

# ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



35TH ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE • OCTOBER 12-13, 2023

## LOCATION

Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort & Spa  
Beaver Creek, CO

## HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort & Spa  
Beaver Creek, CO  
(888) 421-1442

**Make reservations by September 13, 2023 to assure these rates:**

\$199.00 per night, single or double occupancy.  
(Same price for Deluxe and Standard rooms. Suites available for additional charge.)

**CANCELLATION POLICY: 7 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF ARRIVAL.**

Please contact the Park Hyatt Hotel Reservations Department at **1 (888) 421-1442** or make your reservation online at:

<https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/BEAVE/G-ACI3>

Identify yourself as an attendee of the Association of Colorado Independent Schools conference.

## QUESTIONS?

Visit our website at [www.acischools.org](http://www.acischools.org)

or contact Alan Smiley, Executive Director

**(303) 444-2201**

## CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

### EARLY REGISTRATION

*(received BY September 13)*

- Member schools \$450 per person
- Non-member schools \$475 per person
- ACIS school staff \$275 per person for attending Friday only
- Courtesy Extension (Members Only)

The early registration fee will prevail after 9/13 for member schools that register eight or more participants.

### REGISTRATION

*(received after September 13)*

- Member schools \$525 per person
- Non-member schools \$550 per person
- ACIS school staff \$350 per person for attending Friday only

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- **REGISTER** now at [www.acischools.org](http://www.acischools.org)
- **PAY** by mailing your check to:  
ACIS, 4000 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Ste. 230,  
Littleton, CO 80123
- \$50 discount for the spouses/partners of conference registrants
- Dinner and Keynote only—\$150.00

**NO REFUNDS FOR CONFERENCE CANCELLATIONS AFTER SEPTEMBER 13, 2023!**

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## ACIS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SCHEDULE 2023

### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023

TIME	TRACK/SPEAKER	LOCATION
3:00 – 5:00 pm	New Trustee Orientation: Monique Davis and Anne-Marie Balzano	Molly Brown
3:00 – 5:00 pm	Heads' Roundtable: Debra Wilson <i>For Heads of School Only</i>	Ouray/Tabor
3:30 – 5:00 pm	Circle of Chairs for Large Schools <i>For Current and/or Rising Board Chairs Only</i>	Gerald Ford
	Circle of Chairs for Small Schools <i>For Current and/or Rising Board Chairs Only</i>	Jack Dempsey
5:30 – 6:00 pm	Registration	Heritage Hall Foyer
5:45 – 6:30 pm	Reception	Heritage Hall Foyer
6:30 – 7:45 pm	Dinner & Dessert	Mt. Jackson/Grouse
7:15 – 7:45 pm	<b>EVENING KEYNOTE: DEBRA WILSON</b> Transitions Ahead	Mt. Jackson/Grouse

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2023

TIME	TRACK/SPEAKER	LOCATION
7:15-8:15 am	Registration and Book Sale	Sawatch Foyer
7:30-8:15 am	Breakfast Buffet	McCoy's Peak & Patio
8:30-10:00 am	<b>KEYNOTE: KARI GRANGER</b> Revitalizing Schools: The New Era of Stakeholder Leadership	Mt. Jackson/Grouse
10:00 – 10:30 am	Break	
10:30-11:45 am	<b>Concurrent Sessions (Morning)</b>	
	① Change Your Mindset Mary Carrasco	Brown
	② The Antifragile Educator and Leader – Thriving in Challenging Times Pascal Losambe	Tabor
	③ National Legal and Governance Trends: Looking Back and Ahead Megan Mann	Mt. Jackson
	④ Culture and Compensation: How to Empower Your Faculty Josh Cobb and Juan Botello	Dempsey
	⑤ Futureproofing Your School Through Board-Head Partnership Greg Bamford	Grouse Mountain
	⑥ The School Safety Partners We Too Often Leave Out: Engaging Your Board in Safety Chris Joffe	Ouray
11:45 am-12:45 pm	Lunch Buffet	
12:45-1:30 pm	School-Based, School Staff Affinity or Head-led Breakout Discussion Groups	
1:45-3:00 pm	<b>Concurrent Sessions (Afternoon)</b>	
	① Authentic Partnership Mary Carrasco	Brown
	② The Antifragile Educator and Leader – Thriving in Challenging Times Pascal Losambe	Tabor
	③ National Legal and Governance Trends: Looking Back and Ahead Megan Mann	Mt. Jackson
	④ Brave Conversations During Election Season (and Beyond!) Greg Bamford	Grouse Mountain
	⑤ The Fundamental Principles of Crisis Leadership Chris Joffe	Ouray

# ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



## PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023

Heads' Roundtable | 3:00-5:00 pm

#### Collegial Conversation and Collaboration *Debra Wilson*

This will be an opportunity for current ACIS Heads of School to gather for collegial conversation and collaboration. Topics will be communicated in advance of the gathering and based on timely interests and areas of concern. *Only current ACIS Heads of School may participate.*

New Trustee Orientation | 3:00-5:00 pm

#### *Monique Davis and Anne-Marie Balzano*

This workshop will explore strategies for effective school trusteeship. Participants will review standards of good practice for boards, clarify roles and responsibilities, and share ideas for working in partnership with administrators to provide strategic leadership for the school. Case study discussions will foster creative engagement, explore application of good governance principles, and address common board challenges.

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2023

Keynote | 8:30-10:00 am

#### Revitalizing Schools: The New Era of Stakeholder Leadership *Kari Granger*

In a rapidly evolving educational landscape, a fresh leadership approach is vital for Colorado's independent schools—one that embraces change, prioritizes stakeholders, and confidently navigates toward a compelling future. Kari Granger will unveil four critical shifts pivotal to Stakeholder Leadership. We will delve into the complexities of stakeholder behavior, provide strategies to dismantle organizational silos, and recognize the distinct experiences of the 'top,' 'middle,' and 'front-line' individuals in the system. We'll also introduce techniques to enhance collaboration, ensuring experiences across all levels of the organization are acknowledged and leveraged. Join us for this transformative session filled with actionable insights and practical tools. Depart with a rich understanding of this innovative approach leadership and be ready to steer your school into the future.

Morning Presentations | 10:30-11:45 am

#### ① Change Your Mindset *Mary Carrasco*

Do you struggle with finding the right language to make your best fundraising pitch? You may be worried unnecessarily. Change your mindset from making a pitch to determining what you need to learn from a prospective donor and how to ask strategic questions in order to create a winning proposal.

Join GG+A Senior Vice President Mary Carrasco to find the most helpful strategic questions to ask prospective donors.

Circle of Chairs | 3:30-5:00 pm

An experienced board chair from ACIS will lead this roundtable conversation about the critical partnership between school heads and board chairs. Based roughly on school size, discussions will identify common and current challenges as well as proven strategies for effective board leadership. *Only current and rising board chairs may participate.*

Keynote | 7:15 pm

#### Transitions Ahead *Debra Wilson*

Evolution and transitions are inevitable in the nonprofit world, and NAIS is embracing both in this complex time in education. Join the new president of NAIS, Debra Wilson, as she shares the key issues on her mind and how she sees NAIS evolving to address these issues and serve its member schools. This session is an invitation to further engagement as the national association looks forward to the exciting challenges ahead.

#### ② The Antifragile Educator and Leader – Thriving in Challenging Times *Pascale Losambe*

In recent reports, alarming trends have emerged, revealing that teachers, leaders, and especially DEIB practitioners are facing unprecedented levels of burnout and exhaustion. The ever-changing educational landscape, combined with the complexities of fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, has placed tremendous strain on these essential professionals.

In this transformative session, we delve into the concept of becoming “antifragile” as educators and leaders. Rather than merely surviving in the face of adversity, we will explore how to thrive in the current climate.

Drawing on the principles of antifragility, which suggest that certain systems grow stronger and more resilient through exposure to stressors, this session offers practical tools, strategies, and insights to empower educators, trustees, and DEIB practitioners to navigate challenges with resilience, purpose, and renewed passion.

#### ③ National Legal and Governance Trends: Looking Back and Ahead *Megan Mann*

In this interactive session, NAIS General Counsel, Megan Mann, will review the legal, risk management, and governance trends that independent schools across the country experienced during the 2022-23 school year, as well as those we see developing as we head toward 2024. This session will cover a broad range of topics, including board education and development, the focus on school safety and security, affirmative action in the news, as well as trends related to key school documents, policies, and protocols. Megan will include “table top exercises” to help school heads and trustees explore the trends through real-world scenarios, and she will gladly take questions throughout the session. She welcomes interactive dialogue, and will offer practical tips for school leaders.

## PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2023

Morning Presentations *(continued)* | 10:30-11:45 am

#### ④ Culture and Compensation: How to Empower Your Faculty *Josh Cobb and Juan Botello*

During the pandemic, schools embraced change out of necessity and learned how flexibility and adaptability were key to their success in an uncertain environment. Now, as schools look toward the horizon, most hope to sustain those attributes to propel other necessary innovations. Specifically, this presentation examines how innovative compensation systems can inspire a dynamic, collaborative, and positive faculty culture. While reviewing a three-year process of shifting from a scaled salary structure to a unique banded system, the presenters from Graland Country Day School will describe how that change requires faculty input, financial resources, and community support.

#### ⑤ Futureproofing Your School Through Board-Head Partnership *Greg Bamford*

Trustees know that their primary role is to hold the school in trust and to steward it into the future. However, many boards are focused on the present and – at best! – think about the next 5-7 years.

Thinking like futurists helps boards and heads consider a longer time horizon and shape the future, not simply react to it. Futurists don't predict the future. They consider many possible futures, focus on what is probable, and design towards a preferred future. Futurists use their imagination to consider how small signals might evolve to become mainstream trends. They test their thinking with scenarios. Because this kind of thinking enables a higher degree of cognitive flexibility, they respond to novel circumstances with greater confidence and less anxiety. And because futurist thinking is inherently collaborative, it can lead to stronger partnerships between boards and heads.

We believe that boards and heads should regularly engage in futurist thinking as a path to generative governance and more robust strategic planning. This interactive workshop will introduce attendees to core concepts of futurist thinking, have the opportunity to practice a futurist thinking on a small scale, and identify ways that futurist thinking can lead to more generative – and fulfilling – partnership between heads and boards.

#### ⑥ The School Safety Partners We Too Often Leave Out: Engaging your Board in Safety *Chris Joffe*

Boards are deeply involved in our schools, and are invaluable partners for everything from fundraising to academics. But there's one area most schools have not deeply engaged their boards in: safety and security. In this session, we'll discuss why this matters, what board members bring to the table, and how school leaders can more deeply and appropriately engage their board leadership in their safety and security strategy.

Afternoon Presentations | 1:45-3:00 pm

#### ① Authentic Partnerships *Mary Carrasco*

Join us for a conversation with two heads of school and leadership donors to learn more about how authentic partnerships that develop into gifts with true impact. GG+A Senior Vice President Mary Carrasco will lead the conversation with a group of ACIS heads and donors.

#### ② The Antifragile Educator and Leader – Thriving in Challenging Times *Pascale Losambe*

*See description under morning session.*

#### ③ National Legal and Governance Trends: Looking Back and Ahead *Megan Mann*

*See description under morning session.*

#### ④ Brave Conversations During Election Season (and Beyond!) *Greg Bamford*

Educators are anxiously anticipating the fall election. The 2016 and 2020 elections were disruptive and rancorous in many schools, reflecting a deeply divided country. Fast forward to 2024, and election season will likely test our school communities. However, if we can get past the understandable anxiety, we have an opportunity to strengthen our communities through conversation and connection.

In this conversation, we'll reflect on the lessons of the last two election cycles, discuss the dynamics that make the 2024 presidential election particularly challenging, and offer some tools for creating spaces where students can get better at navigating conflict and challenging conversations.

In this workshop, Greg will share some of the elements from Leadership + Design's Design for Election Week curriculum: in particular, the Pause/Reflect/Repair protocol for challenging conversations, the value of proactively offering norms to ground conversations, and an exploration of the distinctions between being non-partisan and being neutral as schools support inclusion and belonging in their communities.

#### ⑤ The Fundamental Principles of Crisis Leadership *Chris Joffe*

Crises are known to have myriad issues blended together and launched at the crisis leaders at the speed of... crisis. How do you know which data presented to you are action-worthy versus which are artifact? What decisions should you make swiftly? What decisions allow time for analysis-paralysis? How does one escape analysis-paralysis once it's recognized? How might we consolidate the perspectives of multiple leaders into a single, decisive, organizational perspective? In this session participants will be able to understand key lessons from recent active shooter events with a focus on preparedness and response, define the core leadership principles of keeping students safe, as we contemplate the spectrum of possibility over the next 5 years.

## SPEAKER BIOS: KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



### DEBRA WILLSON

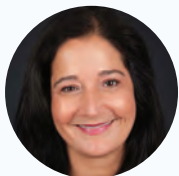
Debra rejoined [NAIS](#) as president in August 2023. She grew up in Connecticut, where she graduated from the Williams School, an independent school located on the campus of Connecticut College. Debra received her B.A. in English from Sewanee, The University of the South, and her J.D. from the University of South Carolina at Columbia. She previously served as general counsel for NAIS for 19 years. In addition to her role as chief legal officer of the organization, she presented to school leaders around the country and abroad around pressing legal issues, risk management, independent school governance, and student health and wellness. She also oversaw the federal government relations work for the association. Debra left NAIS to become the president of the Southern Association of Independent Schools in 2019, a role maintained for four years. Before joining the NAIS staff in 2000, Debra was a tax litigator at the Department of Justice. She is an avid reader, photographer, and cook, and loves to be outdoors.



### KARI GRANGER

Kari Granger is an organizational change expert and combat veteran with 20 years of experience. Curious and direct, she cuts through noise and dives directly to the heart of the matter – anticipating emerging trends, navigating contingencies, surfing complexity, and resolving stakeholder tradeoffs. Kari has worked on five continents and in a variety of industries to include healthcare, technology, higher education, and the military. She is the Founder and CEO of leadership consulting firm, [The Granger Network](#). And, she is a member of the board for the Montessori School of Evergreen. As a mother with a strong voice in the world, Kari has a special interest in working with game-changing leaders seeking to balance an unwavering commitment to their families with their personal and professional ambitions.

## SPEAKER BIOS



### DR. ANNE-MARIE BALZANO

Anne-Marie Balzano is Mission and Data's ([www.missionanddata.com](http://www.missionanddata.com)) senior governance strategist. In her role, she designs learning opportunities for heads of school and boards and leads Mission and Data's *Board Chair Support Program*. A former teacher, head of school, associate professor, and most recently, Director of Leadership and Governance at the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), she possesses a unique and multi-leveled perspective of the educational landscape and the complex demands of supporting leadership and governance development across multiple contexts. She is a trusted advisor to schools across the country, facilitating board retreats and educating boards of trustees on effective governance practices and trends, supporting resiliency in heads of school, and building a positive board culture. Independent school trustees and heads of school know Anne-Marie as the chief editor of *The Board Chair Handbook* and the host of NAIS's governance podcast, *The Trustee Table*.



### GREG BAMFORD

Greg Bamford is a Senior Partner at [Leadership+Design](#), a non-profit organization that works with schools nationally. As a full-time consultant, he has a particular focus on strategic planning, clarifying school identity, and leadership development.

Greg was previously the Associate Head of School for Strategy and Innovation at Charles Wright Academy in Tacoma, Washington, as well as Head of School at Watershed School in Boulder, Colorado. He is currently on the board of trustees at his alma mater, The Overlake School in Redmond, Washington.

Greg has been a featured speaker at dozens of education conferences, and written for publications like *Independent School* magazine, *NBOA's Net Assets* magazine, and *EMA's The Yield* magazine. You can find him on Twitter at [@gregbamford](#).



### JUAN BOTELLO

Juan is a certified public accountant with 40 years of public, private, and non-profit accounting experience. In his 14 years at [Graland](#), Juan has overseen two major construction projects and led several strategic initiatives including a revised faculty compensation system. He has previously presented about school finance at the ACIS Leadership Conference as well as served as a guest instructor at Regis University. Juan holds a BS in accounting from the University of Northern Colorado. He is a Colorado native and enjoys spending time outdoors.

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## SPEAKER BIOS



### MARY CARRASCO

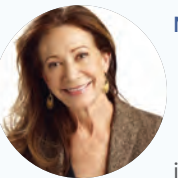
Mary K. Carrasco, Senior Vice President, brings more than four decades of experience to [GG+A](#) and the firm's Independent Schools Practice Area. A respected leader in the independent school advancement community, Mary co-founded the CASE Independent School Leadership Group and chaired the 2012 CASE-NAIS Conference as well as the 2016-2020 CASE Independent School Fundraising Awards Committees.

Before joining GG+A, Mary served Sidwell Friends School for nine years as the Assistant Head of School for Advancement. In this role, she led the school through the early phases of its groundbreaking nine-figure comprehensive campaign. Previously, Mary served as Assistant Head of School at Mercersburg Academy, where she managed a 21-person staff and designed Mercersburg's \$148 million campaign, for which she was a primary solicitor. In her 13 years at Mercersburg Academy, Mary led the institution's fundraising program and guided the school through its \$148 million Mightily Onward campaign. She has also served as a major gift officer for Georgetown University, Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service, and as Director of Resource Development for The Community Foundation of Greater Washington.



### JOSH COBB

Josh started at [Graland](#) in 2002 as the ninth grade English teacher and went on to serve in a lead administrative role in the Middle School. He became the Head of School in 2017. Josh holds a bachelor's degree in creative writing and a master's in English literature from Middlebury College in Vermont and more recently earned a second master's in education from Columbia University in New York City. Josh loves bringing innovation to schools and collaborating with other leaders to implement change.



### MONIQUE DAVIS

Monique Davis ([monique@thinkingdavis.com](mailto:monique@thinkingdavis.com)) is a national education consultant who understands the complex environment of independent schools. She leverages the power of understanding innovation, social trends, culture, strategic planning, design thinking, organizational psychology, collaboration, and business acumen to design models and programs for a school's sustainability. She coaches chairs, heads of school, and administration leaders, builds boards, facilitates retreats, and implements professional education programs using extensive tools and resources designed to increase a board's and administration's effectiveness. She is committed to building school cultures committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. She lectures nationally, leads workshops, presents at conferences, builds programs to support schools, and serves on school and non-profit boards. Our work: Purposeful collaboration. Our focus: Leadership development and high-functioning boards. Our goal: Sustainable schools.



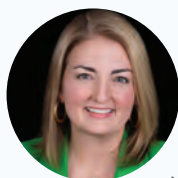
### CHRIS JOFFE

Chris Joffe is the Founder and CEO of [Joffe Emergency Services](#), a company wholly dedicated to – and leader in – school safety programs, event safety, and emergency preparedness. Chris has spent his career dedicated to making the world safer, and over the past decade he and his team have worked with thousands of schools across the country to provide training, consultation, and support. Chris studied paramedicine at UCLA and earned his Masters in Technology, Business and Integrated Design at the University of Southern California (USC) and he's currently in the process of publishing a book on the principles of community safety.



### PASCAL LOSAMBE, PHD

Dr. Pascal Losambe is the Co-Founder, Chief Content Officer, and Senior Consultant for Synergy Consulting Company. Dr. Losambe has a Bachelor's in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry from Middlebury College and a Master of Science in Biology with a focus on Neurobiology from Boston College where he received the Donald J. White award for teaching excellence. Dr. Losambe has earned his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Purdue University with a focus on cultural competence. Dr. Losambe serves as the Director of Diversity and Community Life at Columbus Academy. Dr. Losambe co-authored a book with his wife and business partner, Crystal Losambe, titled *Breaking the Barriers to Belonging: United by Our Biology and Shared Humanity*, which was published in January 2023. Additionally, Dr. Losambe consults and presents to companies and other organizations on various topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion, educational leadership, and organizational culture. He has led strategic vision initiatives for various institutions and has conducted multiple workshops on cultural competence at national and international conferences.



### MEGAN MANN

Megan Mann is the General Counsel for the [National Association of Independent Schools \(NAIS\)](#) and their Vice President in charge of Legal Education and Support. Prior to joining the NAIS team, Megan was an independent school attorney, supporting independent schools across the country. Megan's experience with independent schools began as an independent school student in Richmond, Virginia. She is now the proud mother of two independent school children (and one fabulously awkward looking dog). Additionally, Megan enjoys her role as a trustee for both One Schoolhouse and St. Michael's School (RVA) (where she attended school). When not practicing law or spending time with friends and family, she enjoys voice over work, reading, jogging, and a good BBQ.