Funding Opportunity – Safe Communities Safe Schools
University of Colorado Boulder

Project Description: The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) at CU-Boulder has received funding to partner with Colorado Front Range Middle Schools to promote school safety and a positive school climate. We will work in alignment with what schools are already doing and use an individualized, feasible approach that is driven by each school and their identified needs and priorities.

Project Goals:
- Promote positive school climate and increase school safety
- Increase student pro-social behaviors (e.g., social emotional learning, academic achievement)
- Address mental health needs and reduce student problem behaviors (e.g., delinquency, bullying, violence)
- Provide support to schools for building effective partnerships with community agencies to meet students’ needs

Overview of the SCSS Approach: SCSS works in close partnership with schools and communities to deliver the most effective programs and strategies known to impact school safety and promote a positive school climate in ways that are feasible and tailored to their unique needs. Our approach focuses on 3 Core Components and an implementation framework called the SCSS Implementation Road Map that strengthens, integrates, and aligns existing efforts.

Core Components:
1. Engage a School Team: Most schools already have school teams in place and we will work with these existing teams to create safety-oriented school action plans tailored to the needs of each school. We also encourage schools to include community partners on their team and we will provide guidance to ensure the effectiveness of cross-agency multi-disciplinary teams.
2. Gather Information: We will work closely with schools to collect and interpret data at the school (e.g., climate, rates of bullying, violence, and mental health) and student levels (e.g., identify students’ behavioral and mental health needs).
3. Build a strong Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS): We will support a schoolwide approach to social and emotional learning (SEL), while building the capacity of schools and community agencies to address student needs at the universal (all students), targeted (some students), and intensive levels (a few students).

SCSS Implementation Roadmap:
The roadmap outlines a five-phase process for implementing evidence-based programs and strategies to meet each school’s unique data-identified needs. The five phases include: (1) Build a Foundation (vision and goals with your team), (2) Identify Gaps (through information gathering), (3) Create an Individualized School Action Plan (select one Blueprint program and identify practices and policies matched to your school’s needs), (4) Implement your School Action Plan, and (5) Evaluate (to monitor your efforts).

What Schools Will Receive: We will meet schools where they are in their safety planning process while fully funding:
- Customized tools, resources, and strategies to support each school’s prevention and early intervention goals
- Comprehensive school climate data and student-level screening and assessment tools
- Tools and resources to monitor school climate and safety
- Social emotional learning strategies for staff and students
- Training/materials for a Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development Program (http://www.blueprintsprograms.com)
- The opportunity to participate in a Community of Practice with other schools and districts
- $1,000 stipend for each year in the later implementation group
**Staggered Implementation**: Implementation will be staggered over 4 years with 9 schools starting the project each year, so that all 36 schools will receive the intervention by Year 4. Schools that are in later implementation groups will still have the opportunity to complete staff and student surveys and receive real-time user-friendly reports on their school. They will also receive a $1,000 stipend (per year). Additional information will be collected at the implementation schools to learn to what extent programs and strategies are being used every year.

**Funding and Partnerships**: Funding for this project is provided to the University of Colorado Boulder by the National Institute of Justice as part of their Comprehensive School Safety Initiative. We will also be partnering with:

- **Arizona State University (ASU)**: ASU will develop an easy-to-use information dashboard and provide technical assistance to support evidence-based strategies.
- **Passageworks Institute**: Passageworks Institute offers customizable practices, principles and tools that integrate social and emotional learning, mindfulness, cultural responsiveness, and whole systems thinking to safe schools planning.
- **American Institute of Research (AIR)**: AIR will oversee and lead the project’s evaluation activities and they are focused on ensuring that the evaluation meets the needs of the schools.
- **Colorado Attorney General’s Office and Safe2Tell**: Provide implementation guidance and training on the Safe2Tell Program.

**Application Information**: We are accepting applications until we receive interest from 36 schools. If you intend to apply or if you have any questions about the grant, please contact Jody Witt at jody.witt@colorado.edu or 303-492-6404.

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s)

**Time Commitment**

**Q:** What is the time commitment, what in-school/out-of-school work is envisioned?

A: In school – Monthly meetings with the team (could be with an existing team), but individualized to work with schedules and fit of each school; Out of school – Approx. 1-1.5 days of training in fall and spring with the smaller planning team.

**Program Implementation**

**Q:** How are the programs selected?

A: There will be a menu of Blueprints programs that schools can select from based on their needs. We will also have a menu of simpler strategies that we can bring to help schools build their Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in feasible ways.

**Q:** Who pays for and sustains the evidence-based program?

A: The grant will pay for each school to receive one Blueprint evidence-based program (a lot of the costs for these programs are up front) and we can help strategize for program sustainability as needed.

**Q:** When does program implementation start?

A: Implementation and training of programs won’t start until the 2nd year. Programs will be selected as part of each school’s individualized school action plan and we will work very closely with each school to ensure the program is a good fit and feasible to implement based on their needs.
**Study Design**

**Q:** We noticed that the project is going to use a “staggered implementation design” and that some schools will not receive the program intervention until Years 2, 3, or 4. How is this determined?  
**A:** Participating schools will be entered into a lottery that will determine which year they will start implementing the intervention. The project model will be staggered with 9 schools starting each year of the project, so that all 36 schools will receive the intervention by Year 4.

**Q:** If schools are not receiving the intervention what will their role be and what will they receive?  
**A:** Schools not receiving the intervention will complete evaluation activities such as online staff and student surveys and a school safety checklist. Schools that are in later implementation groups will still have the opportunity to complete staff and student surveys and receive real time user-friendly reports on their school. In return for their time and effort they will also receive a $1,000 stipend that can be spent on whatever is needed for their school.

**Q:** What if later group schools want to implement their own interventions/programs during the project? Will they be allowed to do so?  
**A:** Of course! We are interested in how our program works within the natural environment of the school. We encourage schools to operate as usual during the grant!

**Surveys**

**Q:** Can we see the surveys that are going to be administered prior to agreeing to participate in the grant? Will consent be required?  
**A:** Surveys will be available for schools to review and while the surveys will be anonymous we do ask sensitive questions which will require us to obtain active consent from parents for youth to complete the survey. This is a federal grant and therefore we must follow the guidance of the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment.

**Q:** Will individual school data be shared?  
**A:** Individual school data will only be shared with the school and the project evaluators, data for the project will be kept confidential. If the project outcomes are published all data will be presented at the aggregate level – never identifying individual schools.

**Q:** Who will be surveyed in the schools?  
**A:** Students and staff. Schools can survey parents as well, but this is not required.

**Application**

**Q:** We are interested in the grant but are unsure if it is the best fit for our school. Should we apply anyway?  
**A:** YES! We encourage all interested schools to apply. Once we receive your application and determine your eligibility a site visit will be scheduled. The site visit is an opportunity for schools and CSPV to collaborate to determine if the grant is the right fit for your school and how the project may be tailored to your school’s individual needs.

**Q:** If more than one school in a district is interested does each school need to complete an application?  
**A:** Yes. The majority of the application is written to gain a perspective on the needs and structure of each individual school. However, we will only need one signed letter from the superintendent. If your district has additional district-level administrator (area or instructional superintendents), it is beneficial for them to also sign the superintendent letter of support but not mandatory.