

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
3101 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA

School Safety and Security Committee Meeting

May 31, 2023

MINUTES

Members/Designees:

Hon. Austin A. Davis, Lieutenant Governor, Chairman
Maj. George Bivens, Designee for PSP Col. Christopher L. Paris
Senator James Brewster, Member
Ms. Nikki Bricker, Member
Representative Donna Bullock, Member
Mr. David Hein, Member
Mr. Mike Hurley, Member
Mr. Mike Kelly, Member
Ms. Brittney Kline, Designee for Attorney General Michelle Henry
Dr. Scott Kuren, Designee for Acting PDE Secretary Mumin
Senator Wayne Langerholc, Member
Mr. Randy Padfield, Member
Dr. Jamie Piraino, Member
Dr. Kathleen Reeves, Member
Ms. Wendy Robison, Member
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member

Staff:

Sally Barry	Crystal Lauver
Pamela Bennett	Roi Ligon
Lindsay Busko	Elizabeth Locke
Stephen Ekema-Agbaw	Zoe Miner
Jennifer Ely	Derin Myers
Chris Epoca	Mike Pennington
Heather Hewitt	Debra Sandifer
Kirsten Kenyon	Alyssa Subsinsky
Samantha Koch	Lindsay Vaughan
Geoff Kolchin	Shaun White
Carol Kuntz	

Guests:

Diane Acri, PA House
Capt. Patrick Beaver, PA State Police (PSP)
Sean Brandon, PA House
Stephen Bruder, PA Senate
Erika Brunelle, PA State Education Association (PSEA)
Andrew Christ, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Gwenn Dando, PA Senate
Kristin Daniels, PA State Police (PSP)
Neil Hartnett, Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Kerwin Henderson, WestEd
Jason Henry, Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Heather Masshardt, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Caroline Riegel, PA Partnerships for Children
Brett Schaeffer, PA Senate
Lori Toscano, WestEd
Camille Traczek, PA Department of Education (PDE)
Steph Wehnau, Pennsylvania State University
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate
Steven Williams, Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Call to Order of the May 31, 2023 Meeting and Adoption of Minutes

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM and welcomed participants. A quorum of members was established. Moving to the agenda, Chairman Davis noted that the minutes from the March 29, 2023 meeting were part of the packet of materials made available prior to today's meeting and called for a motion to approve them.

Motion to approve the minutes from the March 29, 2023 meeting as submitted

Motion: Brewster. **Seconded:** Hein. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Bullock, Kline, Piraino & Reeves. **Aye Votes:** 11. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Chairman Davis welcomed and introduced several newly appointed PCCD staff members who will be assisting the Committee in their work:

- School Safety and Security Manager Dr. Jennifer Ely will be handling school safety grants, taking over for Carol Kuntz, who now serves as PCCD's Safe Schools Advocate, and
- Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Manager Zoe Miner will be leading that team and working with Ms. Samantha Koch on the VIP Grant Program.

Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP) Evaluation

Chairman Davis invited Zoe Miner to present information on this action item. Ms. Miner reviewed those eligible to apply, the purpose and goals. She noted that the grant included evaluating whether project and program specific goals were achieved and capturing site specific and cross-site outcomes for FY-2022. Chairman Davis thanked Ms. Miner for her presentation and invited a motion to approve this action item.

Motion to approve the adoption of the application of the National Opinion Research Center for a process and outcome evaluation of the CCVI/VIP grants for an amount not to exceed \$2,792,862 in federal VIP Grant program funds, pending the resolution of any outstanding programmatic and/or fiscal concerns

Motion: Heim. **Seconded:** Tuleya-Payne. **Discussion:** None. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Kline & Piraino. **Aye Votes:** 13. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Presentation on Baseline Criteria Updates

Chairman Davis invited Samantha Koch to share the revised Baseline Criteria. Ms. Koch began by acknowledging that the baseline criteria has helped move the needle in tangible ways and has made a difference in supporting schools in both the mental health and safety and security areas. She shared that this impact can be seen in the grant funding analysis provided in the meeting materials but cautioned members regarding the confidential and protected nature of the data.

Moving on to the current action item, Ms. Koch presented the proposed revised Physical Security and Behavioral Health Baseline Criteria Standards. She noted that the Baseline Criteria Workgroup reconvened following the last Committee meeting and acknowledged the diligent efforts of the more than 60 participants as they met 10 times to evaluate the currently adopted standards and make recommendations for revisions and adjustments.

Ms. Koch referenced the four documents that were created, with two being the proposed Revised Baseline Criteria Standards documents and the other two being crosswalk reference guides comparing the 2021 Baseline Criteria Standards language and the new proposed standards. She highlighted key features of the revised standards as well as some of the changes and benefits of the revisions. Ms. Koch concluded her presentation by sharing the plan to communicate the modification of these standards to all public school entities and inform them of their ability to modify and/or to extend their grant applications if desired.

Motion to approve the Revised Physical Security and Behavioral Health Baseline Criteria Standards

Motion: Tuleya-Payne. **Seconded:** Brewster. **Discussion:** None. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 15. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

School Employee and School Safety Coordinator Training: Update on Needs Assessment

Chairman Davis invited Lindsay Vaughn to present her update on this training. Ms. Vaughn reviewed a PowerPoint presentation and covered what the statute requires for training employees and coordinators, the responsibilities of PCCD and the Committee, and the selection of Risk and Strategic Management Corporation (RSM) as the project partner. She shared that RSM has conducted the needs assessment and reviewed the response and findings. Ms. Vaughn concluded by covering next steps and the target timeline, including first focusing on employees' least comfortable topics and the anticipation of a full day of training for coordinators in January 2024 and a "train the trainer" session by August 2024.

Ms. Vaughn invited questions and comments from members. She responded to one member's question, confirming that Intermediate Units (IUs) will have the ability to be identified as trainers.

Another member inquired regarding active shooter training, which led to some discussion. The member referenced changes that had been made, noting that some schools are doing that type of training with local law enforcement and his support for incorporating students in training drills similar to those required for fire/emergency so they are prepared. He also noted the challenge of a school district trying to get a School Resource Officer (SRO) but not having any applicants, and he asked how many of the 500 school districts have SROs. Another member responded that some of that information is publicly available on the PA Department of Education (PDE) website, as the Office of Safe Schools collects information on each school's security staff annually.

In response to the initial question regarding active shooter drills, a member replied that Act 44 of 2018 requires every public school entity to conduct two active shooter drills per year, to be coordinated with the local law enforcement agency (LEA) or their SRO. He said the biggest difficulty schools are encountering is a shortage of qualified individuals who can serve as SROs. Municipalities are struggling to get enough officers to meet their minimum LEA staffing needs, so many school entities are going with a third-party agency.

The first member asked how that continuing gap might affect how grant funds are disseminated when some school entities have not met the minimum requirements, stating that he only knows of one district in his area that is doing active shooter training with students and LEA on site, which he views as problematic. In response, the other member noted two factors that are part of the challenge with school districts doing the active shooter training with students. The first factor is the community response and pushback of parents letting their school boards know that they do not want their children to be traumatized by experiencing active shooter drills. The second struggle that is becoming more apparent in school districts, and has occurred in Parkland and other places, is the reluctance to involve students in higher-level drills out of fear that are actually training a possible shooter who would have knowledge on how the school would engage in an active shooter situation. He reiterated that active shooter training must be conducted in schools on an annual basis but needs to be done properly and with community, school board, and LEA support. The first member stated that school board members need to go on record about that, as PCCD has compiled good materials and made them available. He concluded by stating the desire to ensure that as funding continues, it goes to the right areas and that the basics are covered.

Ms. Vaughn clarified that active shooter training is part of the emergency training drills already being conducted. There is also the expectation that school safety and security coordinators will work with their LEA and that the trainings will tie together to make the drills more meaningful. Another member added that a lot more is happening than what folks realize, noting that some police departments have been training together to train staff and then practice components with students, so the training is happening, including with the IUs.

General Updates

Chairman Davis invited Kirsten Kenyon and Samantha Koch to apprise the Committee on the status of the FY22-23 School Mental Health & School Safety and Security Grants. Ms. Kenyon provided a brief update, noting that as of May 30, 2023, 655 of 763 (86%) of all grants have been awarded,

amounting to \$165 million out of \$195 million, which is \$82.5 million out of \$95 million for both the physical security and behavioral health grants.

Ms. Kenyon shared a breakdown of the awards by school entity type, with School Districts having the best award rate at 91% followed by Intermediate Units at 89%. Career and Technical Schools are next at 76% followed by Charter Schools at 74%. She indicated that out of the 108 remaining grantees to be awarded, 25 applicants are nearing completion, and staff continues to do outreach with the remainder to resolve their grants. Ms. Kenyon noted that staff are cognizant of the length of time taken in the process and shared that communication will be sent out notifying grantees that they will have the ability to extend the grant timeframe.

Ms. Kenyon also updated the Committee on the status of the School Safety and Security Coordinator Survey. She reviewed the statute in [Section 1309-B](#) requiring coordinators to annually make a report to their school entity's board by June 30 and submit information to the Committee to demonstrate that the requirement has been met. Ms. Kenyon stated that the Survey was made available via Survey Monkey on May 16 and will be open until July 16, noting that 63 school entities have already submitted reports. Ms. Kenyon anticipated sharing a more robust report of the findings at the July meeting.

Next, Ms. Koch reported that on May 15 PCCD submitted a grant request with PDE to the federal Bureau of Justice Initiatives for the STOP School Violence Grant. She noted that the proposed initiative would build on the good work that's taken place over the past three and a half years via the Pennsylvania K-12 Threat Assessment Training & TA Network initiative (seeded through a FY19 STOP School Violence Grant), which has already trained more than 6,500 Pennsylvania school administrators. She indicated that these training supports came at an ideal time, just when school entities were asked to implement new threat assessment team mandates by the 2021-22 school year.

Ms. Koch noted that the new proposal continues and builds upon the current process, maintaining the established training courses and developing advanced training and technical assistance offerings, including expanded scenario-based training. The proposal continues the partnership with RSM Corporation as well as close collaboration with PDE's Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) to embed project supports and develop resources to help schools navigate and respond effectively to behavioral health needs. Ms. Koch concluded by expressing appreciation for the support provided by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and the PA School Boards Association.

Member Updates/Comments/Questions

Chairman Davis noted that the general updates document was provided in the meeting materials and reviewed items included. He invited members to share any comments, questions or updates. A member reported that he testified last week at a hearing on Plan Con funding for school construction and renovation which included a lot about school safety. He shared that it seems like there's some legislative talk in support of funding and a bill is currently in the Senate. He noted that this funding would assist in revitalizing schools and tackling safety issues and programs.

Public Comment

The Chairman invited any public comment; however, none was received.

Adjournment

Chairman Davis noted anticipation of the next meeting date for some time in July, depending on the passage of the state budget and any accompanying legislation that may impact the Committee's work. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 1:51 PM.

Motion to adjourn

Motion: Tuleya-Payne. **Seconded:** Hein. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Hurley. **Aye Votes:** 14. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**