

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

School Safety and Security Committee Meeting

July 27, 2022

MINUTES

Members/Designees:

Mr. Derin Myers, Designee for Chairman Ramsey
Senator James Brewster, Member
Representative Donna Bullock, Member
Ms. Nikki Bricker Cameron, Member
Ms. Tanoa Fagan, Designee for Acting Secretary Snead
Dr. Benjamin Feeney
Dr. Gerry Huesken, Designee for Acting Secretary Hagarty
Mr. Mike Hurley, Member
Senator Wayne Langerholc, Member
Mr. Randy Padfield, Member
Dr. Jamie Piraino, Member
Dr. Kathleen Reeves, Member
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member
Mr. Mike Vereb, Designee for Attorney General Shapiro

Staff:

Sally Barry	Carol Kuntz
Pamela Bennett	Crystal Lauver
Lindsay Busko	Mike Pennington
Chris Epoca	Debra Sandifer
Lynn Fidler	Alyssa Subsinsky
Heather Hewitt	Lindsay Vaughan
Kirsten Kenyon	Shaun White
Samantha Koch	

Guests:

Hannah Barrick, PA Assn. of School Business Officials (PASBO)
Jonathan Berger, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Sean Brandon, PA House
Erika Brunelle, PA State Education Association (PSEA)
Gwenn Dando, PA Senate
Dan Daum, Corry Area School District
Mike Deery, PA Senate
Jacob Derrick, Governor's Office
Julie Kane, PA Department of Education
Scott Kuren, PA Department of Education
Stephen Latanishen, PA Department of Education
Eric Levis, PA Department of Education
Westburn Majors, PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
Heather Masshardt, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Maj. Matthew Nickey, PA State Police (PSP)
Jeremy Sawicki, Pocono Mountain School district
Christine Seitz, PA House
Sherri Smith, PA Association of School Administrators
Stephen St.Vincent, PA Office of Attorney General
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate
Sean Wolfrom, Fort LeBoeuf School District

I. Call to Order of the July 27, 2022 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 April 27, 2022 meeting were part of the packet of materials made available prior to today's meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes from the April 27, 2022 meeting as submitted

Motion: Brewster. **Seconded:** Vereb. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Piraino. **Aye Votes:** 12, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Before moving on with the agenda, Mr. Myers acknowledged that since the last meeting there have been several significant traumatic events of mass shootings and targeted violence in our nation and Commonwealth, including the massacre at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, TX. Referencing the disturbing visuals and reports out of that situation, Mr. Myers stated that this event and others like it serve as painful reminders of the significant importance of this Committee's efforts, which was confirmed by the investments made in school safety and school mental health grants within the recently enacted state budget and related legislation.

Mr. Myers also acknowledge that, as required, the PA State Police provided the Committee with their Annual RVAT Report, which was included in the meeting materials. Mr. Myers reminded participants that the contents of this report are confidential. Mr. Myers asked members to let staff know if there are any questions about it so an Executive Session discussion can be arranged for the next meeting.

II. Overview of Act 55 of 2022

Mr. Myers briefly reviewed the agenda and invited Kirsten Kenyon to share the first presentation. Ms. Kenyon reviewed a [PowerPoint Overview](#) on the various facets of [Act 55](#), which was subsequently posted on the [School Safety and Security section](#) of the PCCD website. She noted that pages 41-63 of [House Bill 1642](#) pertain to school safety and highlighted key portions, including:

- The amended provisions pertaining to Committee membership
- The five specific questions to be included in the required survey of school mental health services (which will be included as part of the [School Mental Health Grant](#) application)
- The breakdown of the \$200 million total in school safety and mental health funding
- Modifications and additions to the allowable activities for grants
- The funding formulas for school districts and other school entities
- Incorporation of the [Baseline Criteria](#) adopted by the Committee in February 2021 as part of the funding process with school entities needing to first meet the tier 1 baseline criteria before they can use funding for other allowable purposes
- Clarification of expectations regarding identification of and training for school safety and security coordinators
- The development of training standards and amended requirements for professional development pertaining to school safety and security for school employees
- The creation of the School Mental Health Internship Program under PHEAA

Ms. Kenyon responded to questions/comments raised by members:

- Questioning how many new school safety and security coordinators there have been in the last 12-18 months, a member suggested that those turnover statistics might be helpful to know as the Committee moves forward with training. Ms. Kenyon concurred that it may be a factor to consider as the criteria is developed.
- In response to a question regarding the School Mental Health Internship Program, Ms. Kenyon relayed her understanding that it would cover practicums/internships which are typically non-compensated, thereby facilitating and incentivizing individuals going into the field.

Mental Health Survey

Mr. Myers referenced the draft Mental Health Survey in the meeting materials for members' review and consideration. The survey was created to address the statutorily required questions included in Act 55. Mr. Myers thanked those on the Committee with a mental health background, colleagues at PDE and DHS, and legislative staff members for their support in preparing and reviewing the survey.

Mr. Myers said that the questions are fair; y straightforward and will be incorporated into the school entities' mental health grant application, after which the data will be extracted. A summary of the findings will be provided to the Committee in an upcoming Executive Session, likely during the September 28 meeting, along with discussion of how the results impact the Committees planning process moving forward.

Motion to adopt the Mental Health Survey

Motion: Tuleya-Payne. **Seconded:** Huesken. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 13, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

School Safety Grant Allocations

Mr. Myers presented the proposed school safety grant allocations and reviewed the formula for this funding provided within Act 55, referencing the chart included in the meeting materials. Each school district within the state is to receive a minimum of \$100,000 for both their mental health needs and physical security needs for a total of \$200,000, while intermediate units, career and technical centers, and charter schools (including regional charter schools and cyber charter schools) will receive a minimum of \$70,000 for both mental health and physical security needs for a total of \$140,000. School districts will also receive an additional allocation based on their 2020-2021 adjusted average daily membership (ADM).

Mr. Myers stated that to receive this funding, eligible school entities will have the month of August to make application within the PCCD Egrants system. School entities will need to answer the Mental Health survey questions as part of their application and answer similar Tier 1 baseline physical security questions. As mentioned in the overview presentation, applicants will need to ensure that they meet Tier 1 baseline security criteria standards in both areas before they are eligible to use funding for related purposes over and above Tier 1. Mr. Myers acknowledged that this is a new grant process and anticipated dialogue with schools on these issues.

Mr. Myers reviewed the time period for these grants, stating that they will start on August 1, 2022 and end by July 31, 2024. He noted that the non-supplantation rules (i.e., funds must be used to supplement, not supplant, expenditures) apply with these grants and payments will be made on a reimbursement basis. PCCD staff will start reviewing grants immediately upon submission by the school entities. If areas needing more clarification emerge, PCCD staff will bring that back to the Committee for discussion and approval. More information about the grants and what school entities applied for will be provided to the Committee after the application period closes.

Motion to approve the School Safety Grant allocation

Motion: Brewster. **Seconded:** Vereb. **Abstentions:** None. **Public Voice:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 13, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Staff Training Workgroup Formation to Address Training Standards

Mr. Myers stated that, as noted during the overview, the Committee is tasked by statute with establishing, adopting and publishing training standards for situational awareness, trauma-informed approaches, behavioral health awareness, suicide and bullying awareness, substance use awareness, emergency training drills, and threat assessment by September 30, 2022.

After those training standards are adopted and published, the Committee is slated to develop and provide "geographically disbursed" training at no cost for school entities aligned with adopted standards. The Committee has been allocated \$4.8 million for this purpose. Certain types of training can be done virtually or in-person, and in partnership with one or more provider(s).

As in 2018 when directed to develop the assessor criteria within a relatively short timeframe, PCCD is recommending the formation of a workgroup to start tackling these standards. PCCD staff have begun pulling from the universe of currently available trainings and will use them as a basis to formulate the standards. The goal is to invite relevant stakeholders who wish to participate in the conversation and/or review the standards and provide feedback to develop as best a product as possible within the time period allotted. Mr. Myers invited members who would like to participate to identify themselves or let PCCD staff know within the next few days.

Motion to approve the formation of a Staff Training Workgroup to address the school employee training standards

Motion: Bullock. **Seconded:** Vereb. **Discussion:** None. **Public Voice:** None. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 13, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Coordinator Training Workgroup Formation to Address Training Criteria

Mr. Myers noted that, just like the training for school employees, the Committee has been tasked with developing required training criteria for School Safety and Security Coordinators, addressing minimum criteria outlined in Section 1316-B (School safety and security coordinator training) by September 30, 2022. He reviewed the core areas to cover, noting that the training cannot exceed seven hours annually. Coordinators will be required to complete the training within one year of the availability of the training, or one year after their appointment. Again, the \$4.8 million set aside for training purposes will cover the costs of making the training available to Coordinators.

As for the last action item, Mr. Myers stated that PCCD is recommending the formation of a workgroup comprised of relevant stakeholders who wish to participate in the conversation and/or review the standards and provide feedback to develop as best a product as possible within the time period allotted. PCCD staff have likewise begun compiling resources and information from currently available trainings, particularly the NASRO equivalent standards previously developed by the Committee and will use them as a basis to formulate the training criteria. Mr. Myers again invited members who would like to participate to identify themselves or let PCCD staff know within the next few days.

Motion to approve the formation of a Coordinator Training Workgroup to address the required coordinator training criteria

Motion: Tuleya-Payne. **Seconded:** Padfield. **Discussion:** None. **Public Voice:** None. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 13, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

III. School Safety and Security Coordinator Report Update

Mr. Myers invited Ms. Kenyon to present this update. Ms. Kenyon noted that in the past, this report was usually done verbally as it was simply a compilation of schools noting that they gave their reports in accordance with the requirements of [§1309-B](#) of the PA School Code. However, this time the survey included questions regarding threat assessment teams.

Ms. Kenyon shared a summary document of the findings from the school safety and security coordinator reports. There were 593 unique surveys completed, the most ever received. This increase shows that the coordinators are taking this responsibility seriously. Ms. Kenyon

reviewed highlights of the findings, which can be viewed in their entirety in the document provided in advance as part of the meeting materials to members.

Ms. Kenyon responded to a member's question regarding any difference noted in the reporting with the size and/or type of school entity. The member wondered if there was any correlation with size, with larger entities having more incidents, or if size or type is a factor in not reporting incidents. Ms. Kenyon stated that she did not go that deep into the data but can have that information for the August meeting. The member also was curious as to how often an intermediate unit might do a threat assessment versus a school district.

IV. Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grant Program Update

Mr. Myers invited Samantha Koch to present on the current VIP grant program status and give an overview of the new \$105 million allocation and next steps. Ms. Koch reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on the VIP grant projects and related initiatives, including a brief recap of the prior funding levels and activities, highlights of the early implementation progress of currently funded VIP projects, and the proposed action item and next steps.

Ms. Koch covered a refresher of the initial \$30 million appropriation of state funds followed by an additional \$15 million in federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds, timeframe, and three-pronged approach taken last year to support a total of 65 grants across the Commonwealth. The Committee also approved the VIP Technical Assistance (TA) Project that awarded \$750,000 to WestEd to support its proposed project design in partnership with Local Initiative Support Corp (LISC). Ms. Koch noted that this year's investment of \$105 million in new funding, comprised of \$75 million in federal ARP funds and another \$30 million in state dollars, will more than double the amount previously available to support VIP grants.

Ms. Koch provided an update on the status of the VIP TA project. Since it is a cooperative grant, PCCD staff have been more involved in finalizing the project budget and other details. She reported that the end is in sight on the back-end logistics and she anticipated that the award will be finalized in the very near future. While that is happening, PCCD and WestEd have worked to coordinate onboarding and project planning as well as connections with key partners in Philadelphia. Ms. Koch said that WestEd is working on developing a needs assessment to use with grant site projects, with more to come on that in the August meeting update.

Ms. Koch shared some highlights in a Gun Violence Reduction & VIP Projects snapshot of self-reported quarterly program performance data as of June 30, 2022. She noted the continuing and concerning trends of gun violence and violence in general but said that the prevention and intervention programs primarily supported with PCCD grants have an expected impact timeline of between 3-10 years.

Ms. Koch reviewed some charts and data from early trends around individuals engaged and served by grant-funded programs indicating an increase in activity and trending in the right direction. This included increases in the number of violence interrupters hired and engaging in outreach efforts. She also identified several common themes that have come up in grantees' early implementation, including:

- Workforce challenges – recruiting, hiring, onboarding, training new employees;
- Forging relationships – building/enhancing partnerships to support project activities; and
- Cash flow concerns – reimbursement process has been challenging for many smaller organizations who lack operating capital and resources on hand.

Ms. Koch concluded her presentation with a review of anticipated next steps regarding the influx of \$105 million in new funding. She noted that the eligible applicants in the Fiscal Code remain the same and the eligible activities are aligned with the activities listed under [§1306-B](#) of the Public School Code. PCCD would like to reconvene the VIP Workgroup in early August to

develop a funding framework to present to the Committee at the August meeting with the plan of releasing the funding announcement in early September and awarding VIP projects by January 2023.

Motion to approve the reconvening of the VIP Workgroup to develop a framework for the VIP funding

Motion: Huesken. **Seconded:** Reeves. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 13, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

V. Member Updates/Comments/Questions

Mr. Myers invited members to share any updates. Senator Brewster commented that today's meeting and the adoption of baseline strategy as part of school safety investments is "historic" and will advance a culture of school safety. He noted that all this data has been accumulated and built into this legislation and ultimately has been supported by funding. He thanked his legislative colleagues, recognizing the huge step that has been made in keeping children, teachers, and staff safe. He also expressed appreciation to PCCD staff for all they have done and noted that this Committee's expertise and work has laid good groundwork for the future. He underscored the importance of the legislative requirement to review the baseline standards every two years. The Committee needs to continue its work, look at the new technology that will come along, and use the expertise of those on this Committee to keep schools safe. Mr. Myers thanked the member for his kind words about the staff team, acknowledging the committed effort it has required. He stated that staff appreciate the significance of this work, the importance of getting it done well and on time, and the thoughtful approach taken in working through issues.

Mr. Vereb informed the Committee that the [annual Safe2Say Something report](#) will be issued on August 1. He stated that there was well over a 15% increase in tips this fiscal year with the same top 4-5 reasons for contact. He noted that there is an expectation that programs like Safe2Say reach a 'peak' within a few years; however, Pennsylvania's numbers are still ticking up after nearly four years. While reports have slowed due to the summer break, he anticipates they will begin climbing again as the school year begins. He also expressed agreement with the previous member's comments on the importance of regular reviews, as the needs of children and capabilities of technology may change, but incidents that can jeopardize the safety and well-being of students unfortunately will likely remain.

VI. Public Comment

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

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Myers thanked everyone for their time and contribution to the discussion. He also thanked PCCD staff for their hard work in preparing all of the materials for today's meeting. Mr. Myers noted that, as mentioned on the agenda, the next two meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, August 31 and Wednesday, September 28, both at 1:00 PM. He stated that the August meeting will include a review of the VIP solicitation framework and preliminary overview of the work of the two training workgroups. At the September meeting, the Committee will need to take formal action on the training standards and criteria. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 2:35 PM.

Motion to adjourn

Motion: Tuleya-Payne. **Seconded:** Feeney. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 13; **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**