Baseline Criteria Standards for School Safety

Webinar Session

January 2024

Welcome!

Today's webinar session will review some changes made to the School Safety and Security Committee's adopted 'Baseline Criteria Standards' in May 2023. We'll also cover some basic information about the purpose and use of the Standards, including how they connect to School Safety & Security and School Mental Health Grants.

Introduction: Baseline Criteria Standards

What's in the 2023 Baseline Criteria Standards?

How Should Schools Use Baseline Criteria?

How Do Baseline Criteria Standards Connect to Other School Safety Initiatives?
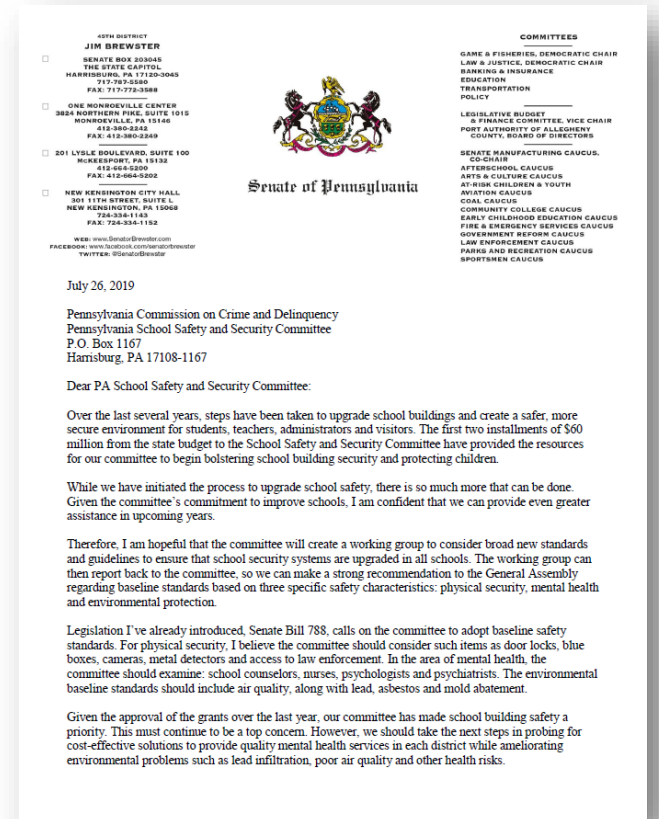
Where Can Schools Seek Assistance + Support?

Introduction: Baseline Criteria Standards

Baseline Criteria: A Brief History

- Act 44 of 2018 – significant investments in school safety…
  - Schools didn't often know what to prioritize for funding.
  - All over the map in terms of programs, services, capacity… "Program potpourri"
  - Significant resource disparities among school entities in terms of what was in place…

- In 2019, SSSC member Sen. Brewster wrote a letter to PCCD encouraging the establishment of Baseline Criteria to guide future investments.

- **Goal:** All school entities in the Commonwealth are places where students can learn and teachers/staff can feel safe because basic, foundational school safety and mental health elements are in place.

Introduction: Baseline Criteria Standards

Developed and adopted with input from the field, PCCD's Baseline Criteria Standards are designed to help guide school entities' decisions about physical security and behavioral health needs.

- Originally adopted by the School Safety and Security Committee in 2021 based on input and recommendations from a multidisciplinary Workgroup.

- Utilizes a multi-leveled approach, with the most basic, foundational elements as 'Level 1' and more advanced criteria at Levels 2 and 3.

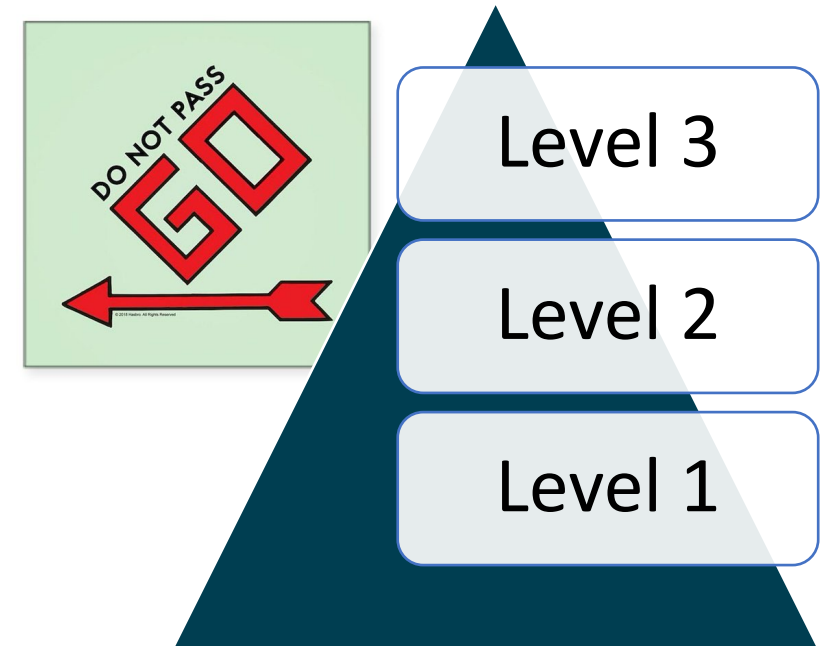- Not originally tied to funding…

Physical Security

Behavioral Health

Act 55 of 2022: Connecting Baseline Standards with grant funding

Act 55 of 2022 amended the School Safety and Security Grant Program process by requiring school entities meet Tier 1 (now Level 1) baseline criteria prior to spending funds on other more advanced eligible activities.

- ***New requirements for schools…and PCCD:*** School entities were asked to provide information about whether they met Physical Security and Behavioral Health Baseline Criteria as part of the 2022-23 School Mental Health and School Safety & Security Grant application.

- ***Learning Curve:*** Because it was a new process, and because the Baseline Criteria Standards weren't originally designed with funding in mind, lots of 'lessons learned' in the initial year…

Level 3

Level 2

Level 1

What we learned during FY22-23

- Baseline Criteria is helping to move the needle on key areas of school safety and mental health supports.

- Provided an opportunity for school entities to identify needs and receive resources needed to fill gaps.

- We know a lot more about the landscape of school mental health and safety/security than we did a year or two before.

- Need to align Baseline Criteria with existing statutory requirements related to school safety and mental health...and to distinguish between different types of school entities.

- Opportunity to update and improve Baseline Criteria based on feedback from the field and subject matter experts, and to help streamline the grants processes that connect to these standards.

What's in the 2023 Baseline Criteria Standards?

Updating the Baseline Criteria Standards

PCCD worked with more than 60 stakeholders over the course of two months to review the 2021 standards, identify areas where changes were needed, and make suggested updates, resulting in the 2023 Revised Baseline Criteria Standards in place today.

- "Tier" → "Level"

- Re-evaluated and revised Level 1 criteria based on common gaps and feedback provided by school entities during the initial grant process in FY22, and to more closely align with existing statutory requirements/mandates.

- Created new option to use grant funds for critical gaps identified through a professionally-completed Assessments.

- Reframed criteria to acknowledge the different nature/contexts of different school entities (e.g., Level 1 = "universal" requirements).

- In recognition of broad workforce challenges, provided greater flexibility for school-based mental health services/supports that meet Baseline Criteria (e.g., contracted services).

- Updated to reference new requirements for school entities (e.g., Act 55 of 2022) and best practices.

2023 Physical Security Baseline Criteria

Physical Security Assessments

School, Campus, Building & Classroom Security

School Security Personnel & Law Enforcement

Communications

Coordination with First Responders & Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs)

School Safety & Security Training/Drills

2023 Behavioral Health Baseline Criteria

Student Assistance & Behavioral Health Support Assessment

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

Mental/Behavioral Health Personnel & Services/Supports

School Climate

Staff Training

Trauma-Informed Approach Plan

Threat Assessment & Management

Resource for School Entities:
Baseline Criteria Self-Assessment Checklists

To help school entities evaluate how their policies, procedures, and practices align with revised Baseline Criteria Standards, PCCD created two interactive 'Self-Assessment Checklist' tools (Excel spreadsheets).

- Excel tools break down each of the elements of in the Revised Baseline Criteria Standards (Physical Security and Behavioral Health) by level and area.

- Includes grant funding examples for Level 1 criteria

- School entities can assess and document their practices and procedures and level of alignment with Baseline Criteria Standards, including any gaps.
  - *Fully met*
  - *Planned to be met/implemented*
  - *Not met*
  - *Not applicable*
  - *Unsure*

A. Student Assistance & Behavioral Health Support Assessment

Please select the answer that most directly applies to your school entity from the options below.

Resource: Student Assistance and Behavioral Health Support Assessment Standards & Guidance - PCCD

SECTION SUMMARY

Number of Level 1 Gaps	0
Number of Level 2 Gaps	0
Number of Level 3 Gaps	0

Criterion	Criterion Level	Answer / Rating	Notes
Student Assistance and Behavioral Health Support Assessment (aligned with standards and guidance adopted by the School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC)) has been conducted that is representative of the school entity.	Level 1		Provide a brief summary of why you selected the 'Answer / Rating' you did for this criterion. Notes can be used to help provide information requested by PCCD as part of the grant application process, among other purposes.

*Example of potential grant-related activities to meet this Level 1 criterion: If seeking funding to support meeting this Level 1 item, the appropriate eligible project activity (see Section 1306-B(J)(1-30)) is Activity 1. **Example:** Paying a vendor to conduct a Student Assistance and BH Assessment representative of the school entity.*

Criterion	Criterion Level	Answer / Rating	Notes
Assessment aligned with SSSC-adopted standards and guidance has been conducted at each educational level (elementary, middle, and high).	Level 2		
Assessment aligned with SSSC-adopted standards and guidance has been conducted school entity-wide.	Level 3		
Conduct ongoing/follow-up assessments at regular intervals or when new programs, services, or initiatives are implemented.	Level 3		

How Should Schools Use Baseline Criteria?

Baseline Criteria & FY23-24 Grants

- **<u>Baseline Criteria is required for School Mental Health Grant Funding in FY23-24.</u>**
  - As with last year's grants program, school entities must demonstrate they have fulfilled Level 1 Behavioral Health Baseline Criteria OR use grant funding to meet Level 1 gaps.

- Priority consideration will also be given to competitive funding requests that will help meet Level 1 'gaps' for school entities and nonpublic schools (Physical Security and Behavioral Health).
  - School Safety & Security Grants
  - Targeted School Safety Grants
  - Nonpublic School Grants

PCCD has created annotated Baseline Criteria guides to help school entities see examples of activities that grant funding can support.

PHYSICAL SECURITY

PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME & DELINQUENCY (PCCD)
SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE (SSSC)
Revised Physical Security Baseline Criteria (2023) with Examples

The Baseline Criteria Standards were adopted initially by the SSSC in 2021 (revised in May 2023) to serve as a resource schools could use to guide and prioritize decisions about physical security and behavioral health needs. The Physical Security Criteria below organize safety and security-related equipment, trainings, policies, programs, and activities into a multi-leveled structure (i.e., from Level 1, which would be the most basic element, to Level 3, the most advanced).

For the purposes of grant funding use, school entities may apply for funding to address physical security gaps identified as part of a recent physical security assessment conducted by a PSP RVAT unit or an individual recognized to perform such physical security assessments on the PCCD School Safety and Security Assessor Registry.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
A. Physical Security Assessments		
A physical security assessment (aligned with standards and guidance adopted by the School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC)) has been conducted of a school building representative of the school entity.	A physical security assessment (aligned with standards and guidance adopted by the SSSC) has been conducted of all school buildings and large gathering spaces.	A physical security assessment (aligned with standards and guidance adopted by the SSSC) has been conducted to the community/surrounding/ancillary areas to the school facilities.
Note: The SSSC's Assessment Criteria are written so that a school entity with limited resources could perform a self-assessment. The SSSC recommends using a qualified external assessor (e.g., PA State Police's RVAT unit, or an individual included on the SSSC Provider Registry) to conduct the assessment.	*If seeking funding to support meeting this Level 2 item, the appropriate eligible project activity (see Section 1306-B(J)(1-30)) is Activity 1.* **Example:** *Paying a vendor to conduct the assessment of all school buildings on campus.*	Conduct ongoing/follow-up assessments at regular intervals or when facilities are modified.
If seeking funding to support meeting this Level 1 item, the appropriate eligible project activity (see Section 1306-B(J)(1-30)) is Activity 1. **Example:** *Paying a vendor to conduct the assessment of one or more school buildings on campus.*		*If seeking funding to support meeting this Level 3 item, the appropriate eligible project activity (see Section 1306-B(J)(1-30)) is Activity 1.* **Example:** *Paying a vendor to conduct the assessment of an athletic stadium, playground, or another facility that the school utilizes.*

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME & DELINQUENCY (PCCD)
SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE (SSSC)
Revised Behavioral Health Baseline Criteria (2023) with Examples

The Baseline Criteria Standards were adopted initially by the SSSC in 2021 (revised in May 2023) to serve as a resource schools could use to guide and prioritize decisions about physical security and behavioral health needs. The Behavioral Health Criteria below organize behavioral health-related services, trainings, policies, programs, and activities into a multi-leveled structure (i.e., from Level 1, which would be the most basic element, to Level 3, the most advanced).

For the purposes of grant funding use, school entities may apply for funding to address any gaps identified as part of a recent Student Assistance and Behavioral Health Assessment conducted by an individual recognized to perform such assessments on the PCCD School Safety and Security Assessor Registry.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
A. Student Assistance & Behavioral Health Support Assessment		
Student Assistance and Behavioral Health Support Assessment (aligned with standards and guidance adopted by the School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC)) has been conducted that is representative of the school entity.	Student Assistance and Behavioral Health Support Assessment (aligned with standards and guidance adopted by the SSSC) has been conducted at each educational level (elementary, middle, and high).	Student Assistance and Behavioral Health Support Assessment (aligned with standards and guidance adopted by the SSSC) has been conducted school-entity wide.
If seeking funding to support meeting this Level 1 item, the appropriate eligible project activity (see Section 1306-B(J)(1-30)) is Activity 1. **Example:** *Paying a vendor to conduct a Student Assistance and BH Assessment representative of the school entity.*	*If seeking funding to support meeting this Level 2 item, the appropriate eligible project activity (see Section 1306-B(J)(1-30)) is Activity 1.* **Example:** *Paying a vendor to conduct the BH assessment for each educational level of the school entity.*	Conduct ongoing/follow-up assessments at regular intervals or when new programs, services, or initiatives are implemented.
		If seeking funding to support meeting this Level 1 item, the appropriate eligible project activity (see Section 1306-B(J)(1-30)) is Activity 1. **Example:** *Paying a vendor to conduct the BH assessment for every school in the school entity.*

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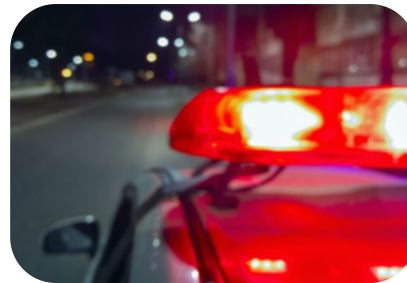# How Do Baseline Criteria Standards Connect to Other School Safety Initiatives?

Many of the updated Baseline Criteria Standards mirror existing requirements for school entities related to school safety.

Civil Rights Laws & Regulations

Professional Development & Training Requirements

Emergency Preparedness & Planning Mandates

School Safety Laws & Regulations

Student Services (e.g., counseling, nursing, etc.)

Where Can Schools Seek Assistance + Support?

Questions? PCCD is here to support you.

- We encourage you to check out resources available on PCCD's website related to school safety and security, including Baseline Criteria Standards.
  - **[Revised Baseline Criteria Standards (2023)](#)**
    - Includes reference crosswalks comparing revised standards with original 2021 versions.
  - **Baseline Criteria Self-Assessment Checklist Tools for School Entities**
    - [Behavioral Health](#) (Excel)
    - [Physical Security](#) (Excel)
  - **Examples of Grant-funded Activities by Baseline Criteria Level**
    - [Behavioral Health](#) (PDF)
    - [Physical Security](#) (PDF)

- If you have any questions about the Revised Baseline Criteria Standards, please reach out to our team:
  - **Email**: RA-CD-SSSC@pa.gov