



**Colorado Charter Schools
Annual Conference**

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Denver Marriott Tech Center



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Funding School Safety

Practical Grant Strategies for Safer Charter Campuses

Peggy Downs
Granting Your Vision LLC

Pikes Peak
February 26, 2026 | 8:30 – 9:30
Operations, Funding & Budgeting



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We make it our priority to **advocate** for high-quality public charter schools across Colorado.



Be a part of the action.



Objectives

- **Clearly articulate the safety problem** that the leadership team needs to solve.
- **Apply a leadership-first decision sequence:**
leadership → program → resources & funding → outcomes.
- **Use the Safe Schools Scorecard** to identify readiness gaps and leadership priorities.



Funding School Safety

School Safety Leadership Toolkit

- 1. Safe School Scorecard** – diagnose readiness across policies, people, practices, and systems
- 2. Safety Program Readiness Checklist** – prepare leadership approvals, documentation, and timelines
- 3. Safety Program Budget Planner** - translate program design into a realistic, fundable budget
- 4. Safety Funding Roadmap** – identify federal, state, and regional funding opportunities that fit your program
- 5. Quick-Start Guide** – apply the tools after leadership and program decisions are made

Why Sequence Matters

When funding comes first

- The school fits its needs into the grant.
- Grant program priorities shape the solution.
- The real leadership problem may stay unresolved.

When leadership comes first

- The school defines the problem.
- The program is designed intentionally to fully address that problem.
- Funding is selected to support that program and produce the outcomes the school has prioritized.

Clarity Comes First – Avoid the Leadership Trap

- What leadership problem are we actually trying to solve?
- Why does this problem require action now?
- What must change for this problem to truly be resolved?
- Who is accountable for the decision – and for results?

Using the Safe School Scorecard

- Surfaces strengths, gaps, and misalignment across your safety system
- Supports leadership judgment rather than compliance checklists
- Informs program design and funding decisions

Designed for leadership teams to use together to name problems, surface gaps, and decide where leadership attention is needed before pursuing funding.

Safe School Scorecard

Staff Training & Support (10 points possible)			
<i>Your team is your first line of defense - let's equip them well.</i>			
21	Are staff trained in first aid, CPR, and concussion awareness?	Yes (2)	2
22	Do they have training to spot mental health concerns or students in crisis?	In Progress (1)	1
23	Are mental health resources or partnerships available for students and staff?	In Progress (1)	1
24	Are staff familiar with using and maintaining safety equipment?	Yes (2)	2
25	Have you budgeted for ongoing safety and emergency training?	No (0) <input type="button" value="▼"/>	0



Drop Down Box



Score

Designed to prompt honest reflection about how safety is operating today – not to produce a perfect score.



Your Score & Next Steps

	64–80 points: Strong Foundation					
	40–63 points: Developing Systems					
	0–39 points: Leadership Attention Needed					
	Action Plan: For each “No” or “In Progress” response, identify one leadership or system-level action needed to strengthen readiness (for example, clarifying ownership, updating agreements, or establishing monitoring processes).					

The results help leadership teams decide what deserves attention first.



What Comes After This Session

In the School Safety Leadership Toolkit, you will find support for:

- **Readiness** – preparing leadership approvals, documentation, and timelines
- **Budget planning** – translating program design into a realistic, fundable budget
- **Funding navigation** – identifying state, federal, and regional opportunities that fit your program

These tools support the work that comes after today's leadership decisions.

Integrating Funding into Program Development

Disciplined leadership and program design make funding easier later.

- **Move beyond wish lists** – connect safety projects to your school’s long-term priorities
- **Design for scale** – ensure today’s projects support future growth and expansion
- **Center student impact** – link safety investments to learning, engagement, and school experience
- **Frame programs clearly** – articulate the program logic behind your safety strategy

Common Leadership Breakdowns When Funding Enters the Conversation

- Leadership decisions stall because required documentation and approvals were never planned in advance
- Leadership teams are not aligned on priorities and ownership
- Timelines are driven by grant deadlines instead of program readiness

Major Federal & State Safety-Related Funding Programs

Federal Grants

- COPS Office – School Violence Prevention Program
- STOP School Violence Program
- Safe Schools / Healthy Students

Colorado State Grants

- Preventing School Violence Grant Program
- School Access for Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program
- School Security Disbursement Grant Program
- School Bullying Prevention and Education Grant Program
- Colorado 21st CCLC subgrant

Leadership Practices That Strengthen Program Outcomes

Leadership practices to prioritize:

- Engage leadership and the board early in defining the problem and priorities
- Align every funding pursuit to your school's safety strategy and goals
- Establish ownership and documentation processes up front

Leadership practices to avoid:

- Don't let deadlines drive program decisions
- Don't start with purchases or vendors before leadership clarity

Building Long-Term Capacity

- Embed readiness into normal leadership and operating routines
- Maintain a living list of safety priorities tied to your program strategy
- Monitor upcoming federal, state, and regional safety funding opportunities
- Maintain current documentation and approvals (policies, budgets, safety plans)

Key Takeaways

- Leadership clarity and program design come before funding.
- Strong safety outcomes follow a disciplined sequence:
leadership → program → resources & funding → outcomes.
- The School Safety Leadership Toolkit supports the work after today
(Scorecard, Readiness Checklist, Budget Planner, Funding Roadmap).
- The decisions you make now determine how well your school can use future funding.



Leadership defines the problem.

Program design creates the solution.

Resources and funding enable the work.

Outcomes demonstrate impact.



From Planning to Action – Support When You Need It

Want a thought partner as you work through your next safety priorities?

I offer brief, no-pressure exploratory calls.

We'll focus on your leadership questions and next steps.

Email me directly: peggy@peggydowns.com

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