

# Legislative Report 2023

**A Report to the Colorado House and Senate Education  
and Judiciary Committees**

**Colorado School Safety Resource Center**  
*C.R.S. 24-33.5-1801 et seq.*

**Colorado Office of School Safety**  
**Department of Public Safety**

*C.R.S. 24-33.5-2701 et seq.*



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# Creation of the Office of School Safety

## Mission

The Colorado Office of School Safety (OSS/Office) in the Colorado Department of Public Safety (“CDPS/Department”) was created by Senate Bill 23-241. The Office of School Safety provides Colorado schools and communities with the tools and resources to create safe and positive school environments for all Colorado students, pre-kindergarten through higher education.

## Key Highlights of the Office of School Safety in 2023

The enabling legislation directed the Office of School Safety to do the following:

- Oversee the Colorado School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC);
- Assist schools in obtaining any available funding or grants related to school safety, and to implement the School Security Disbursement (SSD), School Access for Emergency Response (SAFER) grants and the new one-year Youth Violence Prevention grant. Grant funding assistance is to be provided by a Grants Manager with one additional staff paid by the grant funds; and
- Operate a Crisis Response Unit to assist schools in responding to a crisis or emergency event and train school personnel in crisis response.

Funding from SB23-241 legislation included adding:

- A Director of the OSS along with the Grants Manager, a four-person staff for the Crisis Response Unit, and a .5 FTE to CSSRC for threat assessment analysis;
- \$16,000,000 for the one-time School Security Disbursement grant program;
- \$5,000,000 per year for five years for the School Access for Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program;
- \$1,000,000 for the one-year Youth Violence Prevention Grant;
- One additional Regional Training Consultant (RTC) for the CSSRC; and
- Two additional vehicles (one for the OSS and one for the new RTC).

Therefore, the Office of School Safety consists of three units: the Colorado School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC), the Grants Unit, and the Crisis Response Unit. The Office supports schools and local agencies in the five missions of school safety preparedness: prevention, mitigation, protection, response, and recovery (as outlined by the United States Department of Education, the Presidential National Preparedness Directive PPD-8). The founding legislation for the Office of School Safety provides for 18.5 staff positions.

The Director of the OSS was appointed on July 15, 2023 with one staff member. This first staff member was the Grants Unit Manager who moved from the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (DHSEM), where she had been managing school safety grants. The Managers of the CSSRC and the Crisis Response Unit officially started on August 1st and October 1st 2023, respectively.

Additional staff for all three units began their work in either November or December of 2023. At the time of this report, fifteen of the 18.5 staff positions have been filled. The remaining staff needed includes two Regional Training Consultants, one Crisis Response Unit Specialist, and the half-time data analyst for the threat assessment work. It is anticipated that staff for these positions will be on board in early 2024. With the work of the OSS being limited until staff were

hired, the majority of this Legislative Report reflects the work of the School Safety Resource Center over the last year as required by statute.

### The Colorado School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC)

- The CSSRC provides training, technical assistance, consultation and resources to all pre-K through higher education schools.
- The CSSRC is required to prepare and submit a report to the Executive Director of the Department of Public Safety for submission to the Education and Judiciary Committees of the Colorado General Assembly evaluating the efficacy and value of the services provided to schools every January.
- Along with their current staff, the CSSRC has a 19-member advisory board from various state agencies and other stakeholders addressing school safety issues.
- The CSSRC Advisory Board, outlined in the enabling legislation (C.R.S. 24-33.5-1801 *et seq.*), meets formally four times each year with Center staff to provide input on the work of the Center and hear from board members representing their constituents.
- Staff of the School Safety Resource Center resumed much of their in-person training in both physical and psychological safety issues in 2023.
- Having been awarded a second STOP Violence grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance in 2022 for \$1,992,085, training in the Colorado Threat Assessment and Management Protocol (CTAMP) expanded. Workshops on the utilization of the online CTAMP continued. This second STOP grant allows 75 additional subscriptions to the online forms.

### The Grants Unit

- The Grants Unit oversees all state grants for schools and provides workshops on researching and applying for funding.
- The 2023 School Access for Emergency Response (SAFER) grant recipients had already been selected by the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM). However, management of the SAFER grants was transferred from DHSEM to the OSS in October and districts received their SAFER funding from the OSS in October and November. The request for proposals (RFP) for the next round of the SAFER grants, as outlined in SB23-241, will be released in the Spring of 2024.
- The Youth Violence Prevention Grant RFP was released on September 1, 2023. The deadline for grant applications was November 13, 2023. Forty-two (42) grant applications were received and reviewed requesting just under \$4.5 Million. [Thirteen \(13\) applications were funded.](#) The recipients were notified by November 27, with the work to begin immediately. All grant funds must be expended by June 30, 2024.
- The School Security Disbursement grant RFP was released on November 29, 2023 and applications are due January 29, 2024 by 5PM.
- The OSS will also oversee continued work of the DeAngelis Foundation under the Enhance School Safety Incident Response Grant program.

### The Crisis Response Unit

- The Crisis Unit will train school professionals in crisis protocols and will provide additional support in the aftermath of a critical incident if requested.
- The Crisis Response team received training in the National School Psychologists' PREPaRE curriculum in November and December, guaranteeing readiness to respond to a district crisis.
- Additional train-the-trainer certifications will be obtained in early 2024 so staff can train other school professionals.

## The School Safety Working Group (SSWG)

- In 2019, the State Auditor’s Office reviewed five state agencies that provided services to schools on safety issues.
- The Colorado Legislature passed SB20-023, forming an Interagency Working Group on School Safety to address feedback from the audit.
- The original bill had no fiscal note, so the working group was not formed in 2021. With funding under HB22-1274, the group held its first meeting in December of 2022.
- The Working Group was to be the responsibility of the Department of Public Safety and the School Safety Resource Center. As the Director of the CSSRC became the Director of the Office of School Safety, this work was moved to the OSS beginning in July of 2023.
- The Working Group was tasked with a number of responsibilities as listed below:
  - Study and implement recommendations of the state auditor’s 2019 report regarding school safety;
  - Consider program structure and recommend reorganization if necessary;
  - Identify shared metrics to examine program effectiveness;
  - Facilitate interagency coordination and communication; and
  - Increase transparency and accessibility of state grants and resources, particularly for school districts without a grant writer, which includes improving outreach.
- A report of the work and recommendations of the SSWG, after approval by the Governor’s office, went to the Colorado Legislature in December 2023.

# Highlights of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center for 2023

- **Providing Training, Consultation, and Resources** - The Center provides both statewide and school site training throughout the year. In 2023, the staff provided:
- **Regional Trainings** - Regional symposia during 2023 included the following:
  - **January Speakers' Series** - This series is designed to appeal to caregivers of students. Three nationally-recognized experts presented one-hour talks virtually on January 10, 17 and 24 over the lunch hour.
  - **Child Sexual Abuse Prevention & Intervention Symposium** - This event was held on February 10th at the Douglas County Legacy Campus, and livestreamed.
  - **Threat Assessment Symposium** - This workshop was held on March 9th and 10th, again at the Douglas County Legacy Campus. Plenary sessions were livestreamed.
  - **Institutions of Higher Education Summer Safety Summit** - This symposium occurred at the University of Northern Colorado on June 2nd, and livestreamed.
  - **School Safety Academy** - The third annual week-long Academy took place virtually the week of June 7<sup>th</sup>.
  - **NASRO BASIC 40-hour SRO course** - Two events were held to offer the Basic SRO Course:
    - July 17 - 21 in Thornton, and
    - August 7 - 11 in Grand Junction
  - **Student-Staff Summits** - Three Summits were held:
    - September 12th in Monte Vista
    - September 14th in Grand Junction, and
    - September 20th in Fort Morgan
  - **Colorado Safe Schools Summit** - This annual conference was held over two days, in partnership with the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence and Safe2Tell Colorado:
    - In person with four plenaries on October 19th, and
    - 25 virtual workshops on October 20th
  - The annual **Suicide Symposium**, in collaboration with the Office of Suicide Prevention, took place on November 16<sup>th</sup> at the Lowry Conference Center.
- **School Site Training** - Along with the statewide regional training, the CSSRC continues to provide various staff development, topic-focused workshops, and consultations in individual districts, public, private, and charter schools across the state. In 2023, staff provided training to 7,811 participants on 42 topics in 205 workshops, bringing the total number of people trained since the Center opened to 80,590.

- **Creation and Delivery of Online Learning -**
  - During 2012, the Center launched its first two online training courses for school personnel. Participants have the opportunity to receive continuing education credits with the completion of each course. By 2019, the Center had a menu of 17 online courses. In 2023, the Center submitted and was awarded a SIPA grant to create a new online course. *Threat Assessment - What Parents and Guardians Need to Know*, is for caregivers and explains threat assessments and their role in the process. It was rolled out in September and has been widely marketed through the Center’s EUpdate, partners, and at fall conferences.
  - To date, at least 13,882 people have *completed* our online courses.
- **Consultation and Collaborations -** The staff contacts were 11,404 in 2023. Of those contacts, 379 direct consultations were provided to individual schools/districts, agencies or parents through the second week of December. The Center also collaborated on 281 occasions with other state agencies on school safety issues.
- **Resources -** The Center continues to provide resources electronically rather than in paper. This year the number of resources shared was 68,226. This total encompasses all digital handouts, slide decks, and other materials from site-based trainings and regional conferences.
- **Enhancing Electronic Communication Capability -** The CSSRC (now OSS) updated website continues to be a dynamic hub of current and topical information for schools, emergency responders, community partners, and the general public. Please see [cssrc.colorado.gov](https://cssrc.colorado.gov) or [oss.colorado.gov](https://oss.colorado.gov).

Continual updating and modifying of the website occurs to include more resources and improve searchability. Additionally, 6,712 individuals receive the monthly E-Update newsletter. The newsletter includes school safety news and resources and highlights upcoming training and grant opportunities.

In 2012, the Center initiated a Twitter/X account at <https://twitter.com/CoSSRC>. This allows the Center to update followers between issues of the E-Update. There are currently 1202 followers of the account.

- **Developing and Deepening Collaborations -** Recognizing the need to maximize services and resources to schools, the Center has been working with a multitude of agencies since its inception in 2008. In 2023, Center staff had ongoing relationships with 39 in-state organizations and presented at two national, 11 statewide conferences and multiple regional meetings of other agencies.

During the 2023 calendar year, CSSRC staff continued to facilitate three networking groups: one on threat assessment, one on suicide prevention, and a third on problematic sexual behavior. These groups each meet approximately every other month.

In order to capture youth concerns with a decentralized focus, the Center opted to utilize youth focus groups following the Student-Staff Summits in the fall. The move allows the Center to reach youth across the state, which has proven a challenge for the youth advisory council, Youth Engaged for School Safety (YES<sup>2</sup>).



## Looking Forward

The Center has undergone monumental change with the advent of the Office of School Safety. During this transition, Center staff have been training diligently. The CSSRC was fortunate to add new staff to meet demands: Lea Bernstein Holmes replaced Dr. Ron Lee as the School Outreach Consultant on his retirement in June; and Mike Vagher, the Eastern Colorado Regional Training Consultant, was hired in July. They are already training locally and at statewide conferences and meetings, and have provided a huge relief to the existing staff. A replacement for Margaret Ochoa as the Center's Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Specialist will commence work in January. Ms. Ochoa has assumed the role of Manager of the Center. Melissa Rubeo moved from Program Assistant to Resource Specialist. A candidate has accepted the position as our new Northeast Regional Training Consultant and will also begin work in January. The promotion of Kati Garner from the Western Regional Training Consultant to the OSS Crisis Unit Manager created an opening in the West. The Center is actively recruiting for two positions in the West. That will bring the total Center staff to ten. The .5 FTE for a Threat Assessment Analyst will be pursued in 2024.

It is impossible to extricate the work of the CSSRC from the overall functions of the OSS. Staff from the new Crisis Response Unit will be training schools in crisis response, and responding to calls statewide when incidents occur. They will also cross-train with CSSRC staff on existing training in threat assessment, suicide prevention and response, and much more. That unit is presently recruiting for its third Crisis Response Specialist to become fully staffed.

The Grants Unit is busy seeking out funding for schools, helping them apply for it, and supporting grantees to manage funds after they are awarded. The unit already posted, scored, and awarded a million dollars in funding under the Youth Violence Prevention Grant. They are looking forward to receiving applications for the School Security Disbursement Grant in January of 2024.

Ben Cosso, the Program Assistant for the OSS, supports the entire team of 18+ in communications, travel, and related expenses. All of this occurs under the leadership of Christine Harms, Director.

The work on the National Institute of Justice's (NIJ) 2019-2022 grant, which received a no-cost extension until 2023, has been a rewarding experience as more school staff are trained in threat assessment. Data shows that the workshops have been successful in transferring the knowledge of how to conduct a threat assessment to the participating team members and the training has been delivered with fidelity. Training on the new online case management system continues, and has been expanded. Discussions are underway to offer participating schools the option of adding their Suicide Risk Assessment Toolkit documents, as funded by SB23-241.

Work is well underway on the NIJ grant for 2022-2025, which has allowed for expansion of the CTAMP system to more districts. The Center has partnered to provide training to SROs and school staff, has begun piloting *Handle With Care*, and has commenced work on *Project Unite*. All of these initiatives enhance the school safety work being conducted in the state.

Hybrid training continued to be a popular format of training in 2023. Apart from the first day of the Safe Schools Summit and the three Student-Staff Summits, all regional conferences this year had a streaming/recorded option. Many participants opted for in-person opportunities, but the practice proved challenging. The Center struggled anticipating numbers for venue and catering decisions due to no-shows who could watch virtually. Regardless, the Center is pleased to be able



to provide state-of-the-art information to our school professionals and is strategizing how to plan accurately in 2024.

As of this writing, 2024 already has the Office of School Safety and the CSSRC busy planning the following events:

- January: Speakers Series on topics for caregivers to support student safety
- February: Speakers Series sponsored by the CELL on identifying, preventing, and responding to radical ideologies on campus
- February and March: Digital Threat Assessment workshops
- May: Threat Assessment Conference and Institutions of Higher Education Safety Symposium
- June: School Safety Academy, NASRO training for SRO Supervisors and advanced threat assessment training for staff of institutions of higher education
- July: Host School Resource Officer training by NASRO
- August: Host School Resource Officer training by NASRO
- October: Annual Safe Schools Summit
- November: Youth Suicide Prevention, Intervention & Postvention Symposium



For additional information, please view the CSSRC website at [cssrc.colorado.gov](https://cssrc.colorado.gov) or [oss.colorado.gov](https://oss.colorado.gov)

Colorado School Safety Resource Center

Department of Public Safety

303-550-2737

[CDPS\\_School\\_Safety\\_Center@state.co.us](mailto:CDPS_School_Safety_Center@state.co.us)

## Legislative Report 2023

The following report outlines the activities, efficacy, and value of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC - also referred to as the “Center”), as created by [CRS §§24-33.5-1801](#), *et seq.* This report provides details as to the Center’s operation, including the Advisory Board, training and resources available to schools, the important issues being studied by work groups created through the Center, and the significant outreach and alliances that have been developed to enhance school safety in Colorado during 2023. Additional information may be obtained through the CSSRC website: <https://oss.colorado.gov/>

### Operation of the Center

The founding legislation ([CRS §§24-33.5-1801, et seq.](#)) outlined the formation of an Advisory Board to make recommendations to the Center. The legislation also identified the membership and terms of office. The Advisory Board began with 13 members, as provided by statute, who were appointed during 2008. Six additional members have been added at the recommendation of the Advisory Board and approved by the Executive Director of the Department of Public Safety. At the time of this report, the current members of the Advisory Board are:

#### Advisory Board

NAME	POSITION	ORGANIZATION	APPOINTED BY
Kelly Abbott	Representative of CDPS	OAJJA, CDPS	<i>Executive Director of Colorado Department of Public Safety</i>
Kevin Armstrong	Sheriff	Gilpin County Sheriff Department	<i>Executive Director of Colorado Department of Public Safety</i>
Todd Bittner	Superintendent	Norwood School District	<i>Commissioner of Education</i>
Greg Busch	Emergency Management Director	Colorado Community College System	<i>Executive Director of Colorado Community College System</i>
Michael Dougherty	District Attorney	Twentieth Judicial District	<i>Governor</i>
Desiree Goheen	Intermediate/ Reading Interventionist	La Junta Intermediate School	<i>Executive Director of the Department of Public Safety</i>
Carolena Guiral Steen	Assistant Superintendent	Cheyenne Mountain School District	<i>Commissioner of Education</i>
Rebecca Hall	Superintendent/ Principal	Hinsdale County School District RE-1	<i>Executive Director of Colorado Department of Public Safety</i>
Lena Heilmann	Director Office of Suicide Prevention	Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment	<i>Executive Director of Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment</i>
Craig Hein	General Counsel	Colorado School Districts Self Insurance Pool	<i>Executive Director of Colorado Department of Public Safety</i>
Kelly Jacobsen, Chair	School Resource Officer	Westminster Police Department	<i>Executive Director of Colorado Department of Public Safety</i>

The Advisory Board meets four times during each year and receives regular updates on the activities of the Center. Many Advisory Board members support the Center in other capacities throughout the year, including co-hosting training sessions, participating in working groups, reviewing staff candidates, sharing resources, and attending regional trainings. Advisory Board Members have provided significant input and advice about the Center’s activities, mission, and vision. The Advisory Board first approved operating bylaws on June 1, 2010, and updated them in 2023. All Advisory Board meeting agendas, minutes, and bylaws are posted on the Center’s website: <https://oss.colorado.gov/>

### Vision and Mission of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center

The three-part vision of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center is to support ***safe and secure learning environments, positive school climates, and early intervention services for youth in Colorado***. The vision and mission of the Center align with the legislative directive and were affirmed by the legislature when it created the Office of School Safety in 2023 pursuant to Senate Bill 23-241.

The mission of the Center is to assist educators, students, parents, emergency responders, and community organizations working with all Colorado pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and higher education schools. The Center does this by focusing on the areas of prevention, mitigation, protection, response, and recovery as outlined by the United States Department of Education. The Center provides resources, training, consultation, and technical assistance to foster safe, positive, and successful learning environments and early intervention to prevent crises.

During the 2022-23 school year, CDE reported a 0.4 percent decrease in school enrollment from the 2021-22 data, with 883,264 students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade schools in our state, from 178 districts. The October 2023 count will be posted on January 17, 2024.

Fifteen districts are considered metro Denver with an additional 17 classified as urban-suburban. That leaves the remaining 146 of the 178 districts considered outlying city, town or remote with 110 meeting the definition of small rural. Ninety districts have a student population of less than 500. The Center staff concentrates its focus on these rural districts since, in most cases, they need more school safety resources. This focus has been enhanced by having Regional Training Consultants more geographically available to many of our rural communities.

There are 1,927 public schools in Colorado of which 1,116 are elementary, 289 middle schools and 522 high schools. Two hundred sixty-four charter schools serve approximately 126,947 students (PK-12). In the Colorado higher education system, there are 26 public two- and four-year institutions and an additional 442 private institutions and technical schools. According to data from Axios, 294,800 students were enrolled in Colorado institutions of higher education in 2022. Initially, the Advisory Board prioritized the kindergarten-12th grade mission of the Center during the earliest phases of operation. Since 2014, the outreach of the Center has been expanded to include institutions of higher education.

### Staff of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center

As of December 2023, the Center has ten and one-half FTE. When Christine R. Harms MS, Director of the Center since January of 2012, was appointed as Director of the Office of School Safety in July of 2023, Margaret M. Ochoa, J.D., was promoted to manage the CSSRC. Ms. Ochoa has served as the Center's Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Specialist since April of 2016. She is a former Assistant Jefferson County Attorney, who specialized in child protection work. As Manager, she is responsible for supervising and directing all activities, programs, budget, and personnel issues of the Center, and reports directly to Christine Harms.

Brad Stiles joined the team in November of 2013, with the passage of SB13-138, as the Emergency Response Outreach Consultant. This expanded the Center's outreach to more emergency responders in the state. He has participated in active shooter training and has consulted with numerous schools on their emergency operations plans, as well as conducting site assessments. He has also presented nationally for the Center. Mr. Stiles leads the Center's threat assessment work and facilitates the efforts with the institutions of higher education. He is a former law enforcement officer and Army veteran with a graduate degree in emergency management.

Lea Bernstein Holmes, M.Ed, LCSW, was hired as the School Outreach Consultant in June. She provides consultation with schools and other entities that support students concerned with psychological school safety. She provides training and workshops on topics of high interest and need, establishing and maintaining networks. Ms. Holmes has served as a district social worker and as a district administrator in Colorado and California. She concentrates on the prevention and response phases of school safety. Ms. Holmes serves as a Commissioner on the state Suicide Prevention Commission and the point person for work on suicide prevention for schools. She has already represented the Center at statewide conferences and has trained large and small districts across the state.

In the 2015 legislative session, SB15-20 created a new position in the Center. The Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Specialist is tasked with gathering resources and providing training to school personnel, parents, and students regarding personal safety and the prevention of child sexual abuse and assault. Margaret Ochoa, J.D., held this position between 2016 and August of 2023, when she assumed her duties as Manager of the CSSRC. A candidate was hired to fill the job in December. She will start in January of 2024.

Melissa Rubeo joined the Center in February of 2017 as the Program Assistant. In August, she was promoted to the Center's Resource Specialist. Ms. Rubeo's duties include identifying, acquiring, and reviewing resources, consulting about those resources, maintaining the Center's fiscal accountability through budgetary management, co-managing the website, and assisting with the planning and delivery of school safety statewide symposia and workshops. Due to her historical knowledge of the Center and previous experience as the Program Assistant, she proved invaluable when the Center was without a Resource Specialist for many months in 2023, and has taken the lead in training Benjamin Cosso, the OSS' new Program Assistant.

Mr. Cosso came to the Office of School Safety after completing an assignment as a Web Accessibility Specialist with the Chief Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer in CDPS. As Program Assistant, he provides a wide variety of general support for the entire office and CSSRC staff, including acquisition of office resources, organization and oversight of meetings and training, creation of materials, overseeing social media, co-managing the website, and communication with the public and listserv members.

With a 1331 supplemental budget request approved by the Joint Budget Committee in June 2019, the Center acquired four new positions of Regional Training Consultants (RTCs). Recruitment and sustainability of those positions has been ongoing since that time due to budget fluctuations and the pandemic.

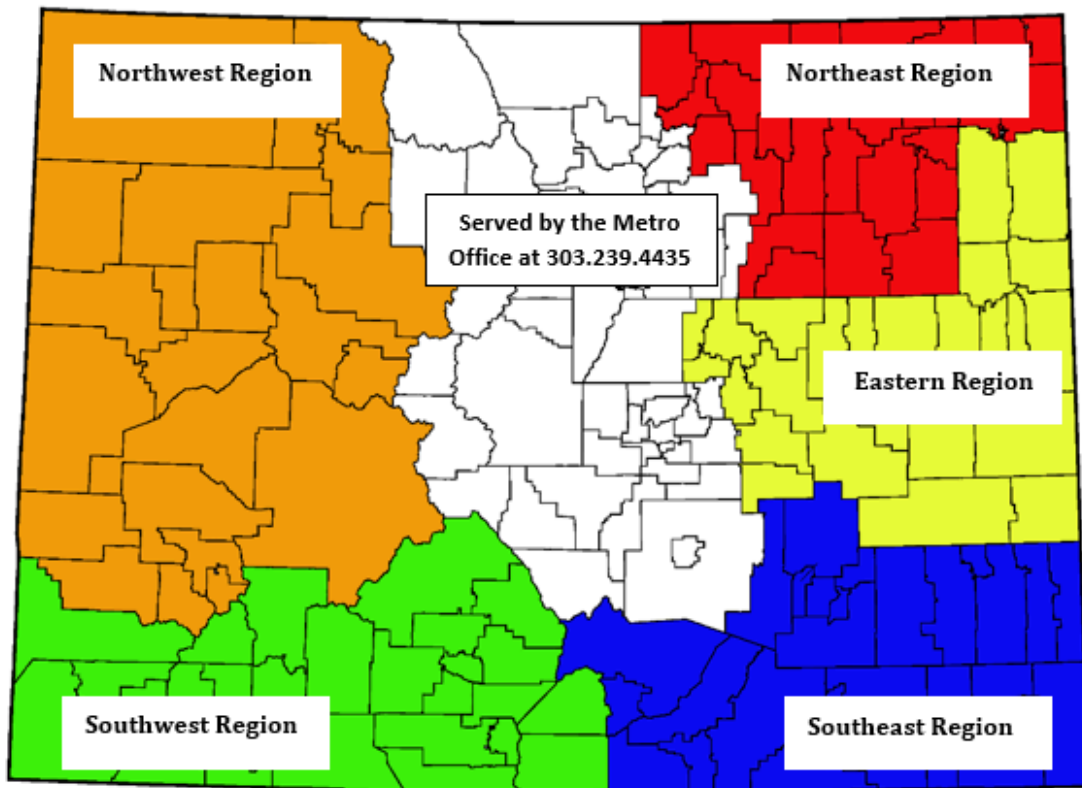
Kati Garner, M.Ed., served the Western region of the state from October 2019 until her promotion to Manager of the Crisis Response Unit in September of this year. The Center is recruiting to replace her in the Northwest.

Kelly Addington, M.A., a former teacher, school counselor and staff of the Santa Fe Trails BOCES, joined the Center in September of 2022, and operates out of La Junta. She offers a multitude of training and resources for her region, and throughout the state. Kelly has represented the Center at statewide conferences, and leads the Center's work in *Handle With Care*. She was also the point of contact for PREPaRE, a curriculum for crisis response in schools, until the Crisis Response Team came onboard.

Mike Vagher, M.A. Ed., joined the team in July as the Eastern Regional Training Consultant. He comes to the Center with vast experience in education, having been a classroom teacher, athletic coach, instructional coach, athletic director, administrator, principal, Title IX coordinator, director of safety/security, chief operations officer, and superintendent. Mike has been a tremendous asset to the team and is already meeting with schools on vulnerability assessments and training statewide in threat assessment, among other topics.

The Center hired a Regional Training Consultant for the northeast region in November. She will start in January of 2024.

## Regional Training Consultants' Territories



The Center has three vacancies: the Northwest and Southwest Regional Training Consultants, for which the Center is actively recruiting. Last, SB23-241 allocated funding for a .5 FTE Threat Assessment Analyst, which will be staffed in 2024.

### Staff of the Office of School Safety

As noted, Christine R. Harms, M.S., was appointed the Director of the Office of School Safety in July. Ms. Harms brings 40 years experience working with youth, professionals and parents in schools, private practice and victim-serving agencies. Director Harms has trained professionals on such issues as violence prevention, school-based crisis response, adolescent trauma, sexual harassment and misconduct, suicide intervention, and mandated reporting of child abuse for decades in Colorado and Pennsylvania. She oversees the Center, the Grants Unit, and the Crisis Response Unit in the Office of School Safety.

Kati Garner, M.Ed., was promoted from the Center's Western Regional Training Consultant to the Crisis Response Unit Manager in September. A former teacher, high school counselor, and district administrator, Ms. Garner led the Mental Health and Crisis Response Team for her district. She has represented the Center locally, statewide, and nationally on a variety of school safety topics. Kati will oversee three Crisis Specialists in the Crisis Response Unit.

Jennifer Mills, M.A., LPC, joined the Crisis Unit staff in November. Ms. Mills brings both school experience as a former school counselor and private practice experience as a Licensed Professional Counselor. Ms. Mills comes to us from Golden View Classical Academy.

Kathleen Keelan, M.A., LPC, joined the Office of School Safety as a Crisis Unit Specialist in December. Ms. Keelan recently retired from Mapleton Schools, and has over 30 years experience in education, mental health, and school and district leadership.

Charli Pringle-North, MPH, joined the Office of School Safety as the Grants Unit Manager in July. Ms. North brings over 10 years of experience in grant administration, with extensive knowledge in federal, state, and private grants and grant processes. She joined the OSS from the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management in CDPS.

Chamone Jones started with the Office of School Safety the week of December 4, 2023. She is Denver native and proud alumna of the HBCU Lincoln University of Missouri. Ms. Jones has worked in juvenile justice, the office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Colorado Department of Education and local funding entities.

### Center Funding

The Center had been a line item in the state budget since its inception in 2008. With the severe state budget shortfall due to COVID, the Joint Budget Committee decided to fund the Colorado School Safety Resource Center in FY2021 and FY2022 from the School Safety Center's Cash Fund. As the Cash Fund did not have a regular source of revenue, the 2022 Colorado General Assembly approved a Decision Item request to return the CSSRC's budget to the General Fund in 2023.



## Activities of the Center

In 2023, the Center continued its mission of providing consultation, technical assistance, resources, and training to school safety partners. The Center’s partnerships and outreach have continued to grow. Resources have been shared both virtually and in-person this calendar year. The details of the Center’s 2023 activities follow.

## Outreach

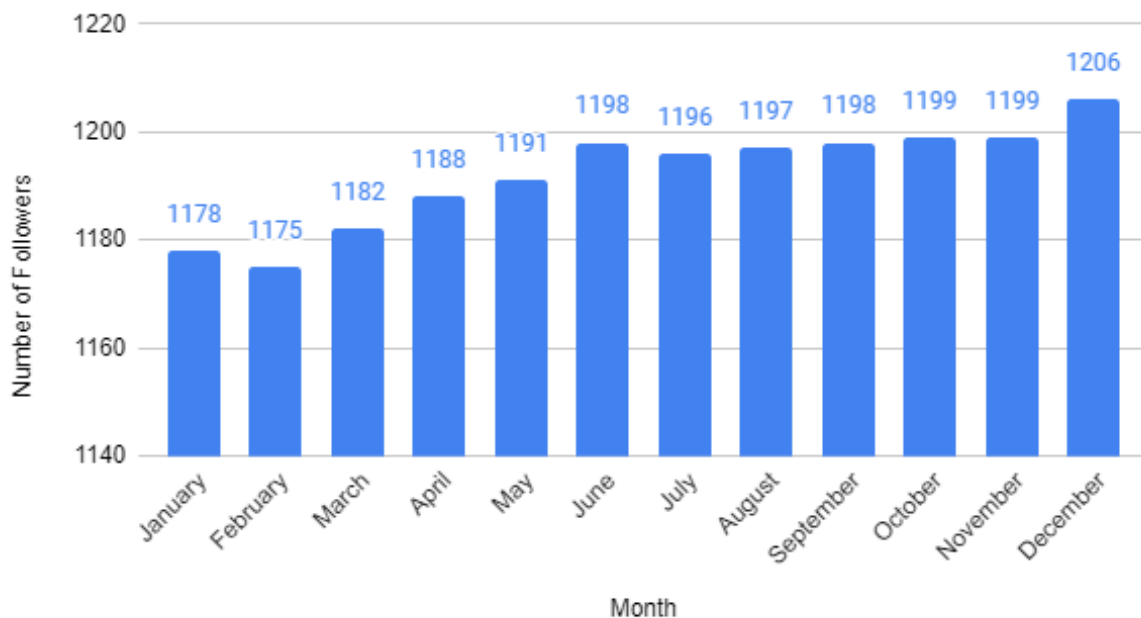
### CSSRC E-Update

The CSSRC created a listserv in August 2009 and has a current database containing over 6,693 email addresses from various providers and school safety partners. The Center generates monthly electronic newsletter updates (E-Updates), which include important announcements, upcoming training opportunities, and new resources related to prevention, mitigation, protection, response, and recovery efforts in schools, as well as potential grant funding sources.

### CSSRC X Account (formerly known as Twitter)

To supplement the Center’s monthly E-Update communication with additional timely information about training, events, resources, and funding opportunities, the CSSRC created a Twitter account in 2012. The School Resource Specialist sent the initial Twitter message on April 4, 2012. By December of 2023, the Center had tweeted over 7,070 times to our followers. The account, which can be found at [twitter.com/CoSSRC](https://twitter.com/CoSSRC), currently has 1,206 followers.

**Figure 1. CSSRC X (formerly Twitter) Followers 2023**

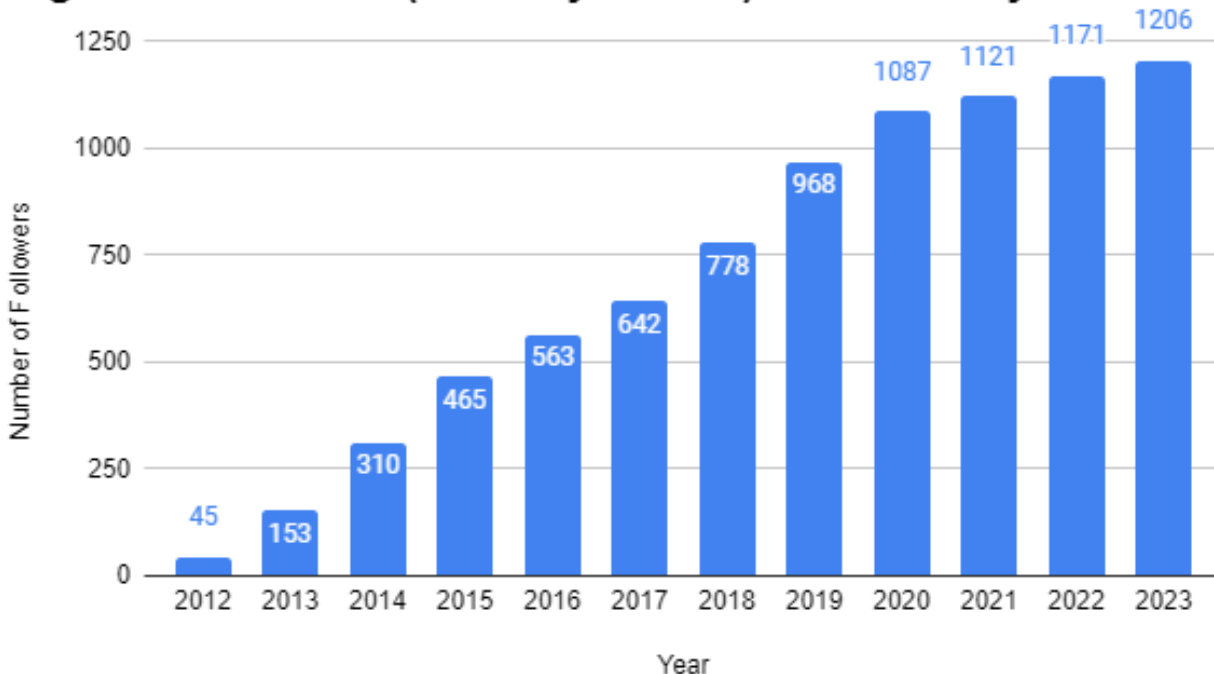


Accessible captions - Figure 1. CSSRC X (formerly Twitter) Followers 2023

- January - 1178
- February - 1175
- March - 1182
- April - 1188
- May - 1191
- June - 1198
- July - 1196
- August - 1197
- September - 1198

- October - 1199
- November - 1199
- December - 1206

**Figure 2. CSSRC X (formerly Twitter) Followers by Year**



Accessible captions - Figure 2. CSSRC X (formerly Twitter) Followers by Year

- Year 2012 - 45
- Year 2013 - 153
- Year 2014 - 310
- Year 2015 - 465
- Year 2016 - 563
- Year 2017 - 642
- Year 2018 - 778
- Year 2019 - 968
- Year 2020 - 1087
- Year 2021 - 1121
- Year 2022 - 1171
- Year 2023 - 1206

## Direct Outreach to Colorado Schools

Below is a list of the schools, districts, institutions of higher education, and other programs which received direct services as a unit from the Center staff during 2023. It does not include individuals from multiple districts who participated in livestreamed or recorded workshops.

### Figure 3: CSSRC Training Activities by District, School or Agency

#### Denver Metro

- Adams-Arapahoe 28J
- Adams County 14
- Adams 12 Five Star Schools
- Boulder Valley Re 2
- Cherry Creek 5
- Douglas County Re 1
- Englewood 1
- Jefferson County R-1
- School District 27J
- St. Vrain Valley RE1J

#### Urban Suburban

- Cheyenne Mountain 12
- Colorado Springs 11
- Manitou Springs 14
- Mesa County Valley 51
- Pueblo City 60
- Weldfield 3

#### Outlying City

- Alamosa RE-11J
- Canon City RE-1
- East Otero R-1
- Fort Morgan Re3
- Moffat County RE: No 1
- Steamboat Springs RE-2
- Valley RE-1

#### Remote

- Arriba-Flagler C-20
- Branson Reorganized 82
- Cotopaxi RE-3
- Cripple Creek-Victor RE-1
- Elizabeth School District
- Garfield 16

#### Outlying Town

- Akron R-1
- Archuleta County 50 Jt
- Aspen 1
- Bennett 29J
- Brush RE-2(J)
- Buena Vista R-31
- Burlington RE-6J
- Center 26 JT
- Clear Creek RE-1
- Delta County 50 (J)
- Eaton RE-2
- Garfield Re-2
- Gunnison Watershed RE1J
- Hayden RE-1
- Hinsdale County RE-1
- Holyoke Re-1J
- Johnstown-Milliken RE-5J
- Lake County R-1
- Las Animas RE-1
- Platte Valley RE-7
- Summit RE-1
- Salida R-32
- Weld Re-8 Schools
- Woodland Park Re-2
- Yuma 1
  
- Haxtun RE-2J
- Ignacio 11JT
- Mancos Re-6
- Plateau Valley 50
- Norwood R-2J
- Park County RE-2
- Platte Canyon 1
- Primero Reorganized 2

- South Routt RE 3
- Weld County School District RE-3J

### **BOCES**

- Mount Evans BOCES
- Northeast BOCES
- San Juan BOCES
- South Central BOCES
- Santa Fe Trails BOCES

### **Charter/Private**

- Alexander Dawson School
- Arma Dei Academy
- Arupe Jesuit High School
- Aspen Country Day
- Augustine Classical Academy
- Ave Maria Catholic School
- Axis International Academy & Preschool
- Bethlehem Lutheran School
- Bixby School
- Blessed Sacrament Catholic School
- Boulder Country Day
- Brighton Adventist Academy
- Caprock Academy
- Chavez Huerta Preparatory Academy
- Cherry Hills Christian School
- Christ the King Roman Catholic School
- Colorado Christian Academy
- Colorado Early Colleges Network
- Colorado Military Academy
- Colorado Springs Charter Academy
- Crowne Point Academy
- Divine Redeemer Catholic School
- Escuela de Guadalupe
- Everest Point Homeschool Academy
- Firestone Charter Academy
- GOAL Academy

- Holy Family High School
- Logan School for Creative Learning
- Loveland Classical School
- Mackintosh Academy-Boulder
- MacLaren School
- Montessori Academy of Colorado
- Mile High Academy
- Monument Academy
- Mountain Juniper Montessori
- Mountain Song Community School
- New Summit Charter Academy
- Prospect Academy
- Regis High School
- Ridgeview Classical School
- Resurrection Christian School
- School in the Woods Montessori
- Southeast Christian School
- St. Anne's Episcopal School
- St. Elizabeth's School
- St. John's School
- Stanley British Primary School
- The Academy of Charter Schools
- The Pinnacle Charter School
- The Rivendell School
- Trinity Lutheran Church & School
- University Schools
- West Ridge Academy

### **College/University**

- Colorado Mountain College
- Northeastern Junior College
- University of Denver

### **Early Childhood**

- Joyful Journey Preschool
- Montrose Early Childhood

- Primrose School at Lowry
- The Goddard School of Littleton

#### Other

- Catholic Charities of Denver
- Charter School Institute
- Colorado Association of School Executives
- Colorado Association of School Resource Officers
- Colorado School Counselors Association
- Colorado School Social Work Association
- Colorado Society of School Psychologists
- Diocese of Colorado Springs Catholic Schools

- Glacier View Ranch (Rocky Mountain Conference of Seventh Day Adventists)
- National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO)
- Teaching the Autism Community Trades (TACT)
- The League of Charter Schools

#### Out of State

- Billings Public Schools (MT)
- Readiness and Emergency Management for School Technical Assistance Center (REMS TA Center)

**Total: 143 Districts/Schools/Organizations**

### Outreach to Superintendents and BOCES Directors

Recognizing that administrative changes take place annually, mailings were sent to all superintendents across the state at the beginning of the 2023-24 school year. This outreach is part of the ongoing strategy to expand knowledge about the Center and the services it can offer to schools. [This mailing](#) included letters sent via email to 178 superintendents and Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) directors with a request to forward copies to other district administrators. In addition to the superintendents and BOCES directors, the CSSRC makes regular contact with the public school superintendents, archdiocesan and other faith-based school administrators, and the BOCES administrators across Colorado.

Governor Polis did not include the CSSRC in any Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) for the Colorado Department of Public Safety in 2023, but he issued WIGs to multiple state departments to prevent and curb illegal opioid use across Colorado. The Center aligned its strategy with those WIGs and included opioid prevention training in multiple Summit opportunities across the state.

### CSSRC Contacts, Consultations and Collaborations

As outlined in Presidential Preparedness Directive 8 (PPD-8) of 2013, the Center aligns its work with the five missions of preparedness: prevention, mitigation, protection, response, and recovery. The Center’s work has also been guided by specific additional Colorado components, such as support of interagency information sharing agreements, implementation of Safe2Tell, training in the National Incident Management System (NIMS)/Incident Command System (ICS),

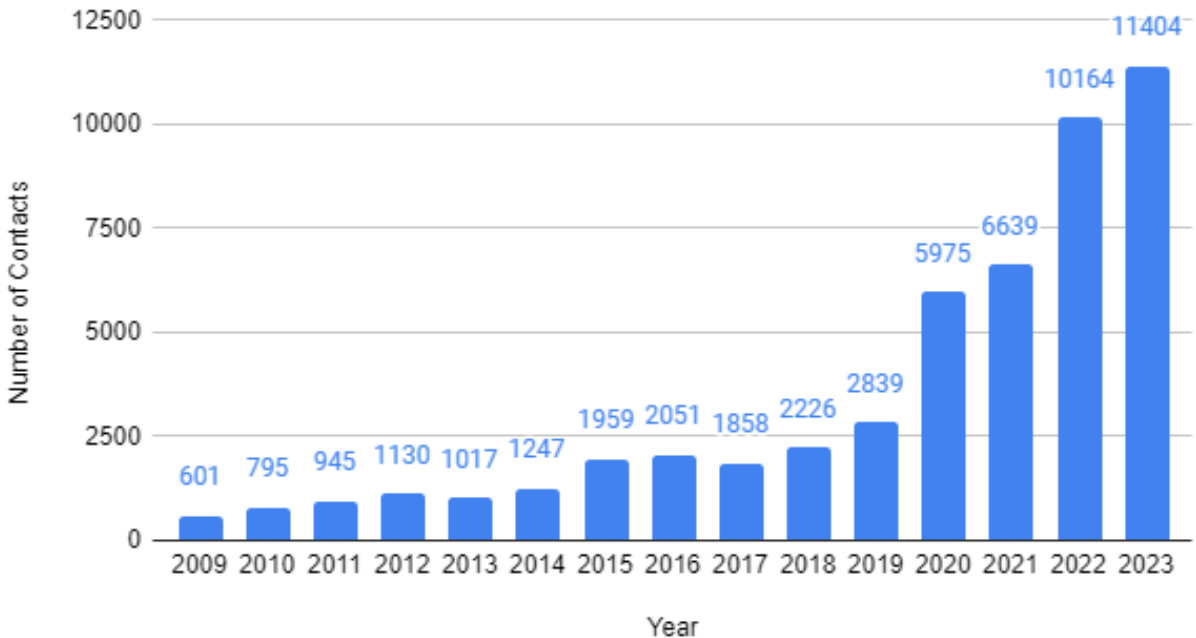
and development of multi-hazard district and school-based emergency plans using the ICS as outlined in CRS §22-32-109.1.

An all-time high of 11,404 contacts, including phone calls, meetings, emails, assistance with training registrations, and site visits were conducted during the 2023 calendar year regarding a wide range of school safety issues and requests for information. This represents the total workload of the Office of School Safety, and this data helps the staff track that workload. Figure 4 (below) illustrates the number of contacts.

Consultation requests within the contact log are primarily a direct result of multiple outreach and marketing efforts of staff, such as the Center website, trainings, newsletters, mailings, E-Updates, and through referrals from board members and others knowledgeable about the CSSRC’s resources and expertise. Consultations in 2023 include only interactions with school personnel, parents, or agency professionals when staff have given resources, information on best practices, or suggestions for training that would be helpful to that site. Consultations totaled 379 by the second week of December 2023.

Center staff also tracked collaborations with other state departments that serve youth and schools within the contact log. These collaborations totaled 281 in 2023. CSSRC staff work closely with CDE, CDPHE’s Office of Suicide Prevention and Office of Violence and Injury Prevention, CDHS’s Office of Behavioral Health and the new Behavioral Health Administration, and the Colorado Attorney General’s Office of Safe2Tell, among others.

**Figure 4. Contacts by Year 2009-2023**



Accessible captions - Figure 4. Contacts by Year 2009-2023

- Year 2009 - 601
- Year 2010 - 795
- Year 2011 - 945
- Year 2012 - 1130
- Year 2013 - 1017
- Year 2014 - 1247
- Year 2015 - 1959

- Year 2016 - 2051
- Year 2017 - 1858
- Year 2018 - 2226
- Year 2019 - 2839
- Year 2020 - 5975
- Year 2021 - 6639
- Year 2022 - 10164
- Year 2023 - 11404

## Outreach Beyond Colorado

CSSRC staff are proud of the reputation earned for their expertise within Colorado and beyond. Former CSSRC and current OSS Director Christine Harms continues to participate in bi-monthly phone meetings with staff from the United States Department of Education, the National Institute of Justice, and the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center (REMSTA Center), as well as a cadre of school safety directors from across the country. The National School Safety Alliance (NSSA) of which the CSSRC Director is a founding member, hosts these monthly meetings. Ms. Harms served as co-chair of the NSSA Board and shared that responsibility with the representative of the Missouri School Safety Center through July 2022. Director Harms has recently been asked to serve as interim chair while a new chair can be elected. NSSA members meet twice a month, first in a networking meeting and then a discussion meeting. Two NSSA members audited the Center’s School Safety Academy in 2023 to gather ideas to bring to their states.

Margaret Ochoa has also worked closely with the REMSTA Center in their efforts to curtail Aiding and Abetting of Adult Sexual Misconduct in Schools. She participated with Director Harms and a representative from the Colorado Department of Education on a panel for the School Preparedness Leadership Group on the topic. Additionally, Ms. Ochoa hosted two Twitter (now X) Chats with the REMSTA Center—one on Aiding and Abetting in January, and another on “How State School Safety Centers Support School Safety” in September.

## Training

### Bureau of Justice Assistance STOP Grants

Since shortly after the Center’s inception in December 2008, staff have taken a lead role in facilitating threat assessment training for Colorado schools. In an effort to enhance the work already done by the CSSRC in Colorado and six other states, the Center applied for a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) grant from the National Institute of Justice in the summer of 2019.

In October of 2019, BJA awarded the Center a \$999,987 grant, known as the STOP (Students, Teachers, Officers Preventing School Violence) Grant. The CSSRC staff spent the winter and spring of 2020 refining the Colorado Threat Assessment & Management Protocol (CTAMP). Over the summer of 2020, trainers conducted workshops for the first five pilot sites. With the assistance of the Center for the Student and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) of the University of Colorado Boulder as the qualitative evaluators of the project, the staff improved the procedures and protocol and then embarked on the training for an additional 30 sites.

By the fall of 2022, thirty-five schools and districts had been trained. The vendor hired to create the online version of the CTAMP protocol completed that work and training on the online version commenced in the late fall of 2022. Having requested and received a no-cost extension, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence will submit this report by the end of January 2024, as required.



The newly-refined CTAMP is a more efficient and effective method of identifying and supporting students initially thought to be at risk of violence at or in relation to school property. The statewide portal, which houses the assessments and the Response Management & Support (RMS) Plans, creates a secure case management system to maintain documentation of threat assessments, and makes it easier for districts to confidentially share information vital to providing students with additional assistance and creating safe environments for all.

In July of 2022, the CSSRC and CSPV again collaborated to submit a new 2022-2025 STOP grant application to the BJA of the National Institute of Justice, and were awarded a \$1,992,085 grant. This grant expands the threat assessment work from the previous grant. It has allowed the Center to provide an additional 75 licenses for the online threat assessment case management system, continue the threat assessment training with stipends for school teams, and partner with CSPV to evaluate the work. The grant has also provided funding to enable 150 SROs and 30 of their supervisors to participate in the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) workshops, 30 multidisciplinary school safety teams to participate in NASRO's *Project Unite*, and three districts to pilot the *Handle with Care* project, in collaboration with Safe2Tell. *Handle With Care* is a trauma-informed collaboration between local law enforcement and schools that ensures that children who are exposed to trauma in their home, school, or community receive appropriate interventions to help them achieve academically at their highest levels.

This work began in the fall of 2022 and continues until September 30, 2025.

### Topic-Centered Regional Trainings offered Statewide

In an effort to provide in-depth training opportunities on school safety issues across the state in accordance with its legislative directive, the Colorado School Safety Resource Center has, either alone or in partnership with other state agencies, conducted topic-centered statewide workshops. These training events are usually hosted in a variety of locations to allow for maximum attendance from various school districts, with deference to their limited budgets and funding for travel. Both in-person and livestreamed events have taken place.

### January Speakers' Series - January 10, 17 and 24, 2023

After successful Speakers' Series in 2021 and 2022, the CSSRC repeated the event this year. This series was presented over lunchtime and recorded in an effort to reach school staff and caregivers, who are often unable to leave classrooms or work places to take advantage of training. Three national speakers addressed Center stakeholders: Devorah Heitner, Ph.D, author and trusted digital citizenship expert; Paul Poteat, Ph.D, professor and researcher on strategies to support LGBTQ+ youth in schools; and Amber Morczek, Ph.D, professor and expert on the pornification of violence. Each of these speakers reported on trends and concerns, but offered practical solutions to keep students safe and empower adults to have difficult conversations. At least some part, if not all of the entire series, was experienced by 280 people live, with others watching the recordings over the thirty-days they were available from Zoom. The Center has already secured experts for the 2024 January Speakers' Series.

Comments from the evaluations included:

- "Extremely useful information just to get caught up to speed on the staggering statistics and the terminology"
- "This was a great workshop. I enjoyed it while learning a lot. It provided amazing resources as well. Thank you!"
- "Your presentation was incredible! I am so glad that I was able to get the information that I needed to help to be able to potentially to bring a GSA into my school district"

- “Interesting. Benefitted from suggestions Dr. Heitner had for talking with kids about social media and developing knowledge in them so that they make good decisions while also having boundaries with digital time”
- “Good information, good ideas to implement, glad I attended”
- “Deborah did an amazing job and as a school social work intern this has helped me broaden my scope of what services or resources I can incorporate into my school and what more I can do for the students.”
- “Dr. Morczek was AMAZING! This brief training truly expanded my knowledge and provided me with resources to use moving forward.”

### Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Intervention Symposium, February 10, 2023

The Center staff hosted a one-day hybrid conference on Child Sexual Abuse Prevention in February. Weather created an obstacle for some in-person participants, but the livestream option was appreciated. Forty-six people watched live, and many more viewed the recordings after the fact. Eighteenth Judicial District Judge Robert Lung presented on human trafficking and the power of resiliency, incorporating trauma-informed practices into his workshop. Dr. Michael Gomez, faculty at Bradley Hospital, Lifespan Institute, one of the teaching hospitals for the Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University, helped participants in understanding problematic sexual behavior in children and trauma based interventions. Melissa Stroebel, Vice President of Research & Insights at Thorn, presented the latest research on youth attitudes related to online sexual experiences. Jenny Coleman, Executive Director of Stop it Now! spoke on deterring sexually abusive behaviors by interrupting low level boundary violations.

### Threat Assessment Symposium, March 9 - 10, 2023

The CSSRC hosted a two-day conference on behavioral threat assessment in March. Plenary speakers included Dr. Dewey Cornell; Professor of Education at the University of Virginia, consultant to the FBI in its study of school shootings in 1999, and developer of school threat assessment guidelines in Virginia, who spoke on the issue of fairness and equity in the threat assessment process. Dr. Lina Alathari, Chief of the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC), presented key findings from NTAC’s latest research reports examining targeted school violence and averted attacks. A panel of experts from across Colorado presented on challenges and solutions in conducting threat assessments. The two-day conference concluded with Dr. John Nicoletti, who reviewed case studies involving mass violence.

Conference guests selected from the following workshops in between the plenary sessions:

- Colorado Threat Assessment Management Protocol Training (CSSRC)
- Digital Threat Assessment (Safer Schools Together)
- Threat Assessment Interviewing Training (CSSRC)
- Student Radicalization (Mekenah Jensen, (CIAC, CDPS)
- Special Education and Threat Assessment (Dr. Melissa Reeves), and
- Analysis/Implementation of Threat Assessment Data (CSSRC)

Comments from the evaluations included:

- “Very informative and the use of school mass shootings was very relevant.”
- “Such a necessary training!!! Thank you.”
- “Best and most informative presentation I have ever seen.”
- “Fascinating! I’ll be looking up the 4 plus hour training you referenced!”
- “Excellent presentation of information that is increasingly very important for school safety.”

- “Great session! Loved the data too, refreshing to hear the results of long term studies and change that is occurring.”
- “Extremely important information on Fairness & Equity in Threat Assessment were expertly conveyed by Dr. Cornell.”
- “I thought this was a great way to share best practices! Also helps to let me know where/how my school does things differently.”
- “Loved the first hand conversation on how schools are handling all of these issues. Thank you to each of the presenters for their time and dedication to our schools.”
- “Dr. Nicoletti is phenomenal! Appreciated his understanding and insight on the history of these events - and how we can be more effective as school personnel.”
- “Very detailed and specific. Insightful and informative. Provoked strong thoughts about when to report threat assessments.”

### **Institutions of Higher Education Summer Safety Symposium - June 1, 2023**

The Center hosted this annual event at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley. The team hosted three substantive plenary sessions and a comic motivational speaker to round out the day. It was very well received. Dr. Rachel King, former Title IX Coordinator and Associate Dean of Students, spoke on the restorative justice framework for responding to sexual harm on campus. Courtney Tassin, LPC, Crisis Intervention Program Manager for the City of Aurora, spoke to the success of their co-responder model and behavioral threat assessment work. Dr. Jennifer Hirsch, author and professor at Columbia University, discussed her landmark study on power and sexual assault on college campuses. 76 registered for the event and 82 watched by livestream. 15 accessed the recordings following the event. Comments from the evaluations included:

- “It was insightful to learn about the restorative way of thinking, the goals and process of restorative justice approach, the repair and impact of the restorative justice triangle and the school restorative practices triangle. I appreciate the 5 Rs Restorative practices steps.”
- “Important information was conveyed. It will be helpful to readdress this topic in 1-2 years to determine the extent to which RJ is used in sexual assault on college campuses with assessment of outcomes.”
- “Dr. King's presentation was very interesting and informative. I've heard about restorative justice as a concept before, but I appreciated the opportunity to dive a little deeper into the theories that guide those frameworks and the questions they ask.”
- “This speaker was extremely knowledgeable. She covered full circle and was excellent with her information and presentation. I truly appreciated what she had to share.”
- “I really liked Jennifer's approach to this presentation, as a Q&A session. I believe that Jennifer's knowledge on the topic was really good.”
- “I've read Sexual Citizens and was excited to hear Dr. Hirsch speak (one of the primary reasons for attending this conference). Her presentation was clear and informative, and I appreciated hearing her discuss the topic that is at the core of my work (supporting survivors of sexual violence on campus). I appreciate the nuanced, research-based addition that her work adds to the larger conversation about this type of harm.”

### **School Safety Academy - Week of June 5, 2023**

The School Safety Academy continues to be a foundational training for school staff who are often relied upon to manage safety concerns as an add-on duty, but remains relevant for SROs and safety and security directors. Twenty-six Specialists attended the 20-hour training. Representatives from large and small districts, as well as auditors from school safety partners outside Colorado, participated over the five days. The auditors attended to learn from the

CSSRC’s established framework. From a brief history of school safety in Colorado to emergency management planning, overviews on threat and suicide assessment, child abuse prevention and psychological safety issues, the mornings were packed with relevant information. Attendees also met additional stakeholders that support school safety so that the specialists know to whom they can turn for additional resources. The Center has established a solid line of communication with Specialists, current and back to the Inaugural Academy in 2021. Many have reached out for more intensive training for their districts from the Center’s staff, and just as many have provided important information on trends and resources to the Center. The CSSRC has scheduled a fourth Academy in June of 2024.

### **Student-Staff Summits - September 12th, 14th, and 20th, in three locations**

With the Center’s decision to disband the youth advisory council in favor of an intentional effort to collect youth voice statewide, the Student Staff Summits were an ideal way to start off the school year. Center staff traveled to three locations in the state to meet with middle and high school students: Monte Vista, Grand Junction, and Fort Morgan.

Rise Above Colorado, a statewide drug prevention nonprofit that works to support teens to live free of addiction, traveled with Center staff. Rise Above educators presented plenary workshops with Youth Partners on how fentanyl is affecting Colorado Communities. The messaging focused on the good news regarding the vast numbers of Colorado youth who are *not* misusing substances, and emphasized ways for youth to make healthy connections and empower their friends to be safe. In breakout sessions, Center staff met with small groups of students and discussed situational awareness and safety planning, overcoming the stigma of mental health care, and consent as a foundational element to healthy relationships.

Teams from both middle and high schools attended with staff members and once again, the evaluations showed their appreciation for the topics and the days’ activities:

- “Everything was extremely useful. The legal aspects of consent were new and very helpful. The engagement also helped process it all.”
- “Knowledge about mental health and how to address it was really helpful. It was also good to know specific laws and statistics about each topic”
- “Being able to hear my students’ opinions and also see them echoed from other schools/districts (was very helpful).”
- “Having active/productive conversations about school, especially on what is working/not, consent is cool was good for the students.”
- “I liked getting to talk about these topics and bring awareness to teachers. Our teachers here got to spend lots of time with us as students and learn our opinions/thoughts.”
- “I really enjoyed the safety breakout, great takeaway information.”
- “Realizing the actual statistics about drugs and its impacts, how to help and communicate with people (was very helpful).”

Students had excellent questions for both the plenary speakers and the workshop presenters. The Center will continue to provide these summits for Colorado youth. The [student feedback](#) from these Summits is available for review.

### **2023 Colorado Safe Schools Summit - October 19 & 20, 2023**

Held during Colorado Safe Schools Week, the Summit is an annual event. The Center once again partnered with Safe2Tell and the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at CU Boulder in hosting the event. For 2023, we limited day one to in-person only, but livestreamed and recorded day two. The first day consisted of four plenary presentations offered in person at the

Adams 12 Five Star School District’s conference venue. CDPS Executive Director Stan Hilkey addressed the attendees and discussed the exciting transition into the Office of School Safety.

The day opened with a debrief of the response and recovery from the Marshall Fire, the most destructive wildfire in Colorado’s history. A multidisciplinary team from Boulder Valley School District shared how preparation allowed them to reopen schools quickly and meet the needs of displaced students and staff. Lessons learned that day and in the months that followed were invaluable to the school teams in attendance. The next speaker, Dr. Cynthia Miller-Idriss, professor at American University, was sponsored by the Counterterrorism Education Learning Lab (the CELL). Dr. Miller-Idriss spoke on radical ideologies online and on campuses, and provided tips on identifying and thwarting recruitment efforts. Dr. Anna Mueller from Indiana University is familiar to many districts in Colorado due to her research on suicide in the state. In this presentation, she focused on protective factors to prevent isolation and suicide through connection in schools. The last speaker on day one was Johnnie Williams, Executive Director of Gang Rescue and Support Project (GRASP) of the Denver Youth Program. A former gang member, Johnnie helped attendees spot signs of gang affiliation and identified protective factors to mitigate it.

The second day was virtual and recorded. Participants could choose from 25 workshops, and were given access to all of the recordings after the Summit. After a call for proposals, the workshop selection was broad and well received. As of this writing, 594 either attended or have viewed recordings of the workshops.

The evaluations support the audience’s appreciation for the two days:

- “I loved the techniques and examples to use with students.” (Using Dialectical Behavior Therapy in Schools)
- “This was helpful to understanding more about TAs and best practices” (The Evolution of Threat Assessment)
- “Very glad to learn more about the implementation details of this important program!” (Safe2Tell Report Recipients Best Practices)
- “I need a whole day of training to learn all of this and more!” (CO School Safety: A Legal Manual)
- “Such an important topic and love collaborating about how to support our students” (The Faces of Youth Homelessness)
- “Great breakout and thankful for her expertise.” (Landscape of Support: Mental Health Professionals)
- “Great training! Kati is so engaging and authentic! Useful information that was presented in a way that it’s easy to implement!” (Threat Assessment by the Numbers: Using Data to Enhance School Practice)
- “This presentation was amazing and informative. This is a topic that is never talked about in athletics and it is so important. I wish all coaches could see this presentation!” (Mental Health Considerations in Athletics)

Comments about the Summit in general:

- “Very informative and beneficial”
- “Great information that illuminated strategies to improve processes that support suicide prevention”

- “Very engaging and informative!”
- “Extremely useful information presented by an engaging individual”
- “Good information that can help students and increase positive interactions and support with them and their families”
- “So much information to take back to the district safety committee- practical tools, scripts, signage”

### Youth Suicide Prevention Symposium - November 16, 2023

In collaboration with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s Office of Suicide Prevention, the Center hosted a one-day symposium at the Lowry Conference Center. The plenaries focused on suicidality and its intersectionality with identities and behaviors: racism as a contributing factor; adoptee status, including issues of abandonment, attachment, and developmental trauma; understanding and treatment of self-injurious thoughts, and how our response can result in reluctance to disclose them; and disordered eating as a co-occurring behavior. The day was live-streamed and recorded for those not able to attend in person. 54 attended in person, and 105 online. Participants continue to view the recordings.

An annual event and the attendees scored the day favorably:

- “I really enjoyed this one, and seeing the applicable connections. Working with young children, I see the importance of teaching food is fuel!”
- “Fantastic presentation. I learned new things about Eating Disorders. I never knew much about them or their differences, except for what one hears from others. Understanding how someone's feelings of disconnectedness from their body and treating it like an object really opened my eyes and got my brain whirling. Thank you!”
- “Thank you for sharing your personal story along with the valuable information and resources on Racism and Suicide Risk.”
- “Great presentation and knowledge from the Janel. Thank you for increasing my knowledge about suicidality in the African American population.”
- “This was great information for all survivors of trauma, not just adoptees.”
- “I really enjoyed this session. Understanding further attachment/impacts of adoption.”

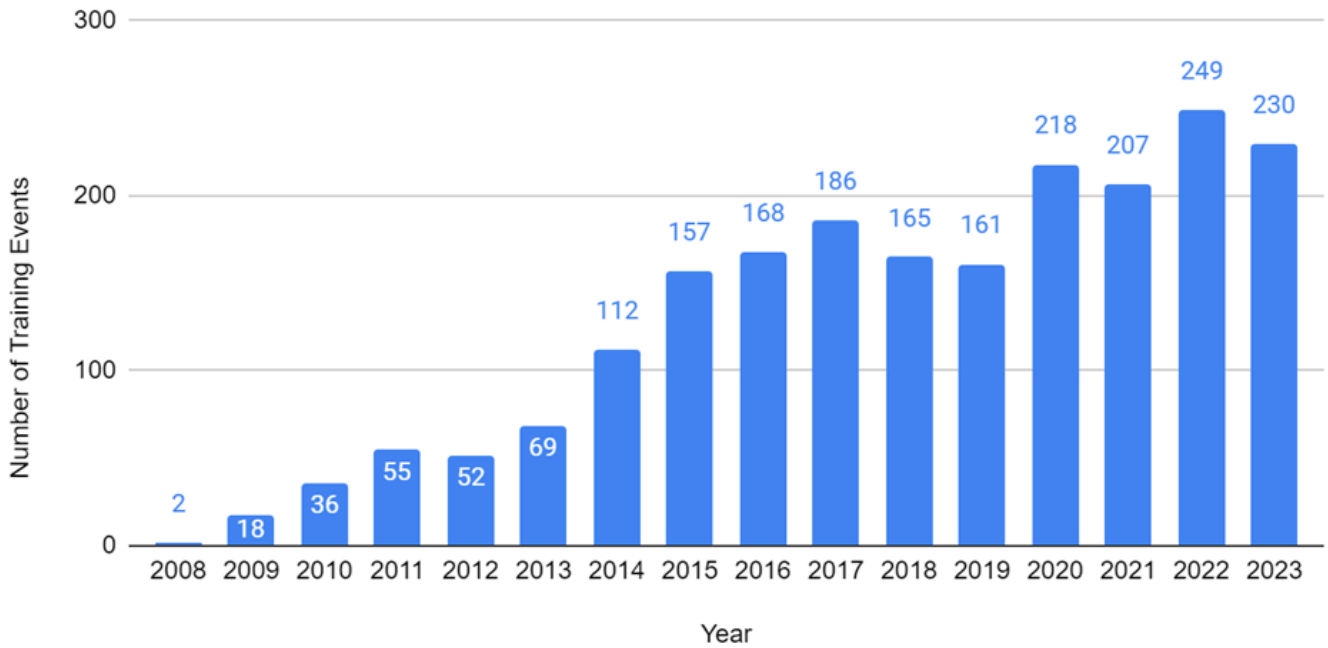
### District/School Site-Based Trainings Site-Based Trainings

Training is conducted based on requests from school personnel on selected topics, hosted at school sites or conferences across the state when possible. The numbers and types of workshops or presentations offered by CSSRC staff are summarized below. Future workshops will be developed based upon survey results, priority of needs, requests, and available funding.

Figure 5 displays the total number of workshops provided in 2023. The Center delivered 230 training opportunities in 2023. The training included the STOP Grant and other CTAMP workshops, the October Summit, regional trainings, conference presentations, as well as those presentations for individual districts and schools. The Summit and regional trainings are publicized to districts across the state via the E-Update, as well as direct email marketing campaigns. These efforts, and working with many partners across Colorado, continue to raise the profile of the CSSRC and increase the services requested.



**Figure 5. Number of Trainings (Hosted & Presented) 2008-2023**



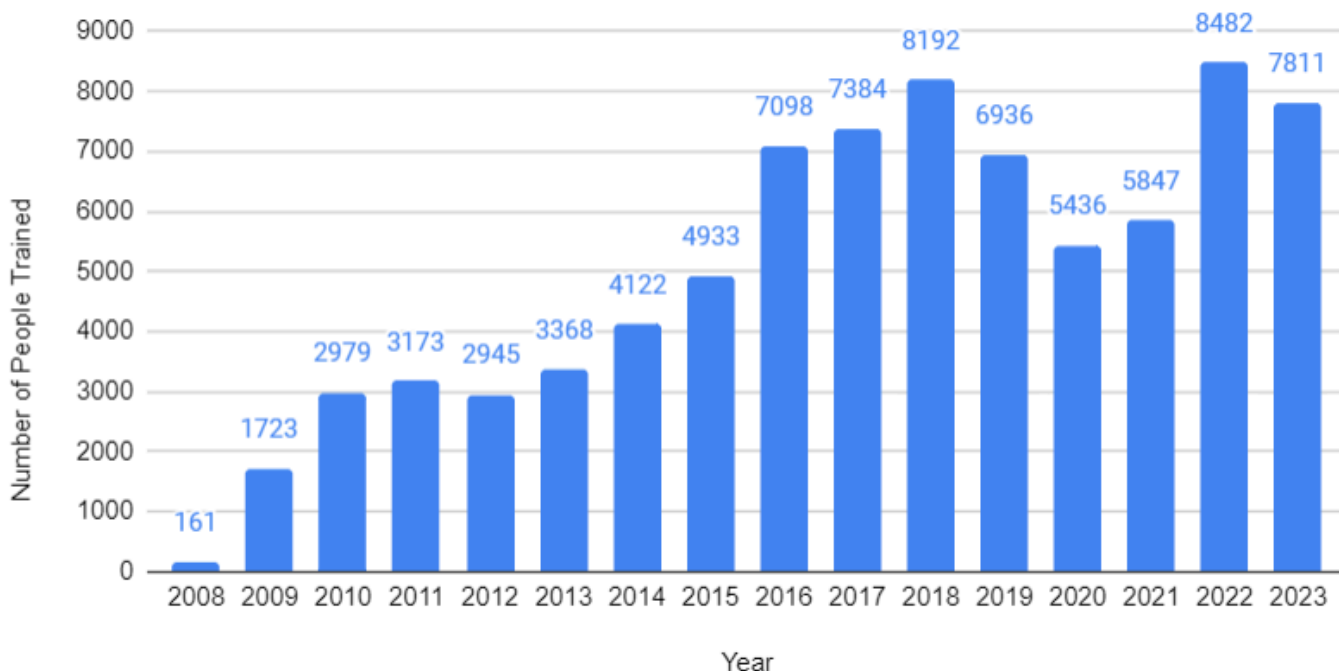
Accessible captions - Figure 5. Number of Trainings (Hosted & Presented) 2008-2023

- Year 2008 - 2
- Year 2009 - 18
- Year 2010 - 36
- Year 2011 - 55
- Year 2012 - 52
- Year 2013 - 69
- Year 2014 - 112
- Year 2015 - 157
- Year 2016 - 168
- Year 2017 - 186
- Year 2018 - 165
- Year 2019 - 161
- Year 2020 - 218
- Year 2021 - 207
- Year 2022 - 249
- Year 2023 - 230



Figure 6 shows the number of training participants in 2023, which was 7,811. Since the Center’s inception in 2008, 80,590 participants have attended a training event or workshop presented by the CSSRC. Each year, the number of people trained varies, partly with the quantity of training provided and partly with the location of the workshops and district circumstances. Being able to provide virtual workshops has increased not only the number of school staff who can participate, but allows the Center to have a greater reach across the state.

**Figure 6. Number of People Attending CSSRC Trainings 2008-2023**

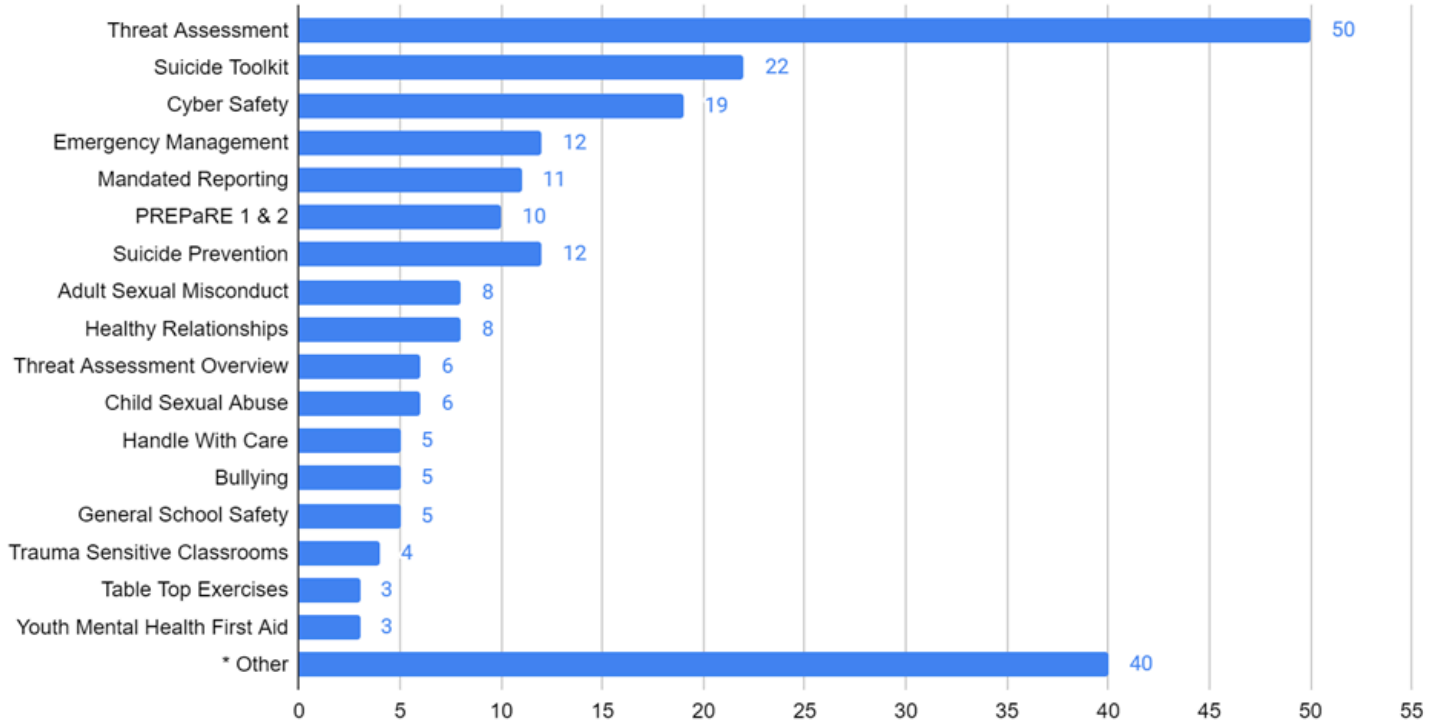


Accessible captions - Figure 6. Number of People Attending CSSRC Trainings 2008-2023

- Year 2008 - 161
- Year 2009 - 1723
- Year 2010 - 2979
- Year 2011 - 3173
- Year 2012 - 2945
- Year 2013 - 3368
- Year 2014 - 4122
- Year 2015 - 4933
- Year 2016 - 7098
- Year 2017 - 7384
- Year 2018 - 8192
- Year 2019 - 6936
- Year 2020 - 5436
- Year 2021 - 5847
- Year 2022 - 8482
- Year 2023 - 7811

Figure 7 is a breakdown of the training events in 2023 by training topic.

**Figure 7. Topics of Trainings and Presentations Provided by CSSRC Staff in 2023**



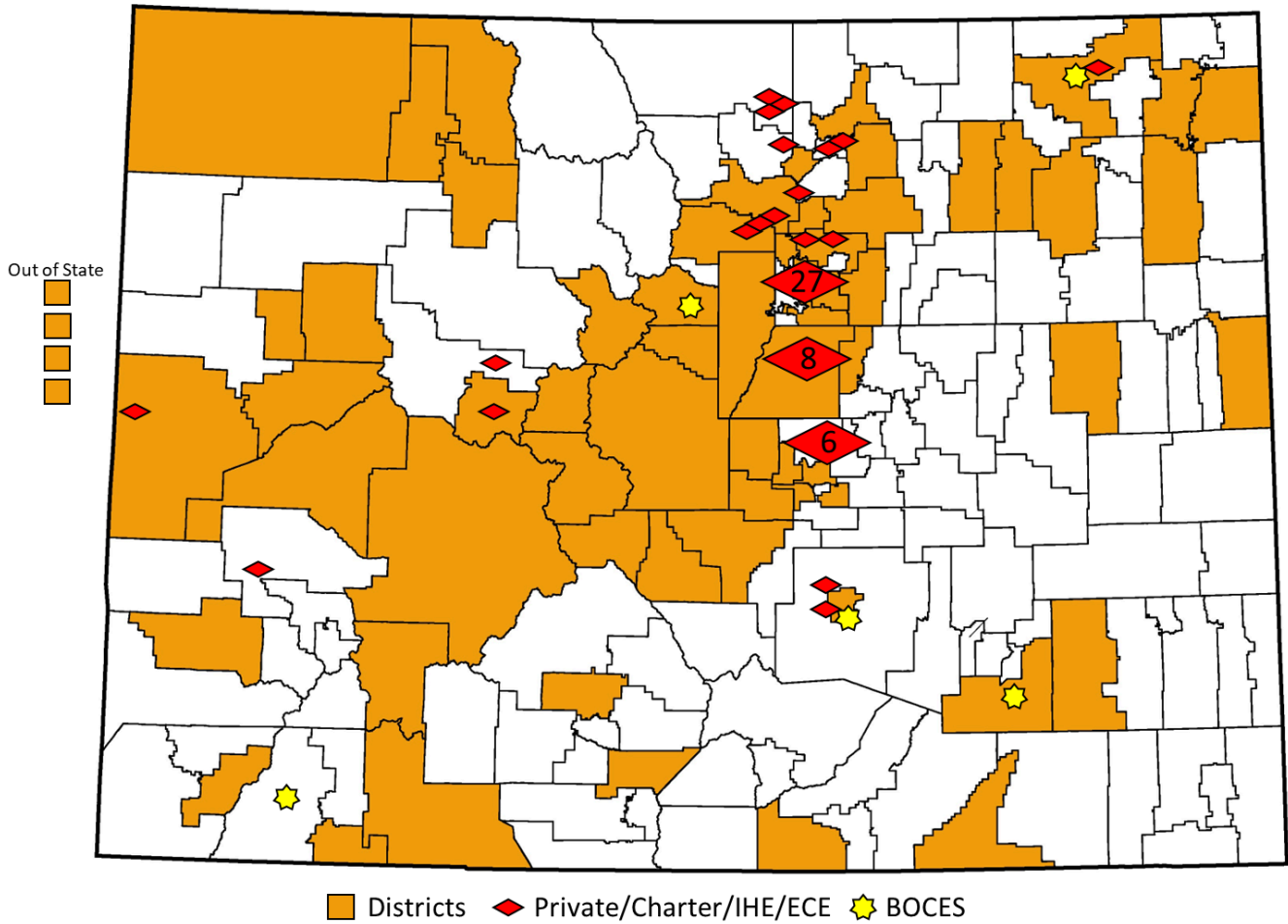
Accessible captions - Figure 7. Topics of Trainings and presentations Provided by CSSRC Staff in 2023

- Threat Assessment - 50
- Suicide Toolkit - 22
- Cyber Safety - 19
- Emergency Management - 12
- Mandated Reporting - 11
- PREPaRE 1 & 2 - 10
- Suicide Prevention - 12
- Adult Sexual Misconduct - 8
- Healthy Relationships - 8
- Threat Assessment Overview - 6
- Child Sexual Abuse - 6
- Handle with Care - 5
- Bullying - 5
- General School Safety - 5
- Trauma Sensitive Classrooms - 4
- Table Top Exercises - 3
- Youth Mental Health First Aid - 3
- \*Other - 40

\*Other training options include: human trafficking; various iterations of threat assessment topics; use of the CTAMP online tool; diversity, equity and inclusion; mental health overviews; trauma-informed practices; de-escalation in mental health crisis; navigating pornography for caregivers; comprehensive safety planning; informed supervision; restorative practices; secondary traumatic stress; best practices for interviewing; mental health considerations for athletes; use of Safe2Tell; school/community collaborations, and more.

Figure 8 outlines the school districts in Colorado with the colored portions showing the locations of all CSSRC outreach and training activities in 2023.

**Figure 8- Locations of all CSSRC Outreach and Training Activities in 2023**



### Statewide Conferences & Regional Presentations

In addition to regional and site-specific training, staff continue to be invited to present at statewide conferences and meetings. This year, staff presented for the following organizations:

- Colorado Association of School Executives
- Colorado Association of School Resource Officers
- Colorado Charter Schools Institute
- Colorado Rural Schools Alliance Meeting
- Colorado School Counselor Association
- Colorado School Social Work Association Conference
- Colorado Society of School Psychologists
- Domestic Violence/Sex Offender Management Boards Annual Conference
- Northeast BOCES
- South Central BOCES
- Santa Fe Trail BOCES

## Online Course Development

The CSSRC staff developed and published their first two online training courses for school personnel in 2012. Since that time, 15 more courses have been added. Technology changes over the last 11 years have resulted in some courses becoming corrupted and inaccessible. Hence the lack of views reflected in the figure below. The content for those courses remains available through live training.

In October of 2022, the Center received a Statewide Internet Portal Authority (SIPA) grant to add a new course. The new course is designed for parents or guardians to offer more information about threat assessment and how their child will be supported in and after the process. The course is available on the Center website at: [Threat Assessment: What Parents and Guardians Need to Know](#). We appreciated the assistance of the Colorado State Patrol for the course's narration.

All online courses (with the exception of *Threat Assessment*, as described above, and *Sexting*, as described below) are exclusively hosted through the Colorado TRAIN system ([www.CO.Train.org](http://www.CO.Train.org)). The CO TRAIN system is managed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment as a comprehensive learning platform for professionals who protect the public's health. CO TRAIN is part of the Training Finder Real-time Affiliate Integrated Network (TRAIN) and is a free service of the Public Health Foundation.

Figures 9 and 10 below describe the number of online course participants and their geographical origins, as maintained by CO TRAIN. These online courses can be counted as one or more hours of professional development and provide a printable certificate upon successful completion. Four of the courses arose from the Center's School Security Personnel Workgroup, which was created to provide guidance for the training of non-sworn school security personnel. The Center has been informed that one district is requiring a number of these online courses for their new school security staff.

View Figures 9 and 10 with the understanding that the metrics do not capture the youth who are required to take the *Sexting* course as a part of their court-ordered diversion or probation program, as those juveniles may participate via the Child Welfare Training System (CWTS). The CWTS link to [Sexting: What You Need to Know](#) is provided here. Those learners are able to print a certificate for their diversion/probation officer, but are not accounted for by CWTS. The Center is not provided analytics regarding the number of youth that completed *Sexting* and/or provided evidence of that through the juvenile justice system.

**Figure 9. Online Course Participant Summary 2012-2023**

Online Course Title	2023 Participants	Total Participants to Date (2012-2023)
1. Adolescent Development	259	2641
2. Basic Mental Health Awareness for Educators	944	4672
3. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Under Colorado Law**	—	1510
4. Crisis Planning for an Off-Campus Event**	—	419
5. Front Office Staff: School Gatekeepers	148	1400

6. Informed Supervision for Schools	45	489
7. Making Referrals to Your Threat Assessment Team	192	3767
8. Mandated Reporting of Sexual Abuse for School Staff	464	3906
9. Preparing and Conducting a Tabletop Exercise for Your School	56	492
10. Proactive School Discipline (online)	186	1082
11. School Security Personnel: Emergency Management**	—	932
12. School Security Personnel: Interpersonal Communications**	—	660
13. School Security Personnel: Observation Skills and Incident Reporting	158	1624
14. School Security Personnel: Professional Conduct and Ethics	164	1164
15. Sexting: What You Need to Know*	98	666
16. Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs**	—	671
17. Youth and Marijuana in Colorado	37	339
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,751</b>	<b>26,434</b>

\*Sexting: What You Need to Know is also hosted on the Child Welfare Training System, managed by the Colorado Department of Human Services, for ease of access by juveniles. These figures do not account for participation on that platform.

\*\* These courses were unable to be updated and will need to be recreated: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Under Colorado Law; Crisis Planning for an Off-Campus Event, School Security Personnel: Emergency Management; School Security Personnel: Interpersonal Communications; and Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs.

### Figure 10. Top 20 Counties in which CSSRC Online Courses Have Been Accessed

Adams	Denver	Garfield	La Plata	Morgan
Arapahoe	Douglas	Grand	Larimer	Pueblo
Boulder	Eagle	Huerfano	Lincoln	Sedgwick
Delta	El Paso	Jefferson	Mesa	Weld

Courses are consistently highly rated, with comments from evaluations such as:

- **“GREAT COURSE” (Adolescent Development)**
- **“I think it was very informative and really put into perspective what adolescents are dealing with and how us, as adults, can help them navigate this developmental period.” (Adolescent Development)**
- **“Interesting, easy to follow and super interactive!” (Basic Mental Health)**
- **“Sensational” (Front Office Staff: School Gatekeepers)**
- **“Great training for all who work in the front office.” (Front Office Staff: School Gatekeepers)**
- **“Important information and efficient presentation.” (Mandated Reporting of Sexual Abuse for School Staff)**
- **“Excellent review of critical information to ensuring referrals are made to appropriate resources and the TA team” (Making Referral to Your Threat Assessment Team)**

- “Helpful and thorough. Made me consider things I would not normally have considered.” (**Mandated Reporting of Sexual Abuse for School Staff**)
- “Good quality content for a touchy subject.” (**Proactive School Discipline - Online**)
- “I have a better understanding of observation and reporting skills as a school security officer.” (**School Security Personnel: Observation Skills and Incident Reporting**)
- “Excellent training module. Very thorough.” (**School Security Personnel: Professional Conduct and Ethics**)
- “AWESOME!!!” (**Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs**)
- “This course was informative and thorough. I like that every legal matter was broken down and explained as simply as possible.” (**Sexing : What You Need to Know**)

## Resources

### Website

The [CSSRC website](#) has been designed as a state information and resource repository, offering a variety of support to a wide audience of pre-kindergarten through 12th grade schools, higher education institutions, and the parents, communities, and organizations that support safe and positive school environments in Colorado. The website’s professional offerings include current best practices, evidence-based resources, practical applications, training, grants, and educational opportunities. Now a project of the Office of School Safety, the website has added robust information regarding grant applications and support, as well as the opportunities available for schools through the Crisis Response Unit.

The website’s accessibility was improved in 2023 through the work of Benjamin Cosso, Program Assistant, who was hired by the OSS after completing an assignment as a Web Accessibility Specialist with the Chief Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer in CDPS. Ben continues to ensure the website meets accessibility requirements as set forth by the federal government. The accessibility score reached the necessary level and will be checked periodically to maintain this level.

Highlights of the website include:

- Immediate connection to the Grants and Crisis Response Units, with full access to grant opportunities, writing resources, and forms; as well as training for schools in crisis response, and access to clinical staff to assist in the aftermath of an event.
- Creation of a “CSSRC Training/Presentation Request” platform which allows our audience to request for specific school safety needs and training. Website users can now directly request CSSRC NO-COST training, consultations, resources, and technical assistance for all schools in Colorado by completing the form on the website. This online web-form platform received a considerable amount of training requests in 2023.
- In order to provide easier access to search for and find training, guidelines, articles, assessment tools, and other resources, the Center created and launched the “CSSRC Online Search Document Library” platform on its website. This Online Search Document Library repository serves a quick and thorough search engine for those who work in and with schools to improve safety to find the resources needed, as an alternative to using the current web site search bar (scrolling through long pages of links).
- The Center migrated from the old “Listserv System” to “Constant Contact” in our delivery of the E-Update (CSSRC Monthly Newsletter). This new system not only provides secure and accurate control and management of the Center’s E-Update subscribers but has made it



easier for our audience to sign up while the Center is also able to track newsletter deliveries and provides better analytics which is helpful in reaching out to more audiences.

- With the improvement of the website accessibility, the Center has information on accessibility at all advantageous pages on the website that gives audience information to ensure reasonable accommodations are provided to enable people to engage fully in our training, meetings and/or events. The CSSRC Website continues to be “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.1, level AA” Compliant.
- Training opportunities for school staff, including a calendar of national and local opportunities.
- Updates to all links to Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS).
- Periodic updates to links to Colorado school safety legislation and current grants
- Weekly updates on new highlighted topics, upcoming trainings/events and features
- New highlighted topics and features updated weekly

### Website Use Data

The Statewide Internet Portal Authority offers Google Analytics to track website traffic. Google Analytics provides historical data about website visitors and evaluation of the site’s usability. Monthly website use tracking and analysis profiles are collected. The software provides tracking of visits to the website, pages viewed, and information about downloaded materials (see Figures 11 and 12 below). Over the course of 2023, there were approximately 90,598 page views with a considerable number of document downloads.

**Figure 11. Top 5 Most Visited Pages of the CSSRC Website (Beyond the Homepage) in 2023**

Page Title   Created By
Guns in Schools   School Safety Resource Center
Mandatory Reporting   School Safety Resource Center
Claire Davis School Safety Act   School Safety Resource Center
Youth Violence Prevention Grant Program   School Safety Resource Center
OSS Online Training   School Safety Resource Center

CSSRC staff continually create tip sheets, templates, and other informational documents to assist schools in their safety work. These can be found on the Center’s website under CSSRC Tools and Templates.

The Center now provides six resource guides for schools:

- [Essentials of School Threat Assessment: Preventing Targeted School Violence](#)
- [Positive School Climate: Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Education](#)
- [Resources for Youth Suicide Prevention and Intervention](#)
- [Restorative Practices Guide for Schools](#)
- [Resources for Child Sexual Abuse and Assault Prevention](#)
- [Social & Emotional Learning](#)

Some of the resource pages created this year included the following topics:



- [Toolkit of Behavioral Health Resources Pertaining to the Israel-Hamas Conflict](#)
- [White House Establishes First-Ever Office of Gun Violence Prevention](#)
- [Behavioral Health Resources for Those Affected by the Violence in Lewiston](#)
- [Combating Youth Vaping in Colorado - A Conversation with AG Phil Weiser](#)
- [When School Safety & Fire Prevention Meet with School Resource Center Director, Christine Harms](#)
- [Support for AAPI Community following Targeted Mass Shootings](#)

In addition to state and national users, the CSSRC website has been visited by people from around the world.

**Figure 12. Top Eight Countries Outside of the United States Visiting the CSSRC Websites**

Top Countries	
Canada	France
Philippines	South Africa
United Kingdom	Australia
India	Kenya

### Working Groups

One responsibility the Center has adopted since its inception is to facilitate work groups on topics of identified need in order to develop and distribute resources to be used by Colorado schools. Previously, the Center has facilitated working groups on Emergency Planning for K-12 Schools, Interagency Information Sharing, Crisis Response Guidelines, School Security Personnel, Bullying/Harassment Prevention, Parental Notification by Schools When Staff Have Been Accused of Sexual Misconduct, Businesses Assisting Schools in Communities Prepare (BASIC Prep) and the Institutions of Higher Education Networking Group. In 2016, a group reviewed the three reports commissioned after the 2013 Arapahoe High School shooting tragedy and wrote a report on the recommendations that were presented to the SB15-214 Interim Committee, School Safety and Youth Mental Health in Crisis.

In 2023, four working groups were still active from previous years. These include:

#### Threat Assessment Working Groups

Threat Assessment has been at the core of the Center’s work since its inception. Working Groups on this topic have been active for over a decade. Updates from the United States Secret Service and the United States Department of Homeland Security and work on the STOP grants have sparked regular meetings. Stakeholders have looked to the CSSRC to create space for discussion on this content.

The general threat assessment advisory group continued to meet in 2023. A separate group of those grantees using the CTAMP also met regularly. Most of this latter group are either new to threat assessment or conduct so few assessments every year that their challenges are very different from districts that conduct threat assessments weekly. With varying degrees of threat assessment experience and need, it was decided that different meeting opportunities would better serve school personnel.

## Suicide Intervention and Prevention Working Group

Since 2017, the CSSRC has been facilitating informal meetings of school mental health leaders, particularly to discuss suicide. In 2019, the group urged the Center to create suicide risk assessment tools for use by Colorado districts that have not yet adopted such instruments. The working group reviewed the finalized toolkit, and training on it began in the spring of 2020. In 2023, Center staff trained 21 districts on the use of the toolkit. Dr. Terri Erbacher, one of the original authors on whose work the toolkit is based, addressed the group in January of 2023 to answer questions about making modifications to the toolkit.

This networking group is now facilitated by School Outreach Consultant Lea Bernstein Holmes, and focuses on those districts that are using the CSSRC Suicide Intervention and Assessment Toolkit. When she hosts speakers of general value to school based mental health professionals, such as state experts who can assist schools with resources from partner state departments, Ms. Holmes expands the working group invitations to a broader audience.

## School Based Professionals Working with Youth with Problematic Sexual Behaviors

Problematic sexual behaviors are a unique challenge to school safety. This working group was requested in 2022 by stakeholders engaged in the previous groups, who saw a need the Center's Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Specialist could fill. This year, the Center hosted speakers on such topics as identification and response to human trafficking indicators, the intersection of threat assessment with problematic sexual behaviors, Title IX from the perspective of both coordinators and survivors, forensic interviews of student victims, and best practice advice from SOMB providers. This and the other networking groups will continue in 2024.

## Youth Engaged for School Safety (YES<sup>2</sup>)

After the 2022-2023 YES<sup>2</sup> team reported out to the Advisory Board in April, the CSSRC assessed the YES<sup>2</sup> groups over the years and noted that there was disproportionate participation by Front Range high school students. Staff was desirous of a more balanced representation from other geographic regions of the state. A decision was made to disband YES<sup>2</sup> in favor of empaneling youth focus groups statewide in school year 2023-2024. This strategy would capture diverse youth voice in a more intentional way. With the assistance of the Regional Training Consultants and School Outreach Consultant, there are multiple opportunities across the state to meet with youth. The team started with the Student-Staff Summits in September, as noted above. Focus groups are scheduled into 2024.

## Collaboration

The Center continues to work with other agencies with similar missions to maximize our ability to provide services to schools and contribute to the work that all youth-serving agencies are accomplishing. The Center is proud of the reputation earned for cooperating with other professionals and the quality and quantity of work that has been produced through these partnerships. Currently, the CSSRC attends regular meetings as a participant, active member, school safety voice, or fellow presenter with the following statewide groups:

### [Association of Threat Assessment Professionals \(ATAP\) \(Rocky Mountain Chapter\)](#)

The [Association of Threat Assessment Professionals](#) (ATAP) was founded in 1992 as a non-profit organization comprised of law enforcement, prosecutors, mental health professionals, corporate security experts, probation and parole personnel and others involved in the area of threat and violence risk assessment. Mike Vagher joined the Colorado Chapter in November of

2023. Participation in ATAP allows CSSRC staff to access training and network with other violence prevention professionals.

#### [Anti-Defamation League \(ADL\)](#)

The ADL staff have presented for the Center on many occasions. Since 2019 [the ADL](#) has provided excellent materials, which the Center shares in the E-Update, to educate schools as to how to speak with students about social justice issues and hate activities that have been occurring nationally. The increase in anti-semitic crimes and bullying on campus in 2023 has made this partnership all the more important.

#### [Child Protection Ombudsman of Colorado \(CPO\)](#)

The [Office of the CPO](#) is an independent agency working on behalf of Colorado's children and families. The office is designed to listen to the public about their experience with and concerns about child protection, research and investigate those issues, and determine the best way to resolve each inquiry. They also collaborate with lawmakers, professionals, and other stakeholders to advance legislation and policies that will have a lasting, positive impact on our children and families. Margaret Ochoa serves as the CDPS representative on the CPO's Mandatory Reporting Task Force, which is reviewing national best practices and consulting with numerous experts, researchers, and people with lived experience to make recommendations to the General Assembly in 2025.

#### [Colorado Association of School Boards \(CASB\)](#)

The CSSRC has worked with [CASB](#) on a number of initiatives and working groups. Currently, Lindley McCrary of the Littleton Public Schools represents CASB on the CSSRC Advisory Board.

#### [Colorado Association of School Executives \(CASE\)](#)

[CASE](#) consults with the Colorado Department of Education on recommendations for the superintendent representatives on the CSSRC Advisory Board. Representing the rural districts are Superintendent Todd Bitner of Norwood Schools and Superintendent/Principal Rebecca Hall of the Hinsdale School District. From the Front Range, Carolena Steen, Ph.D., the Assistant Superintendent of Cheyenne Mountain School District, also serves as a representative to the CSSRC Advisory Board. Kelly Addington and Lea Bernstein Holmes presented at the summer CASE Conference on the work the CSSRC is doing with *Handle With Care*, a trauma-informed collaboration between local law enforcement and schools.

#### [Colorado Association of School Resource Officers \(CASRO\) and National Association of School Resource Officers \(NASRO\)](#)

[CASRO](#) membership consists of school resource officers, other law enforcement personnel, and affiliated partners. The Center is a member of this Association. CSSRC's Advisory Board SRO is Kelly Jacobsen from the Westminster Police Department, who also serves as the Secretary on CASRO's board. Brad Stiles, Emergency Outreach Consultant at the Center is an advisor to the CASRO Board of Directors, Mr. Stiles and Ms. Garner both attended the annual CASRO conference in Breckenridge, CO, with Mr. Stiles actively participating in running the conference and Ms. Garner presenting on several topics.

Funding from the 2022 STOP Grant has enabled strong collaborations between the CSSRC and [NASRO](#). The CSSRC hosted two trainings for Colorado SROs to complete the NASRO Basic SRO Course in 2023. They took place in July in Thornton, and in August in Grand Junction. 66 total SROs were trained at the combined events. CSSRC staff were trained to facilitate the *Project Unite* curriculum (a partnership between NASRO and the Center for the Study and Prevention of

Violence at CU Boulder) in November. Plans are underway to make NASRO Advanced SRO Training available in 2024, and to schedule Supervisor’s Training at CASRO’s Annual Conference next summer.

#### [Colorado Association of School Safety and Law Enforcement Officers \(CASSLEO\)](#)

CASSLEO, an association of school safety and security directors from many of the larger Front Range school districts, meets periodically, and Center staff attend and report on statewide initiatives.

#### [Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault \(CCASA\)](#)

[CCASA](#), an association promoting safety, justice, and healing for survivors while working toward the elimination of sexual violence, consults frequently with Center staff regarding safety matters of statewide concern. In 2023, among other protections for survivors, CCASA’s priority bills strengthened school protections against sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination, established a tracking system for sexual assault evidence kits, secured funding for victim services, and enhanced training and recommendations for disciplinary policies with respect to the judiciary. Ms. Ochoa served on CCASA’s Policy Committee in 2023, gaining early access to information on pending legislation.

#### [Colorado Department of Education \(CDE\)](#)

Since the opening of the Center, staff have had an excellent working relationship with staff at the [Colorado Department of Education](#). The CDE has a staff member assigned to the CSSRC Advisory Board, and the Commissioner of Education appoints three other board members from the school community. Currently, Christina Monaco is the CDE staff member serving on the Advisory Board. Others appointed by the Commissioner of Education include Dr. Carolena Steen, Assistant Superintendent of Cheyenne Mountain School District; Board Secretary Dr. Jane Lineman, Student Safety Coordinator for Denver Public Schools; and Todd Bitner, Superintendent of the Norwood School District.

CDE has continued to support the Center’s efforts with respect to campus safety and Title IX obligations. The state Title IX Coordinator, Rebekah Ottenbreit, is a frequent and valued guest at the Center’s training conferences. She has trained at both the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Symposium and the Safe Schools Summits, and coordinates referrals to and from staff as necessary. She coordinated training for the Center’s Work Group on Managing Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems in early 2023. Ms. Ottenbreit and the [CDE website](#) have proven to be valuable resources to Center stakeholders.

There is also a productive working relationship with the staff at CDE who manage the [BEST grants](#) and CSSRC. Brad Stiles, Emergency Response Outreach Consultant, is often asked to conduct site assessments and make recommendations for districts on requests regarding their BEST grants.

CDE developed [Model Bullying Policy](#) in compliance with SB18-151 and HB21-1221. Adam Collins, Bullying Prevention and Education Grant Coordinator, has been a tremendous resource for Colorado Schools in accessing and implementing that policy. The Center has partnered with CDE to promote the adoption of these principles. As CDE enhances its work in violence prevention in schools, the Center has acted as a consultant with experience in managing STOP grants, as well as a school safety partner invested in ensuring that the two departments do not duplicate efforts.

Krista Klabo, the [School Psychology and Special Education](#) Evaluation Specialist at CDE, has presented at all of the School Safety Specialist Academies since 2021. She is a consistent and valued partner in the Center’s work.

Colleen O’Neil, Associate Commissioner of [Educator Talent](#), presented with Christine Harms and Margaret Ochoa to the U.S. Department of Education in early 2023. They spoke on Colorado’s efforts to comply with federal and state laws regarding the creation and implementation of policies preventing the aiding and abetting of sexual misconduct by educators.

The Office of School Safety and the [Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement](#) forged a stronger connection in 2023, with plans for ongoing collaborations in the coming years. The partnership will strengthen and avoid duplication of efforts in school safety matters. Discussions have focused on disproportionate and exclusionary discipline and strategies to avoid them.

#### [Colorado Department of Higher Education \(CDHE\)](#)

The Colorado [Department of Higher Education](#) has representation on the CSSRC Advisory Board and supports the annual Summer Safety Summit for Institutions of Higher Education (IHE). Mr. Greg Busch, Emergency Manager for the Community College System within CDHE, is their representative on the CSSRC Advisory Board. Mr. Mark Pokorny, Environmental and Emergency Preparedness Manager for Metropolitan State University of Denver, also serves on the Advisory Board. Mr. Pokorny continues to offer his services to schools on the storage and disposal of hazardous materials or hazardous wastes.

#### [Colorado Department of Human Services \(CDHS\) Behavioral Health Administration \(BHA\)](#)

The [Behavioral Health Administration](#) (BHA) launched in 2022, and is a cabinet member-led agency within the State of Colorado, housed within the Department of Human Services. The BHA is designed to be the single entity responsible for driving coordination and collaboration across state agencies to address behavioral health needs. The Department of Human Services has been the go-to organization to assist the Center in finding the right regional professionals to collaborate with the Regional Training Consultants. Suzy Morris, Youth Substance Use Disorder Services and School Based Mental Health Specialist Program Manager within the Behavioral Health Administration sits on the CSSRC Advisory Board. Ms. Morris presented to our Suicide Prevention Workgroup regarding the Specialists program this fall.

#### [Office of Children Youth and Families \(OCYF\)](#)

The Center looks to the [Division of Child Welfare](#) for expertise regarding child abuse and neglect. Shared messaging across departments is key to consistency for stakeholders in education and beyond. Ms. Ochoa follows the agency’s lead on child abuse prevention efforts during Child Abuse Prevention Month to create awareness of both departments’ work.



## Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)

### Colorado Crisis Education and Response Network (CoCERN)

[CoCERN](#) is a statewide, asset-based community partnership formed to deliver effective, efficient, and professional disaster behavioral health services. The Center has been involved with this group since its inception. The School Outreach Consultant, Lea Holmes, represented the Center at the quarterly meetings until October when Kati Garner, Crisis Unit Manager, took over as the representative. Representatives from CoCERN were actively involved in the Statewide Crisis Response Working Group.

### Office of Suicide Prevention

The Center has worked collaboratively with [CDPHE](#) to systematically prevent suicide and sexual violence. CDPHE's [Office of Suicide Prevention](#) (OSP) is the lead entity for suicide prevention, intervention supports, and postvention efforts in Colorado. The Center and the OSP meet regularly to stay current on trends, research, and available resources. Center stakeholders benefit from frequent workshops and meeting updates by members from the OSP at regional conferences and the Suicide Prevention working group. Since 2010, the Center, CDE, and the OSP have joined forces to present 14 Youth Suicide Prevention and Intervention Symposia for school professionals. The Center has a seat on the [Statewide Suicide Commission](#) facilitated by the Office of Suicide Prevention. Currently, Lea Bernstein Holmes, School Outreach Consultant for the Center, represents the Center on the Suicide Commission. She also co-chairs the Youth Initiatives Workgroup.

Lena Heilmann, Ph.D., Director of the Office of Suicide Prevention within the Office of Violence and Injury Prevention, Mental Health Promotion Branch of CDPHE, is a member of the CSSRC Advisory Board. Dr. Heilmann recommended a number of the presenters for this year's Suicide Prevention Symposium and introduced them at the conference.

### Sexual Health

The Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Specialist promotes the work of the [Comprehensive Human Sexuality Education Grant Program](#) as a mode of sexual violence prevention. Their work is reflected in the [Child Sexual Abuse and Assault Prevention Resource Guide](#).

### Healthy Kids Colorado Survey and Colorado Healthy Schools Smart Source

The Center has long had a representative on the [Healthy Kids Colorado and Smart Source Surveys](#)' Steering Committee. Director Harms served in that role until Margaret Ochoa assumed those duties with the creation of the Office of School Safety. CDPHE staff facilitate this work. These surveys are conducted by the University of Colorado, Denver in alternating years. The surveys collect youth health and risk-related data around the state from a random sample of middle school and high school students. Both surveys are also supported by the Colorado Department of Human Services and CDE.

## Colorado Department of Public Safety

### Colorado State Patrol (CSP)

The CSSRC maintains a professional relationship with [CSP](#), particularly as issues related to schools arise that offer opportunities for education regarding vehicle safety and response. Center staff consulted on CSP's school safety curriculum project, and provide refresher training to the deliverers of the curriculum on identification of child abuse on request.

CSP has continued to generously provide voiceover talent for the CSSRC online courses and has worked with Center staff to update the online courses. Most recently, CSP PIO Master Trooper

Gary Cutler narrated the online course *Threat Assessment: What Parents and Guardians Need to Know*.

#### Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ)

Multiple offices within the Division of Criminal Justice have collaborated with the CSSRC and OSS over the years. That partnership continued in 2023. Additionally, DCJ shared its Public Information Officer, Paula Vargas, with the Office of School Safety.

#### Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance (OAJJA)

Kelly Abbott, Manager of the OAJJA, presently serves on the CSSRC Advisory Board. She has long been a valued partner to the Center, and in 2023 assisted the Grants Unit of the OSS with the review of applicants for the Youth Violence Prevention Grant.

#### Offices of Domestic Violence and Sex Offender Management

The [Sex Offender Management Board](#) (SOMB) develops standards and guidelines for the evaluation, treatment, and behavioral monitoring of sex offenders. Staff to the Board and the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Specialist have collaborated for years on school training and statewide projects. In 2022-2023, Ms. Ochoa served on the SOMB Best Practice Committee/Children with Problematic Sexual Behaviors. She presented on that work at the 2023 Domestic Violence/Sex Offender Management Boards Conference. Ms. Ochoa attends relevant SOMB monthly meetings to keep abreast of developments within schools and the provider community. The SOMB Program Coordinator provided consultation for the Center's Work Group on Managing Students with Problematic Sexual Behavior in 2023. Her suggestions have assisted districts to safely reintegrate juveniles who have committed offending behaviors into their schools and communities.

#### Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC)

The [Division of Fire Prevention and Control](#) has always supported the work of the CSSRC. In recent years, there have been further collaborative efforts as schools work to ensure that their emergency preparedness for active shooter situations do not interfere with fire safety policies. In [this podcast](#), Director Christine Harms and Fire & Life Safety Section Chief Brunette discuss the interconnectedness of school safety and fire prevention.

#### Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

##### Colorado Information Analysis Center (CIAC)

The [CIAC](#) is an office of the Colorado Department of Public Safety, [Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management](#). The CIAC serves as the focal point within the state for receiving, analyzing, and sharing threat-related information among private sector, local, tribal, and federal partners. When appropriate, the CIAC and the Center work together to distribute informational messages to the Center's stakeholders regarding school safety.

During the 2018 legislative session, eight additional employees were added to the CIAC to support the Safe2Tell program. This program is an anonymous tip line open to all citizens, but focused on students to provide a tool for them to report concerns to school officials and law enforcement. Establishing the Watch Center at the CIAC, where Safe2Tell professionals accept and analyze calls, has deepened the relationship between the CIAC and the CSSRC and helps the CDPS further support school safety.

The CIAC implemented its Colorado [Preventing Targeted Violence Program \(CO-PTV\)](#) in 2023. That initiative established a whole-of-community approach to address targeted violence by

building a solutions-driven and equity-informed strategy with multidisciplinary partners to create a safer and healthier Colorado. The CSSRC is in discussions with the CIAC on how to enhance this work in schools and will highlight the Program in its IHE Symposium in 2024.

#### [Colorado Education Initiative \(CEI\)](#)

The [CEI](#) is an independent 501(c)(3) that serves as a partner to the Colorado Department of Education in the effective implementation of programs and public policy related to education. The Center and staff from CEI have worked together on many projects in the past and staff from CEI have presented at a number of the CSSRC's regional workshops as well as the October Summit.

#### [Colorado League of Charter Schools](#)

The [League of Charter Schools](#) is a full-service nonprofit membership group for about 95% of the charter schools in Colorado. The League offers legislative advocacy, performance management, professional development, governance training, group purchasing programs, teacher effectiveness services, new school development support, employment and facilities consultation, marketing and communications assistance, and more. OSS Director Chris Harms presented at the League's annual conference in February this year.

#### [Colorado Office for Victim Assistance \(COVA\)](#)

[COVA](#) is a 501(c)(3) committed to fairness and healing of crime victims and their families and communities through leadership, education, and advocacy. COVA is a recognized leader in statewide training for professionals and volunteers who work with victims of crime and trauma. The Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Specialist meets on occasion with a group of statewide trainers from COVA and its partners to promote one another's training opportunities and avoid redundancies. Center staff and COVA staff have regularly presented at one another's hosted training opportunities.

#### [Colorado Rural Schools Alliance](#)

The [Colorado Rural Schools Alliance](#) was established in 2008 to be the voice for rural schools in Colorado. The Alliance holds a weekly meeting of rural superintendents to which the OSS director is invited. The director has also presented to this group.

#### [Colorado School Districts Self Insurance Pool \(CSDSIP\)](#)

[CSDSIP](#) insures over 90% of the state's school districts and therefore has a vested interest in the safety and security of Colorado schools. CSDSIP has been a loyal sponsor of the annual Safe Schools Summit during Safe Schools Month. 2023 was no exception. Craig Hein, J.D., General Counsel for CSDSIP is a member of the CSSRC Advisory Board.

#### [Colorado School Counselor Association \(CSCA\)](#)

The [Colorado School Counselor Association](#) serves its members and the public through programs that advance guidance and counseling in all school work settings: elementary, middle/junior high, high school, and postsecondary schools. At CSCA's Annual Conference in October of this year, Margaret Ochoa and Kati Garner presented on strategies for school counselors and caregivers to address youth consumption of pornography.

#### [Colorado School Safety Initiative](#)

Confluence Policy & Strategy Group and the Public Education & Business Coalition launched the [Colorado School Safety Initiative](#) in 2023. The stakeholder coalition and research initiative brings together system leaders, educators, students, parents, government officials, mental and



behavioral health experts, law enforcement, security experts, counselors, community leaders, communications experts and other stakeholders to discuss a broad range of issues affecting school safety and climate. This initiative will outlast the work of the School Safety Working Group, and the Office of School Safety will be a partner in its efforts. They will provide an annual report to the Colorado General Assembly.

#### [Colorado School Social Work Association](#)

The [Colorado School Social Work Association](#) exists to promote the visibility and viability of the School Social Work profession and promote professional excellence among school social workers in an effort to enhance the well being of students, families, and community within the educational system. Ms. Ochoa and Ms. Garner presented to this group at the annual conference in September.

#### [Colorado Society of School Psychologists \(CSSP\)](#)

The mission of [CSSP](#) is to strengthen the effectiveness of school psychologists in addressing the academic, social, and emotional needs of children and youth in Colorado. Lea Holmes was selected to present at the Annual CSSP Conference in November of 2023. Dr. Franci Crepeau-Hobson, representing the CSSP crisis team, was also an active member of the Statewide Crisis Response Working Group. She worked with Kati Garner this year to train OSS staff to deliver the National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP) PREPaRE crisis training.

#### [Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#)

The [FBI](#) is an intelligence-driven and threat-focused national security organization with both intelligence and law enforcement responsibilities. The FBI has dedicated programs to investigate domestic and international terrorism, foreign counterintelligence, cybercrime, and many others. Staff from the FBI have presented numerous times at CSSRC statewide trainings on threat assessment and human trafficking.

#### [Illuminate Colorado](#)

[Illuminate Colorado](#) is a cohort of agencies whose mission is the effective prevention of child maltreatment. They are the Colorado branch of Prevent Child Abuse America. The Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Specialist has served on the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Coalition (CSAPC) since 2021. That group was convened by Illuminate and is composed of experts from the nonprofit sector, state government, and individual members. Ms. Ochoa has met regularly with facilitators trained by Illuminate to enhance opportunities for training. They have, in turn, presented at CSSRC's Regional Conferences.

#### [Metro Crisis Team](#)

The Metro Crisis Team was initially developed in 2017 by five district-level mental health leaders in the Denver-Metro area who saw the need for more regular collaboration in regards to psychological crisis prevention, intervention, and response. The group currently consists of leaders from eleven districts and has morphed into an integrated and resourceful network for mental health leadership to share practices and resources in order to strengthen psychological safety. Ms. Bernstein-Holmes attends these monthly meetings, which take place at different district locations throughout the metro area. Her involvement allows the Center to track trends facing the metro districts.

### National School Safety Alliance (NSSA)

The Alliance is a network of state-level school safety practitioners from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The purpose of the NSSA is to examine and share information about trends in school safety, training opportunities, resources, and best practices from the field. The NSSA members also have the responsibility of advocating for best practices in school safety at both the state and national levels.

OSS Director Christine Harms has been a member of the NSSA since its informal inception in 2014. In 2021, the group became formalized with the adoption of a board of directors and by-laws. Ms. Harms became the co-chair of the board along with Ms. Amy Roderick from the Missouri School Safety Center. Director Harms' term expired in August of 2022, but she remains active in the twice-monthly meetings.

### One Colorado

[One Colorado](#) is a non-profit organization with a mission to secure and protect equality and opportunity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Coloradans and their families. They have been co-presenters with the Center, ADL, CDE, CEI, and Facing History throughout the state in the Positive School Climate: Bullying Prevention Institutes since 2011. The Center looks to One Colorado for resources to support LGBTQ+ students.

### Partners for Children's Mental Health (PCMH)

This agency, supported by Children's Hospital Colorado and the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Colorado, is designed to serve as a statewide resource to increase the capacity, access, and quality of mental health services for children, youth, and families. The CSSRC works with [PCMH](#), [Mental Health Colorado](#), the Colorado Department of Human Services and a private practitioner to support a Community of Practice funded by Centura Health. This group is more focused on providing training for all school mental health professionals, while the CSSRC networking group mentioned above caters to behavioral health leaders from the schools. These groups will continue to meet and share strategies and resources to reduce suicide rates. Chris Harms, Margaret Ochoa, and Kati Garner presented to PCMH this fall on the structure of the OSS.

### School-Based Mental Health Advisory Board (SBMHAB)

The School-based Mental Health Advisory Board (SBMHAB) is led by the Project AWARE team within the Office of Health and Wellness at CDE. The purpose of the SBMHAB is to bring together stakeholders from multiple state agencies (i.e., CDE, CDPHE, CDPS, CDHS, BHA) and local constituents (e.g., district staff) to provide updates on efforts (e.g., training, funding opportunities, service offerings, training/technical assistance) for school-based professionals and respective partners (e.g., community-based organizations) focused on the behavioral health of students in schools across Colorado. Additionally, the SBMHAB aims to enhance alignment, coordination, and collaboration across multiple state agencies related to state government infrastructure, systems, and processes which impact how behavioral health supports reach students in Colorado. The School Outreach Consultant serves on this board with input from the Director of the OSS so that the work of the SSWG is aligned with this committee.

The School Outreach Consultant also serves on the Suicide Prevention Policy Subgroup Committee through the SBMHAB. This group is developing a model district and school-level policy regarding suicide prevention training in schools by utilizing data to inform best practice trainings for schools and districts.

Youth Healthcare Alliance (Formerly Colorado Association for School-based Health Care  
“CASBHC”)

Established in 1996, the [Youth Healthcare Alliance](#) is a non-profit membership organization that helps communities throughout Colorado establish, operate, and expand school-based clinics to ensure K-12 students and their families receive comprehensive, equitable healthcare. Currently, there are 68 School-Based Health Centers in the state.

## Summary and Conclusion

The creation of the Office of School Safety has changed how school safety services are offered in Colorado. Bringing the CSSRC, a Crisis Response Unit, and a Grants Unit together to serve schools has created a synergy with exciting potential. 2023 was a year of growth and learning. Critical, life-changing training took place. The OSS team received gold standard training to respond to crisis, and the team trained thousands in threat and suicide assessment, as well as other prevention topics. A million dollars in funding was awarded for youth violence prevention efforts. The OSS is only beginning to make its impact on school safety efforts across the state.

2023 saw conferences and meetings return in person, but a lingering benefit of the virtual infrastructure is that schools can participate in these events with ease despite time-consuming and costly geographic challenges. It remains a top priority of the CSSRC to provide accessible and inclusive formats within which its stakeholders can engage.

The Center was not mentioned in the Governor's Wildly Important Goals in 2023. Nonetheless, the CSSRC was able to contribute to the goals related to the opioid crisis through its regional conferences. Understanding that substance misuse often starts while youth are of school age, the Center sought to make best use of its time with middle and high school students by addressing opioid/fentanyl use straight on.

The Center has completed or scheduled most of its requirements under the BJA STOP Violence Grants. Staff have trained all of the required grantees in the Colorado Threat Assessment and Management Protocol. The workshop is in high demand, and trainers are working hard to ensure that every school who requests the training has access to it. The online case management system is in use, and has already been expanded. This time-saving, secure platform is a welcome solution for Colorado schools, especially rural districts. The first cohorts of SROs have been trained in the Basic NASRO course. Two more groups are scheduled for next summer. SRO supervisors will be trained under the grant at the CASRO conference in the spring. Staff have been trained in the *Project Unite* curriculum, and final negotiations are underway with NASRO to present the training next summer. The pilot schools for the *Handle with Care* project have been trained and law enforcement in those locales are utilizing the program. The staff of the CSSRC are excited about and grateful for these additional resources that will be available for Colorado schools.

The Office of School Safety is always looking to create opportunities to expand its threat assessment work. It would be gratifying to complete an outcome evaluation of the CTAMP showing its efficacy through behavioral change. The OSS looks to examine this possibility in 2024.

The third School Safety Academy was held in 2023, with 26 Specialists completing the training. Participants enjoyed learning about foundational elements of school safety, and had the opportunity to meet staff from partner agencies. All present learned from the expertise of the entire group. The Center has been intentional about inviting Specialists from all three Academies to its school-based professionals working groups and regional conferences to sustain these relationships. The 2024 Academy is on the calendar in June.

CSSRC staff will continue to meet the requests for training, consultation, resources, and technical assistance for all schools in Colorado, with a particular focus on the rural communities. Staying abreast of the best practice updates from the federal government on school safety

policies and procedures is a priority. Staff from the Center continue to be invited to participate in national discussions and welcome the opportunity to train professionals in other states.

The support of Governor Polis and the Colorado General Assembly makes all of this work possible. 2023 brought opportunities in school safety that will bear fruit long into the future. There is no more noble cause than to protect children and youth. We are grateful to be of service in this endeavor, and strive to continue to support schools to make it a reality.



For additional information, please view the CSSRC website at [cssrc.colorado.gov](https://cssrc.colorado.gov) or [oss.colorado.gov](https://oss.colorado.gov)  
Colorado School Safety Resource Center  
Department of Public Safety  
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