The Heartland

School Safety & Security Summit

October 6th & 7th

Lincoln, NE

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY

SAFE 2 HELP NEBRASKA

Nebraska Council of School Administrators

AGENDA Day 1

Heartland School Safety & Security Summit

'Better Recovery Outcomes Start with Prevention'

Tuesday, October 6th, 2026

- **12:30 to 1:00** Check-In/Registration
  Embassy Suites by Hilton 1020 P Street Lincoln, Nebraska

- **1:00 to 1:30 WELCOMING to the Summit:**
  Governor Jim Pillen welcomes attendees to the Heartland School Safety & Security Summit

- **1:30 to 3:00 Tabletop Discussion Exercises**

  Be prepared to have an active role in the open discussions and collaboration in this exercise of actual situations schools encounter in school safety & security.

  School Safety Teams will be made as all participants contribute to the safety decisions.

  'The Perfect Storm'
  Far more than a bad weather day

  - The Perfect Storm scenario is designed to demonstrate how multiple, seemingly unrelated incidents can cascade throughout a single school day, overwhelming systems, staff, and decision-makers if preparation and coordination are insufficient.

  - This exercise is not intended to suggest that every school will experience all of these events in one day, but rather to highlight how quickly normal operations can deteriorate when early warning signs are missed, communication breaks down, or resources are stretched thin.

- **3:00 to 4:00 Panel Discussion**

  Partnership with Clarkson Institute: AI Companions Influence on Youth Well-Being. After watching the *Clarkson Institute's* youth created short film Disconnected – created by an Auburn High School Junior. (15 minutes) there will be a panel discussion on AI Companion chatbots impact on youth well-being.

  - Youth High School Moderator – TBD – provide the youth voice.
  - Joe Toscano – AI Expert: former Google Consultant, author of Automating Humanity, in the film Social Dilemma on Netfilx
  - Kevin Kaminski – School Counselor Youth Engagement Voice
  - Jay Martin – NDE, School Safety & Security Director
  - Dr. Ken Zoucha – Director of Addiction Medicine & Department of Psychiatry

- **4:00 to 6:00 Social & Vendor Opportunities:**

- **6:00 Dinner:** on your own

Why & Who Should Attend:

The Heartland School Safety Summit aims to convene school administrators, counselors, safety teams, first responders, school social workers & psychologists, licensed mental health professionals, school board members, and emergency managers from multiple states to share best practices in incident prevention, crisis preparedness, and the promotion of psychologically safe school environments.

Join us in an active collaboration of learning and thriving as we work together to make all school communities safe and secure.

AGENDA – DAY 2
Heartland School Safety & Security Summit

Wednesday, October 7th, 2026

- **8:00 AM** Check-In/Registration and Continental Breakfast – Coffee - Water
  Embassy Suites by Hilton 1020 P Street Lincoln, Nebraska.

- **8:30 to 9:30 Keynote Speaker:**

  Suicide continues to be at the top of Schools Anonymous Call Center Report/Tiplines – Youth Suicide & Mental Health concerns remain on an upward path. It is a #1 concern in schools across the country, so we are pleased to bring a survivor who can address prevention and resilience.

  Kevin Hines is an internationally recognized mental health advocate, bestselling author, and one of the nation's most powerful voices on suicide prevention. At just 19 years old, Kevin survived a suicide attempt that became a turning point—not only in his own life, but in the lives of millions he has since reached through his work.

  Today, Kevin partners with schools, safety professionals, and communities across the country to focus on prevention, early intervention, and the power of connection. His message is grounded in lived experience and backed by action, offering practical insight into identifying warning signs, reducing stigma, and creating safer environments where every individual knows they are seen, heard, and valued.

- **9:30 to 9:45 Break/Visit with Vendors**

- **9:45 to 10:45 Session I Breakouts**
  - **Addressing Educator Safety –** Margaret Ochoa – Colorado Office of School Safety
    In 2024, the Colorado legislature required a year-long exploration of educator safety by a statutorily designated task force. This workshop will provide the results of a survey of over 1100 Colorado school personnel identifying the enormity of the problem. The presentation will also provide recommendations from the task force and four subcommittees outlined in five Roadmaps to Action. If you are concerned about the safety of educators and what your school and district can do to protect them, you will want to participate in this workshop.

  - **Evaluating Recent Attacks to Strengthen School Safety –** Brian Kempf – Elkhorn Nebraska

    This presentation will evaluate several recent attacks to offer insights and describe emerging trends. Utilizing this information, school safety and security officials can assess their current programs to identify gaps and limitations of current capabilities. The presentation's ultimate objective is to provide leaders with foundational knowledge to build a defensible school

safety strategy based on facts and analysis. The presentation will introduce data on K-12 school attacks and delve into several recent attacks to reveal pertinent details for school leaders to consider. Topics covered in the presentation include Elevated shooters (not only political assassins); the role of emerging technologies in attacks; hostile vehicle attacks; warning / red flag behaviors; and attack timelines.

- **Columbine, Lesson Learned from a First Responder –** Don Moseman – North Dakota Safety Council

  This will be a powerful and deeply personal presentation from one of the initial first responders at Columbine. Drawing from firsthand experience of that and two other events, the speaker shares the lasting emotional and psychological impact the tragedy had- not only on the victims and community, but for the first responders who rushed to the scene that day.

- **Swatting Indicators –** Devon Bodenstab – Nebraska – NIAC

  This session will provide a broad overview of indicators of swatting in a school setting and how a fusion center can assist.

- **10:45 AM Break/Vendors**

- **11:00 to 12:00 Session II Breakouts**
  - **Crisis Recovery and Interventions Real Lessons from Two School Tragedies –** Trish Kilpin – Wisconsin Dept of Justice

    Preparing and implementing effective interventions after incidents of school violence, stabilizing the school community and empowering staff. Careful planning and decision making is essential in providing best practice interventions that promote healing during the first moments, days, months and years following a large-scale crisis or act of school violence. In 2024, the Office of School Safety assisted two school communities in Wisconsin who experienced unthinkable tragedies and will share strategies for preparing in advance of a crisis, as well as specific considerations in planning interventions that meet the needs of the unique school community in the aftermath of a crisis.

  - **Beyond the Drill: Navigating Lockdown Response & Recovery –** Kyle Poore -Nebraska - Lincoln Public Schools

    Success during an incident is often determined long before it begins. Against the backdrop of a real-world school Lockdown, this case will examine the entire life-cycle of the event including initial notification, the coordinated response between school staff and law enforcement, and the comprehensive recovery process. Included will be insights from school and district leadership as well as law enforcement partners. We will analyze the specific leadership strategies used by school and district leadership to support staff and students through the immediate aftermath and the extended recovery period.

- **Beyond the Binder: Using AI to Build Smarter Tabletop Exercises** – Christopher Villarreal, ED.D and Missy Stolley – Papillion, Nebraska

  Your Emergency Operations Plan is only as strong as your team's ability to use it under pressure. But developing realistic tabletop exercises that test decision-making against your actual procedures takes time, and it often gets pushed aside. In this session, presenters from Papillion La Vista Community Schools will share how they are exploring the use of AI tools to support both the development and execution of tabletop exercises. Attendees will hear how the district uses AI informed by its own EOP and crisis procedures to generate scenarios, build decision points that connect back to established protocols, and facilitate exercises designed to surface gaps before a real crisis does.
  This is not a session about replacing human judgment with technology. It's about using AI to help your team practice against the plan you've written, not a generic scenario that hasn't been revisited since the last compliance check. Participants can expect to leave with: A framework for using AI to develop tabletop exercises grounded in their own EOP Practical strategies for building scenario decision-making trees that test specific procedures Techniques for facilitating exercises that surface gaps in preparedness Sample prompts and workflows they can adapt for their own districts.

- **Tier 1 Preventative Team Approach to Decrease School Threats –** Victory Haines and Rob Brenner – Nebraska - LPS Middle School

  Principal and SRO of an urban middle school share strategy and story of a successful preventative approach and joint effort to reduce the number of school threats and disturbances.

- **12:00 to 1:00 Lunch**

- **1:00 to 1:30 Nebraska School Safety & Security Award Presentation**
  Then…
  Connecting with Today's Youth
  The Power in the Hallways –
  How We Improve School Culture

  Mike Donahue is a renowned national speaker and author who has dedicated his career to helping educators and parents shift how they see kids and understand culture. He knows that schools aren't defined by posters or programs, but by the "silent rules" and unwritten belief systems shaping student behavior. Mike identifies the pressure points of identity and belonging that adults rarely see, focusing on the energy that sits in the hallways long before students enter the classroom. His approach transforms schools from the inside out by empowering students to recognize their value and use their influence for good. What he teaches is not theory, it is real-world experience that works when it's needed most. When belief shifts, culture will follow.

- **1:30 to 1:45 Break/Vendors**

- **1:45 to 2:45 Session III Breakouts**
  - **Safety & Emergency Debrief the Response: Experiences from a 5 -8 Grade Building –** Katie Rose & Jordan Anderson – Columbus, Nebraska

    Navigating crisis in your building can never be done without a team. Come learn from the experiences leading up to dialed 911 for a response to our middle school building. We will break down our organization and tweaks we make in the "You can't make this up" moments. With communication being key, we will include what roles and responsibilities look like; with high levels of communication as a team to ensure a positive outcome.
    As members of the Administration team responsible for responding to a crisis that has occurred at Columbus Middle School, we will share the range of actual events we have navigated so that you can learn and plan. We will walk through our real experiences, from broken legs, people fainting, suspected substance use, CPR and cardiac arrest, seizures, and even a bat swooping the hallways. This presentation will take you through the calmness in the chaos during a response; with the transparency of what we have learned and changed in our response protocol along the way. Presenters are past recipients of the Nebraska School Safety and Security Award.

  - **Recognize, respond, and prevent dating and sexual violence.** – Alex Pecoraro and Rachel West – Nebraska Coalition

    This session will explore the realities of dating and sexual violence among youth and how to intervene. After laying the foundation for how to address harm that may already be happening, we will take the second half of the session to explore primary prevention strategies. These strategies will provide education, tools, and resources to prevent violence from occurring and ultimately build safer schools.

  - **Enhancing Crisis Management: Using Handle With Care for Trauma-Sensitive School Interventions** – Kelly Addington – Wyoming Department of Education – School & Student Safety Accreditation Consultant

    This session will show you how to strengthen a school district's Crisis Management Plan by establishing protocols and school-community partnerships (law enforcement, schools, mental health) to support students exposed to trauma. The core protocol is a confidential notice from law enforcement—"Handle With Care"—after an incident. Trained school staff respond with trauma-sensitive, student-specific interventions (like re-teaching lessons or postponing testing). HWC is a proactive response focused on supporting the aftermath of trauma, complementing measures like 988 and Safe2Tell Wyoming, which focus on threat prevention.

- **Helping Students Navigate Social Pressure –** Mike Donahue

  Navigating Two Governments: Understanding the Hidden Pressures Driving Student Behavior. Today's students are not just managing school, they are navigating two powerful systems every single day: the adult government, and the social government. While educators often focus on rules, expectations, and academic performance, many student decisions are actually driven by an invisible force, the need for belonging, status, and emotional safety within their peer culture.
  In this workshop, educators will gain a deeper understanding of how these two "governments" compete for influence over a student's identity, behavior, and decision-making. Participants will explore why students sometimes choose social acceptance over adult expectations, why fear of peer rejection can outweigh fear of consequences, and how this tension impacts engagement, risk-taking, and mental health.
  Through real-life examples and practical strategies, educators will learn how to:
    - Recognize the hidden social pressures shaping student behavior
    - Understand the role of image management and peer influence
    - Build relational trust that increases student openness and honesty
    - Shift from reacting to behavior to addressing beliefs driving it
    - Create environments where students feel safe enough to align their actions with their values

  This session will challenge traditional assumptions about student behavior and equip educators with tools to better connect with students in a way that leads to lasting change.
  When educators understand the power of both governments, they gain the clarity needed to respond with empathy, build stronger relationships, and influence students at a deeper level, where real growth begins.

- **2:45 to 3:00 Break/Vendors**

- **3:00 to 4:00 Session IV Breakouts**

  - **Proactive School-based MTSS Measures to Address Suicide Concerns – Kim Jacobson & Sally Carlson**

    The strength of the school's Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 supports and interventions is the foundation for suicide prevention and response. This session encompasses proactive universal support that need to be in place within each tier, coupled with specific tools and resources directed at suicide prevention and response.

- **How to USE AI for Good**: **A Gen X Guide to Mastering NotbookLM for School Safety, Compliance, and Transport** – Lee Jacobsen – Grand Island, Nebraska

  Let's be honest: for those of us who remember life before the internet, the current AI "gold rush" can feel like a mix of hype and headache. But beyond the chatbots and deepfakes lies a tool that solves the problems we deal with daily: information overload. This session is designed specifically for educational leaders who are drowning in PDFs, board policies, meeting transcripts, and strategic plans. We're going to dive into NotebookLM, Google's AI-powered research assistant. Unlike general AI, NotebookLM stays "inside the fence" of the documents you provide, ensuring accuracy and data integrity. No fluff, no tech-jargon—just a practical look at how to reclaim your Sunday nights and make better, data-driven decisions.

- **The Mentoring Effect**: **How a Caring Adult Supports student well-being and security** – Kristina Syring and Tori Pedersen – Nebraska Teammates

  Safe schools are built through strong relationships. This session explores how one-to-one, school-based mentoring increases student hope, engagement, and school connectedness while reducing absenteeism and disciplinary referrals to help create safer, more supportive learning environments.

- **SCIP**: **Intervention and Prevention** – Tessah Fulk – Nebraska, School Community Intervention & Prevention

  This general SCIP presentation covers SCIP's systematic approach to identify and assist youth experiencing a behavioral health concern, how this process enhances and complements other school programs, covers identification and parental engagement, discusses the series of prevention education opportunities that SCIP offers their schools.