Mark Pokorny
Kelly Jacobsen	Chris Wilderman
Stacey Jenkins	
Lindley McCrary	

Absent:

Greg Busch
Michael Dougherty
Desiree Goheen
Rebecca Hall
Craig Hein
Jane Lineman

Staff Present:

Christine Harms, Director, Office of School Safety (OSS)
Margaret Ochoa, Interim Director, School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC)
Charli Pringle-North, Grants and Agreements Manager
Brad Stiles, Emergency Response Outreach Consultant
Lea Bernstein-Holmes, School Outreach Consultant
Kati Garner, NW Regional Training Consultant
Kelly Addington, SE Regional Training Consultant
Mike Vagher, Eastern Colorado Regional Training Consultant
Melissa Rubeo, Resource Specialist

Welcome and Advisory Board Business - *Margaret Ochoa, Manager*

- The meeting was called to order at 1:31 pm by the Chair, Officer Kelly Jacobsen.
- Officer Jacobsen requested that all attendees provide a brief introduction and welcomed the newest Advisory Board member Susan Morris who is the Program Manager with the Department of Human Services, Child and Youth Substance Use Disorder and School Based Services.
- The board reviewed meeting notes from the April 4, 2023, meeting. A motion was made by Chris Wilderman to approve the notes as written, was seconded by Christina Monaco, and carried by a majority.
- Margaret Ochoa turned the meeting over to Director Christine Harms to discuss the newest changes for the Office of School Safety. Director Harms shared the OSS will

have three units, the School Safety Resource Center, the Grants Unit, and the Crisis Response Team. Margaret Ochoa will be responsible for filling the remaining open positions within the School Safety Resource Center (SSRC) which include the Northeast Regional Training Consultant and the Southwest Regional Training Consultant. The Center also has the goal of hiring a half time employee to assist with threat assessment analysis. The functions of the Center will not be changing, they will still be providing schools with as much support as possible.

- Director Harms also shared the plan for the Crisis Unit is to hire a manager for the unit and three individuals to work under that manager. The unit will be prepared to train on crisis response using the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) PREPaRE training and will be available to smaller districts that may want assistance after a critical incident.
- The final unit in the Office of School Safety is the Grants Unit. This unit's manager is Charli Pringle-North and this team will help to find other school safety grants, conduct workshops on how to apply for grants as well as providing assistance with the grant that is available from the OSS which is a Violence Prevention grant in the amount of one million dollars. This is a one year grant opportunity and none of the awards can be over \$100,000. The Safer Grant has been re-funded and will go on for another six years with \$5,000,000 available. The legislature provided additional funding for the School Security Disbursement Grant in the amount of \$16,000,000 and it will be a one time grant this year.
- Director Harms also shared that the Center is working with the School Safety Working Group (SSWG) and there will be a write up related to this in the Director's Corner in the Center's monthly EUpdate. This write up is due to some misunderstandings regarding what the Office of School Safety will do compared to what the School Safety Working Group will do. The working group has put together an inventory of all the resources available to schools from all state agencies and there is a gap analysis to address what is missing. There is concern with how school districts are accessing the 160 resources available to them because they are spread throughout the state agencies. The working group is addressing how to consolidate everything so schools can easily access all resources available to them. This working group will have a report completed and delivered to the legislature by January of 2024.
- Ms. Harms also shared the Colorado School Safety Initiative (CSSI) is the other group the OSS is working with. The public/private sector group is looking at what is happening in schools and communities and how community violence is impacting schools. It is expected that the CSSI will continue working long past the end of the SSWG.

CSSRC Activities - CSSRC Staff

- Mrs. Ochoa shared that there have been some staff changes in the Center. Lea Bernstein-Holmes is the new School Outreach Consultant and she started with the Center at the beginning of June. She previously worked in a small school district in the Denver Metro Area where she oversaw mental health in the district with a team of 12-14. While working in that position, she worked with the Center quite a bit from school trainings to attending events hosted by the Center.
- Another new staff member is Mike Vagher, the Eastern Colorado Regional Training Consultant, who came to the Center in July. He has worked in education in a rural district for over fifteen years in positions like teacher, district admin,

superintendent, and more. He also worked with the Center over his time in education from various trainings.

- Ms. Ochoa shared more information on the ongoing staffing changes for the Center. The positions for Northeast Regional Training Consultant and Southwestern Regional Training Consultant are open and being advertised for.
- The Center has been quite busy, during the third week of July they hosted the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) Basic SRO course and they are hosting another round of the training in Grand Junction next week. The funding for this training is from the Bureau of Justice Assistance STOP Violence Grant. This training has been a wonderful training and networking opportunity for CSSRC Staff and Colorado Officers alike.
- The Center also has three Student and Staff Safety Symposiums scheduled for September 12 in Monte Vista, September 14 in Grand Junction and September 20 in Fort Morgan. These trainings are designed for middle and high school students and the Center has been encouraging districts to send groups of students with adults from the schools to encourage conversation and for them to bring back ideas to improve safety together. The Center is having a presenter from Rise Above Colorado present a presentation titled “Connecting With and Empowering Teens to Prevent Substance Use Through Positive Social Norming Messages.” The Center trainers will then have small breakout sessions focusing on Mental Health, Safe Space and Situational Awareness, and Consent. The attendees will be broken up into three groups and will be able to attend each session before coming back together to have discussions on what was learned and what they may be able to do at their own schools.
- The Center will also be hosting their Annual School Safety Summit on October 19 - 20, 2023. October 19th will be in person at the Adams 12 Conference Center located at 1500 E 128th Ave., Thornton, CO. The plenary speakers will be:
 - Boulder Valley School District & Community Partners speaking on Responding to a Major Crisis: The Marshall Fire
 - Cynthia Miller-Idriss, Ph.D. from the CELL presenting on Violent Extremism and Youth
 - Anna Mueller, Ph.D presenting on Research Findings on Suicide
 - Johnnie Williams of GRASP presenting on Gang Recognition & Prevention
- October 20th will be the virtual workshops for the Summit and will include five different tracks with five breakout times.
- The Center is also hosting their Suicide Prevention and Postvention event on November 16, 2023, at the Lowry Conference Center located at 1061 Akron Way, Denver, CO. The presenters are:
 - Janel Cubbage, MS, LCPC, presenting on Understanding the Intersection of Racism and Suicide Risk: A Context for Suicide Prevention Efforts
 - Kristen Santel, LISW-S, presenting on Supporting Adoptees
 - April Smith, Ph.D. presenting on Eating Disorders and Suicide
 - Kathryn Fox, Ph.D presenting on Understanding & Treatment of Self Injurious Thoughts and Behaviors.
- Director Harms shared that the School Safety Working Group and Colorado School Safety Initiative Steering Committee have been meeting regularly and last week they met regarding sustainability including things that school staff would want to know about resources and how to come up with a mass list for a website or app to

make the resources available to everyone. An update will be provided when available.

- Brad Stiles provided an update on the STOP Grants the Center has received and been working on. The first grant the Center received finished training last fall and the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence is currently finishing the final reports. More information will be shared when it becomes available. The second/current grant is currently being trained and the Center has completed this training for sixteen different schools up to this point and they expect to complete thirty by the end of the calendar year. The Center is obligated to complete fifty trainings for this grant before the end of the period.
- Kati Garner provided an update on the Threat Assessment Online Toolkit and training that the Center has been working on. Currently, she is training schools on how the online system works in person and virtually. Last week, she was able to meet with the vendor to obtain access to a back end side of the system that will allow her to assist individuals with resetting passwords, resetting their multifactor authentication, and more to get into the system. She also shared that funding has also been received that will allow the Center to expand the system concept to include the Suicide Risk Assessments, more information on that project will be available soon.
- Margaret Ochoa shared that there was a great opportunity for Kelly Addington, Kati Garner, and Lea Bernstein-Holmes to attend ASIST training last month. Ms. Bernstein-Holmes shared that it was a week long train-the-trainer event. It is a two-day training that takes you through a pathway of understanding and believing that suicide is preventable. Different intervention points like how to have the necessary conversations. She shared that she found the practice, such as working through a scenario, in the training to be very valuable. The Center can facilitate the training of ASIST for around \$50 per person for materials only.
- Mike Vagher shared that the Center will be working on creating and facilitating student focus groups across the state. Initially they will look at using the Student Staff Safety Summits to find people or groups to participate. Once they find the groups they can focus on how to build it and continue growing throughout the state.
- Kelly Addington shared an update on the Handle With Care program which is a trauma-informed response model that was developed by the West Virginia Defending Childhood Initiative. The Center received a grant from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and they have partnered with Safe2Tell to start this program with three pilot schools. In August, the first pilot location will be training their law enforcement staff and the Center will train their school staff on the program. This is to educate staff on childhood traumatic events and how to respond to behavior incidents related to that in a trauma-informed way. The process for this is that law enforcement will come into a home or community for a variety of reasons from fire, a mental health hold, violence, or more. If a child is present, the officer will make a report with Safe2Tell who will then provide the child's name and school to the proper receiving party for that district. The staff receiving the notice will send a message to only the individuals that work with that student to "Handle With Care". Details related to the incident are not passed to the school or district, but they understand that the child has experienced a traumatic event.
- Melissa Rubeo shared an update on the NASRO Basic SRO training that was provided in Thornton, CO in July 2023. There were approximately 48 officers and one SSRC staff member, Lea Bernstein-Holmes, for the five day training. The officers came

from around the state and it was a wonderful opportunity for networking, learning, and expanding understanding. The training was very well received by the attendees and the Center has high hopes for the upcoming training in Grand Junction at Mesa University.

Advisory Board Members' Updates

Norwood School District

- **Todd Bittner**, Superintendent, shared that his school district is currently working on implementing outside safety pieces at their schools but they are encountering challenges from the county and state, completing negotiations and more. They are in the midst of a BEST grant to help facilitate some of their greatest needs. While resources are limited at this point, they put an SRO in their district last year. The students have been interacting with law enforcement in a positive manner and this is causing a change in the relationship between students and law enforcement in and out of schools.

Metropolitan State University

- **Mr. Mark Pokorny**, Environmental & Emergency Preparedness Manager for Metro State University (MSU), reported that they are gearing up for the school year and implementing new security programs including locking down the building and utilizing id's to get in and out of the buildings. He then offered assistance with lab or chemical safety in any aspect.

Department of Human Services, Child and Youth Substance Use Disorder and School Based Services

- **Susan Morris**, Program Manager, shared that one of the programs she wanted to share is the Crisis Resolution Team. They have received funding as part of the American Rescue Plan. There is \$5,000,000 allocated towards the Crisis Response System as it relates to families. They are working hard to get this out and into the schools to increase awareness of the services that are available. Their Crisis Resolution Team supports families with youth and young adults who are experiencing behavioral health challenges and would benefit from intensive, short-term, in-home services and linkage to ongoing supports.

Colorado Department of Public Safety (CDPS), Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice

- **Ms. Kelly Abbott**, Manager, OAJJA and CDPS representative on the Advisory Board from the Division of Criminal Justice, stated that their office released a Law Enforcement Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant which is available on their website. The grant is to assist law enforcement agencies around hiring and retaining individuals.

Adams 12 School District

- **Chris Wilderman**, Director, Safe & Sustainable Environments, shared that while school is ramping up, their current focus is to keep buildings cool and clean to get ready to welcome everyone back. He thanked Mr. Pokorny for offering assistance with chemicals and hazmat materials so often. He also shared that he is looking

forward to the benefits that the Handle With Care Program will have such as interrupting the school to prison pipeline.

Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment/Office of Suicide Prevention

- **Dr. Lena Heilmann**, Director of the Colorado Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP), reported that while she does not have a big update but wanted to share their 2022 Suicide Fatality data updates. She will share the full report but the youth numbers are dropping. While it is hard to know the number of lives saved, they are hoping to see that the drop in numbers is a sign that prevention efforts are helping. In 2020, there were 87 young people lost to suicide and in 2022 there were 56. While that is not statistically significant, the decrease is promising. Suicide is still an ongoing issue and they are hoping for a downward trend in those numbers moving forward.

Colorado Department of Education

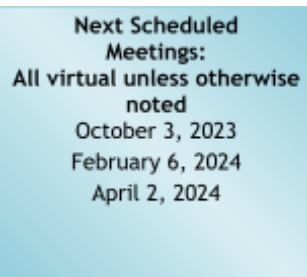
- **Christina Monaco**, Field Manager for the NW Region for the CDE, shared that there have been many staff changes in their office and will have multiple engagements coming down over the next 3 - 6 months. Her office will start a new District Improvement Strategy Office. A director has been hired as well as a professional learning coach. In addition to this, she is working to grow her team to six people within the next thirty days.

Colorado Department of Law

- **Stacey Jenkins**, Director of Safe2Tell, said this is a new year for Safe2Tell and they will be launching their Gold Star Programs. This is a tiered program for schools for recognition. Participants who engage with Safe2Tell, like having them on their website, hosting student trainings, and more, will be assigned a level that determines what decals, certificates, or other awards they will receive. Yesterday was the closing of the previous school year which had the highest volume of reports on record. While it is great to know the students are aware of Safe2Tell resources, it is sad that it is necessary at this volume. She will share the annual report after it is finished this fall. Safe2Tell is holding a train the trainer session on August 17, 2023, virtually from 8:30 am - 11:00 am.

Having no further updates, Chris Wilderman (who stepped in for Officer Jacobsen when she was called out) asked for final thoughts from the CSSRC staff. Ms. Ochoa thanked the board for all of their support. Mr. Wilderman then thanked the board for their attendance today as well as their ongoing support and praised the work of the CSSRC staff. The meeting was then adjourned at 3:18 pm with thanks to everyone in attendance.

The next meeting is on Tuesday, October 3, 2023, at 1:30, and it will be virtual.



Next Scheduled
Meetings:
All virtual unless otherwise
noted
October 3, 2023
February 6, 2024
April 2, 2024