

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

**School Safety and Security Committee Meeting**

January 11, 2023

MINUTES

**Members/Designees:** Mr. Derin Myers, Designee for Chairman Ramsey  
Ms. Janice Bart, Member  
Senator James Brewster, Member  
Representative Donna Bullock, Member  
Ms. Nikki Bricker Cameron, Member  
Dr. Benjamin Feeney, Member  
Lt. Kyle Gautsch, Member  
Rep. Barb Gleim, Member  
Mr. David Hein, Member  
Mr. Mike Kelly, Member  
Dr. Scott Kuren, Designee for Secretary Ortega  
Maj. Matthew Nickey, Designee for Col. Robert Evanchick  
Mr. Randy Padfield, Member  
Dr. Jamie Piraino, Member  
Dr. Kathleen Reeves, Member  
Ms. Wendy Robison, Member  
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member

**Staff:**

Pamela Bennett	Carol Kuntz
Lindsay Busko	Crystal Lauver
Christina Cosgrove	Roi Ligon
Jennifer Ely	Levi Looks
Chris Epoca	Zoe Miner
Heather Hewitt	Mike Pennington
Kirsten Kenyon	Debra Sandifer
Rebecca Kiehl	Alyssa Subsinsky
Samantha Koch	Lindsay Vaughan
Geoff Kolchin	Shaun White

**Guests:**

Diane Acri, PA House  
Sean Brandon, PA House  
Andrew Christ, PA School Board Association (PSBA)  
Mike Deery, PA Senate  
Kathryn Krueger, PA Assn. of School Business Officials (PASBO)  
Westburn Majors, PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)  
Heather Masshardt, PA School Board Association (PSBA)  
Fonta Reilly, United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley  
Katharine Royer, Olivet Boys & Girls Club  
Camille Traczek, PA Department of Education  
Unknown Caller (570-640-8518)

• **Call to Order of the January 11, 2023 Meeting and Adoption of Minutes**

Mr. Myers called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM and welcomed participants.

A quorum of members was established. Mr. Myers noted that the minutes from the September 28, 2022 meeting were part of the packet of materials made available prior to today's meeting.

**Motion to approve the minutes from the September 28, 2022 meeting as submitted**

**Motion:** Brewster. **Seconded:** Gleim. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Bart & Reeves. **Aye Votes:** 14. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Before moving on to the agenda, Mr. Myers mentioned a few changes to the Committee. He noted that Joe Regan from the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) had resigned from the Committee in September. Mr. Myers extended a welcome to Lt. Kyle Gautsch of the Harrisburg Police Department who was appointed to serve on the Committee at the recommendation of the FOP and is present today.

Mr. Myers informed members that PCCD Chairman Charles Ramsey resigned from his service, effective 12/14/2022. Mr. Myers stated that PCCD will keep Committee members apprised as to when a new chair is appointed. He also noted that Committee staff and/or members may change with the new administration and that PCCD will keep members posted on that.

- **Progress Update on FY 22-23 School Mental Health & Safety and Security Grants**

Mr. Myers provided an update on the current status of the FY 22-23 School Mental Health & Safety and Security Grants. While he acknowledged the significant time and dialogue with schools involved in processing the applications, Mr. Myers was pleased to report on the progress made. He stated that 200 grants have moved completely through the process and have been awarded. Another 283 applications have satisfactorily completed deliberations on criteria questions and an additional 203 applications have been reviewed and returned to the school for response to questions.

Mr. Myers noted that the process has definitely been more time intensive with the baseline criteria, but it seems to have made a difference in addressing key areas of school safety that may not have been targeted without the baseline criteria and legislative requirement. He acknowledged that with this change, there has been a significant learning curve with applying the baseline criteria, and the team has observed some areas where updates may be needed. To that end, Mr. Myers announced the plan to reconvene the Baseline Criteria Workgroups to consider and re-evaluate some of the Tier 1 areas based on feedback from schools and internal observations, with the goal to present initial findings to the Committee in March and finalize and potentially adopt the revised Baseline Criteria at the May 31 meeting.

Mr. Myers also informed members that PCCD has been working closely with our partners at PDE to issue updates and communications to the field regarding the status of these grants and have done our best to make accommodations for schools working through this process. He noted that schools have asked about extending deadlines, and PCCD is allowing that and will work with schools to ensure sufficient time for project completion.

- **Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program Update**

Mr. Myers referenced the Committee's adoption at the August 2022 meeting of the Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grant Program funding framework based on the \$105 million received as part of the FY22-23 state budget. In that framework, \$15 million was set aside for Coordinated Community Violence Intervention (CCVI) Strategies; \$85.5 million in VIP grants; and \$4.5 million for research/evaluation, training and technical assistance. Mr. Myers invited PCCD staff Ms. Samantha Koch to share more information on the recommendations for the Committee's action.

Ms. Koch began with a snapshot of program performance for the FY21 Gun Violence Reduction and VIP projects, noting that activities reported by grantees have steadily increased as programs ramp up. She reported that the projects supported by these grants have:

- Served, reached, and/or engaged at least 41,663 individuals, including 26,899 in the third quarter of 2022 (most recent data)

- Made more than 2,000 referrals to victim service providers, case management services, and other community-based resources and providers during the third quarter of 2022
- Engaged 2,040 individuals considered to be at 'high-risk' for violence involvement
- Employed 54 violence interrupters and outreach workers who have engaged 5,649 individuals, including 3,386 in the third quarter of 2022

Ms. Koch asserted that the investments presented for consideration today will build on this good progress and support people and organizations working to prevent and reduce violence in their communities.

Ms. Koch reviewed the first action item regarding the \$15 million available to support the FY22-23 Coordinated Community Violence Initiative (CVI) Strategies Pilot Grants, briefly summarizing the goals and objectives. She reported that 23 applications were received requesting over \$26.7 million in funding. Following the team review, scoring and reconciliation of the applications, Ms. Koch presented the recommendation to fund 5 projects totaling \$12,000,676 that would service Allegheny County, the City of Chester, Philadelphia (both city-wide and a targeted ZIP code), and the City of York. Ms. Koch shared the categories of areas of deficiency for those that were not recommended and the possible option to use the approximately \$3 million remaining in VIP funding to support additional viable applications received through the VIP Competitive Grants solicitation.

Mr. Myers asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he called for a motion.

**Motion to approve the adoption of the five Coordinated Community Violence Intervention (CCVI) Strategies Pilot Grants for an amount not to exceed \$12,000,676 in state VIP funding, pending the resolution of any outstanding programmatic or fiscal concerns**

**Motion:** Bart. **Seconded:** Heim. **Discussion:** None. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Reeves. **Public Voice:** None. **Aye Votes:** 15. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Following the vote, Ms. Koch shared information on the FY22-23 VIP Competitive Grants. She referenced the \$85.5 million in available funds announced in September, noting that the addition of \$3 million in "leftover" CCVI Strategies funding brought total available to \$88.5 million. Ms. Koch reviewed the two-phase process for applications, reporting that 352 initial funding requests were submitted through SurveyMonkey after which 185 applicants were invited to submit a formal Phase 2 application in PCCD's Egrants system, with 159 eligible applications received by the December deadline.

Ms. Koch provided an overview of the application review process, noting that there were 14 review teams, each comprised of two internal PCCD staff and one external reviewer and organized by model or program type. Review and scoring of the applications occurred in mid-December, with reconciliation calls in early January to discuss feedback and finalize recommendations.

Ms. Koch summarized the 122 projects recommended by the VIP Workgroup for awards ranging from \$10,000 to \$2.5 million, a listing of which is included in the meeting materials, with about a third of the awards going to small and mid-size organizations. She stated that applicants are headquartered in 17 counties, with project service areas extending to other parts of the state. She said that a little more than half of recommended projects and funding (54%) will go to Philadelphia-based organizations, followed by those based in Allegheny County, the Lehigh Valley, and Berks County (Reading), and that the projects will support and advance a wide range of programs.

In response to a member's question, Mr. Myers said that every application was by a team that included an external reviewer, and multiple individuals (at least 12) served as external reviewers. A member asked for the total amount of funding received by Philadelphia, which was

subsequently tallied and provided later in the meeting as \$44 million. With no further questions, Mr. Myers called for a motion.

**Motion to approve the adoption of 122 Violence Intervention & Prevention Grants for an amount not to exceed \$88,499,324 in state VIP funding, pending the resolution of any outstanding programmatic or fiscal concerns**

**Motion:** Tuleya-Payne. **Seconded:** Brewster. **Discussion:** Rep. Bullock offered her thanks and appreciation for all the hard work done by Ms. Koch and the PCCD team on this initiative. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Reeves. **Public Voice:** None. **Aye Votes:** 15. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Ms. Koch next addressed the third action item for consideration regarding the adoption of VIP Funding Evaluation Framework, using the \$3 million previously reserved by the Committee to support research and evaluation activities. Ms. Koch reviewed the key goals, components, and timeframe of the proposed framework as detailed in the meeting materials document.

Mr. Myers responded to a member's question regarding ways to permanently employ individuals hired to implement projects, noting consideration of implementation and long-term sustainability challenges. He further clarified that information regarding other funding sources to support a continuity of services when staff are hired to implement will continue to be captured. With no further questions, Mr. Myers asked for a motion.

**Motion to approve the VIP Funding Evaluation Framework**

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

Mr. Myers invited Ms. Koch to add context to the final action item for the augmentation of the VIP Technical Assistance Provider grant. Ms. Koch shared the proposal to increase funding to WestEd by \$1 million, bringing the project total to \$1.75 million. She reported that the project has made good progress to date, including conducting a needs assessment of current grantees, and soft-launching a statewide community of practice with anticipated formal launch along with a public facing website, resource library and other technical assistance events and activities, in the next few weeks.

Ms. Koch reviewed the purpose of augmentation to "right size" technical assistance and training capacity, including the ability to provide technical assistance to the larger cohort of current VIP grantees, facilitate connections among CCVI grantees, support implementation of evidenced-informed models with fidelity, and other key deliverables as detailed in the meeting materials document. Ms. Koch added the intention to create and deploy new mechanisms to support the work of staff and to coordinate research/evaluation efforts and technical assistance as components in taking this initiative to the next level and extending it through September 2025. Hearing no question, Mr. Myers called for a motion.

**Motion to approve augmenting the current grant PCCD has with the VIP Technical Assistance Provider, WestEd and LISC, in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 in state VIP funding, pending the resolution of any outstanding programmatic or fiscal concerns**

**Motion:** Heim. **Seconded:** Padfield. **Discussion:** None. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Reeves. **Public Voice:** None. **Aye Votes:** 15. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Following the vote, PCCD Executive Director Mike Pennington made a comment, expressing his thanks to the Committee, the VIP Workgroup, and PCCD staff for all their work on this. He noted it was a tremendous effort encompassing \$300 million between the school safety and mental health grants and the VIP grants, on top of other significant efforts underway at the

same time. He expressed appreciation for the collective efforts and partnership in getting these resources out to schools.

- **General Updates**

- Office of the Safe School Advocate

Noting the significant efforts made to improve the services rendered by the PCCD Office of the Safe School Advocate in the School District of Philadelphia Mr. Myers invited the Safe School Advocate, Ms. Carol Kuntz, to provide an update. Referencing the establishment of the Safe Schools Advocate in 2011, Ms. Kuntz stated that her move from the role as manager of school safety into the advocate position enabled a continued focus on school safety grant initiatives, the ability to work more directly with school administration, and a wider view of the community organizations available to assist students and their families.

Ms. Kuntz reviewed some of the highlights over the past 6 months, including the placement of a PCCD Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP) staff in the District to facilitate direct connection with families and creation of a funding announcement for victim services organizations to work with students. The grant was awarded to the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office's Victim Services Unit, with the subsequent ability to connect with 46% of the 164 students referred to OSSA and make referrals for needed services. Ms. Kuntz noted some of the challenges encountered in attempts to reach all 164 students, including incorrect or disconnected phone numbers and the lack of voicemail options. She stated that efforts are underway to improve obtaining and maintaining correct and current contact information.

In addition, Ms. Kuntz reported the establishment of a system of reciprocity of sharable information with the Philadelphia Police Department to assure student and family assistance. She also referenced the Cure Violence training provided to VIP grantees by Temple University faculty and Committee member Dr. Kathleen Reeves and thanked Dr. Reeves for providing this program for six new grassroots organizations.

Finally, Ms. Kuntz related developments in the role of the OSSA to monitor incident data on school violence, including discussion with the new Superintendent and the new program created by PCCDs Office of Research, Evaluation, Special Projects and School Safety to transfer data from the District's incident data management system and compare it to the data submitted to the PA Department of Education (PDE). Ms. Kuntz noted the difference in data reporting between the PDE/PIMS and the District's system, stating that the newly developed program will allow analysis of the differences and identification of any discrepancies. She confirmed continued efforts with the District to improve communication and data management and noted that creation of an annual report is currently underway.

- School Employee and School Safety Coordinator Training

Moving on to the next agenda item, Mr. Myers reminded members of the previous adoption of training curriculum outlines for both school employees and school safety coordinators in preparation for developing more robust trainings to be offered at no charge to schools as mandated by Act 55 of 2022. Mr. Myers invited PCCD staff Lindsay Vaughn to provide an update on progress made thus far.

Ms. Vaughn stated that the anticipated competitive funding announcement to find and fund a qualified applicant to build and deliver curricula and courses that align with both sets of training standards was issued on December 2, 2022 and will remain open until January 31, 2023. She noted that several applications have been started in the system for this grant, which will award up to \$4.8 million for the development of curricula and delivery of training for both employees and coordinators for a four-year period beginning April 1, 2023 and ending March 31, 2027.

Ms. Vaughn said that a team to review and score applications for this grant is being developed, which will include both internal PCCD staff and external reviewers. The team will begin the review process as soon as the funding announcement closes, with the goal of making a recommendation of the best applicant to the Committee at the March meeting.

Ms. Vaughn noted that since it will take some time for anyone awarded this funding to get up the speed, in late October PCCD issued some additional information in collaboration with PDE to serve as interim guidance for schools on how to handle the new Act 55 training requirements in the meantime until the new trainings developed. That [guidance](#), along with a [Q&A](#), is posted on the [School Employee Training](#) page in the [School Safety and Security section](#) of the [PCCD website](#).

#### First Chance Trust Fund Update

Mr. Myers provided an update on the First Chance Trust Fund (Fund), including some background, current status, and new developments. He noted the Fund's purpose to provide enhanced opportunities to at-risk youth in areas with higher high school drop-out rates, incarceration rates or high crime rates, stating that 2017, PCCD was tasked by Act 44 to adopt a Statement of Policy which included the risk factors that may lead to criminal behavior and provide for the "maintenance use" of the Fund. Mr. Myers shared that when the original Statement of Policy was adopted, PCCD opted to implement it through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee due to its familiarity with student needs, in consultation with the Victim Service Advisory Committee.

Given that the First Chance Trust Fund supports scholarships to students and/or programs to be implemented in schools to provide assistance to at-risk youth, now that the Committee has been established with members having expertise with student needs and school administration, the Commission updated the Statement of Policy at their December 2022 meeting to allow Committee members to also inform that work.

Mr. Myers shared the timeliness of the updated policy, due to the Fund receiving an allocation from the Department of Correction for the first time in five years, triggering the release of funding. Mr. Myers related the funding mechanism supporting the Fund, noting that approximately \$700,000 has been received thus far, with projections that the Fund may receive regular allocations of at least \$1 million annually over the next four years. Mr. Myers invited Committee members interested in learning more about the Fund and/or participating in a workgroup focused on this to let PCCD know.

- **Member Updates/Comments/Questions**

Mr. Myers noted that the general updates document was provided in the meeting materials. He invited members to share any comments, questions or updates, but none were offered.

- **Public Comment**

Mr. Myers invited any public comment however none was received.

- **Adjournment**

Mr. Myers thanked everyone for their time and contribution to the discussion. He noted upcoming meeting dates for Wednesday, March 29 with a focus on the training recommended for school employees and coordinators, and Wednesday, May 31 with the agenda including action on the VIP research/evaluation recommendation. Mr. Myers stated that the following meeting will likely be in July after the Commonwealth budget enactment. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 1:48 PM.

#### **Motion to adjourn**

**Motion:** Tuleya-Payne. **Seconded:** Bullock. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 16. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**