

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

School Safety and Security Committee Meeting

July 28 and August 25, 2021

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
Col. Robert Evanchick**, Member
Ms. Tanoë Fagan*, Designee for Acting Secretary Snead
Mr. David Hein**, Member
Mr. Mike Hurley*, Member
Mr. Mike Kelly**, Member
Dr. Scott Kuren, Designee for Secretary Ortega
Dr. Gennaro "Jamie" Piraino**, Member
Lt. Col. Scott Price*, Designee for Colonel Evanchick
Mr. Joseph Regan, Member
Ms. Wendy Robison**, Member
Mr. Jeffrey Thomas, Designee for Director Padfield
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member
Mr. Mike Vereb*, Designee for Josh Shapiro

Staff:

Pamela Bennett	Carol Kuntz
Lindsay Busko	Crystal Lauver
Rolanda Chung*	Zoe Miner*
Chris Epoca	Diane Morgan*
Lynn Fidler**	Maddy Roman-Scott*
Charles Gartside**	Alyssa Subsinsky**
Kirsten Kenyon	Debra Sandifer
Samantha Koch	Shaun White**
Geoff Kolchin	

Guests:

Jonathan Berger, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Sean Brandon, PA House Democrats
Erika Brunelle*, PA State Education Association (PSEA)
Gwenn Dando, PA Senate
Mike Deery, PA Senate
Jacob Derrick, Governor's Office
Representative Brian Kirkland
Heather Masshardt, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Alison Piccolino*, PA Senate
Christine Seitz*, PA House of Representatives
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate
Stephen St. Vincent**, PA Office of Attorney General

* Attended July 28, 2021 meeting only

** Attended August 25, 2021 meeting only

I. Call to Order of the July 28, 2021 Meeting and Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Myers called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM and welcomed participants. A quorum of members was established. Mr. Myers noted that the minutes from the February 24, 2021 meeting were part of the packet of materials made available prior to the meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes from the February 24, 2021 meeting as submitted

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

Mr. Myers announced that the Committee has a new member, as State Representative Barbara Gleim was recently appointed to the Committee as the House Speaker's replacement for Representative Jason Ortity. Mr. Myers provided a brief summary of Representative Gleim's background and experience and welcomed her to the Committee.

II. Overview of State Budget

Mr. Myers began by confirming the general knowledge that funding for school safety and security grants was not specifically allocated in the FY2021-22 state budget. However, the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) allocated a significant portion of funding to the states for their use to stimulate the economy and make up for losses that occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pennsylvania's allocation includes \$4.9 billion specifically designated for schools to support education needs throughout the state, which would allow schools some flexibility to fund other current identified security and safety needs.

While there was no specific allocation for school safety, Mr. Myers announced that there was a new \$30 million allocation issued to PCCD for Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) grants. Reviewing the proposed plan for administering this funding that was included in the meeting packet for the Committee's consideration, Mr. Myers noted that the authorization for these funds directs that they are to be used solely to provide grants and technical assistance to community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, municipalities, district attorneys and other eligible entities under section 1306-b(j)(22) of the Public School Code of 1949 with the intent "to support local efforts to take preventive measures to stop the growing issue of gun violence."

PCCD staff recommend a multi-pronged approach to administering the VIP funding in a hybrid model based on previous collaborative community/gun violence efforts. Mr. Myers reviewed the three parts of the plan, starting with immediately capitalizing on the quality applications that were just received as part of the FY2021 Gun Violence Reduction Funding grant solicitation by supplementing the \$5 million allocated with VIP funding to support as many quality grants as possible. Mr. Myers noted that a SurveyMonkey approach was used to solicit a broader audience and garner applications from smaller community agencies that would be able to start their projects immediately.

Mr. Myers responded to a Committee member's questions regarding this first part, including:

- Providing support and technical assistance for smaller community organizations that are close and/or don't have familiarity with our grant-making process, so they have the opportunity to refine their applications and potentially be funded;
- Applicants' location, confirming that they are primarily from those counties with the highest rates of gun violence (Allegheny, Berks, Dauphin, Lehigh, Philadelphia, York, etc., also Chester in Delaware County)

Mr. Myers reviewed the second step, which involves looking at the currently funded projects (i.e., applications PCCD has already awarded specific to gun violence reduction or intervention), reviewing the results of their efforts, and seeing if there is opportunity for them

to do more, if what they are doing can translate to other parts of the state and they would be willing to provide technical assistance to others. Staff would then come back with recommendations to either continue or augment those organizations for additional resources for the Committee's consideration at the August meeting.

Finally, Mr. Myers shared the third step proposing establishment of a workgroup to develop a funding framework. The workgroup would be comprised of members of the Criminal Justice Advisory and School Safety and Security Committees to ensure the necessary expertise. He stated that the proposed framework would be presented to the Committee at the August meeting and invited anyone interested in this workgroup to let staff know. Mr. Myers responded to a member's question by noting the expectation that there will be significant resources, \$20 million, available for allocation.

Motion to move forward on the Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) plan as presented

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

III. Grant Updates

Mr. Myers invited Carol Kuntz, School Safety and Security Manager, to provide an update on the administration of previously awarded grants this year. Ms. Kuntz began with the current administration of the Coronavirus Aid Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER)-funded School Health and Safety Grants. She noted that all of these grants were administered prior to the May 5, 2021 spending requirement deadline. While staff are still dealing with numerous project modification requests and administering them as they come in, there is no concern with any of the grants that are being completed.

Ms. Kuntz provided an update on the most recent round of Community Violence Prevention/Reduction grants. She noted that all 30 grants that were approved at the February 2021 meeting for a total request of \$7.5 million have been awarded and the grantees are moving forward with those projects.

Finally, Ms. Kuntz pointed out that staff have started the monitoring plan process and have 34 monitoring visits scheduled for the 2019-20 competitive and meritorious grants to be completed by the end of December 2021. The school safety team developed a monitoring protocol, documentation templates for staff, and a monitoring report walkthrough PowerPoint presentation for schools to guide them as they complete the documentation. The monitoring tool was developed in Egrants for ease of access for all involved and to support report generation. A percentage of each school entity was randomly chosen to be monitored, along with schools at high risk for reporting.

IV. General Updates

Ms. Kuntz provided a quick update on the School Safety Coordinator report. Each year staff put out a survey, and each school entity's security coordinator must annually submit a presentation to their board by June 30 and complete the survey. Ms. Kuntz reviewed the current list of school entities that have submitted a total of 434 unduplicated surveys, including:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|-----------------------|-----|
| • Approved Private Schools: | 11 | • Intermediate Units: | 20 |
| • Area Vocational Technical Schools: | 23 | • School Districts: | 310 |
| • Charter Schools: | 70 | | |

Ms. Kuntz noted that last year the Committee approved that schools could submit their presentation, a copy of the board meeting agenda or minutes displaying that the presentation had occurred. All schools provided the date of the presentation with 97% of respondents

submitting documentation regarding the presentation. Other schools will not have a board meeting until September, and so will provide the documentation at that time.

Ms. Kuntz briefly reported on the responses regarding current practices that schools are using to improve safety, with the top one being staff training, followed by equipment purchases, the addition of mental health/behavior health personnel, and assessment and planning. Additionally, staff training ranked high in the responses to improve safety in the coming year.

Ms. Kuntz shared that the survey remains open as staff continue to reach out to schools, adding that she recently met with Approved Private Schools and so more of them are participating. Staff also continue to receive requests from schools to submit their survey.

Ms. Kuntz concluded with a brief update on the Assessment Provider and Third-Party Security Vendor Registries. She reported that 12 new providers were added to the [Assessment Provider Registry](#), for a total of 126 approved providers. Of those, 95 are approved for physical security assessments, 22 for behavior health assessments, and 9 for both physical security and behavior health assessments. In addition, since the last SSSC meeting, two more vendors were approved and added to the [Third-Party Security Vendor Registry](#) for a total of 17 vendors approved to provide security guard personnel to schools throughout the commonwealth.

Next, Ms. Samantha Koch provided an update on the threat assessment team training. She began by announcing that the [Pennsylvania K-12 Threat Assessment Training](#) curriculum has been developed and formally launched, and encouraged folks to check it out. Ms. Koch stated that all schools have access to the [12 online Training Modules](#), which staff, our vendor Risk and Strategic Management (RSM) Corporation, and other partners are actively promoting. She noted that on June 15, 2021, PCCD, RSM, and the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA) co-hosted "K-12 Threat Assessment Implementation Resources & Training for PA School Entities." There was a great response to this informational webinar, which had 539 registrants and more than 300 live participants.

Ms. Koch detailed more of the progress made, stating that since its launch on April 30, 2021 there have been 871 registrants for the Technical Assistance & Training Network site representing approximately 600 unique school entities across Pennsylvania, a great reach so far. Additionally, as of last Friday, July 23, 2021, more than 176 individuals from schools across the commonwealth have completed all 12 online threat assessment training modules.

Ms. Koch described the next steps with the threat assessment team training, starting in August when PCCD will host the first two of 10 in-person, regional Threat Assessment "train-the-trainer" sessions. She stated that these sessions will use the same curriculum as the online training module, just delivered in an in-person setting. The first training will take place August 9, 2021 at PaTTAN Harrisburg, with the second scheduled for August 16, 2021 at Northeast Intermediate Unit in Archbald, PA. She said they anticipate having close to 190 participants for both of these sessions, noting that they already reached their capacity for the first training in Harrisburg. Ms. Koch noted that additional regional training sites will be announced as details are finalized with prospective hosts over the next few weeks.

Ms. Koch concluded her update by announcing the recently updated the [School Safety and Security Webpage](#). It has been redesigned to make it more user friendly, and she encouraged participants to take a look.

Mr. Myers asked if members had any questions about these updates, and staff responded to several raised around assessment providers, including:

- How many assessors are being used by districts? We don't currently have that information.
- Member noted that she wrote a brief article for the Pennsylvania Psychological Association to alert them about the Registry and has been asked if they register, if anyone will contact them, so wondered how many school districts are going to the Registry for their assessment providers? That information was is part of the survey, so will be addressed in the Executive Session discussion.
- Another member observed that in the spring of 2021 many districts put physical safety and security risk and vulnerability assessments on hold due to of all the fluctuation in the climate in the schools with students that were attending, some schools still being at full remote learning, etc. They are starting to see more schools reaching out to schedule physical safety assessments for this coming fall, but many are well beyond the 2-3 year recommendation for completion in Act 44, so hope to get on more of a normal schedule in conducting those assessments. Staff agreed, noting that PCCD has been getting a lot of information from schools and questions about when they need to have assessments done.
- Member said that schools are asking if those assessments are eligible for funding under the federal CARES Act/ESSER funds, nothing that would be important for school districts to know where they stand with the safety grants. Scott Kuren (PDE) will check into that and let PCCD staff know.
- Regarding the report that staff training was one of the top areas funded by the grants, a member wondered what that training involved, was it pandemic related vs. violence, active intruder, emergency plan training, etc. Staff said yes, schools provided feedback which will be discussed later as part of the Executive Session.

V. Member Updates/Comments/Questions

Mr. Myers opened up the discussion, asking if any members had any other business to bring before the group. Member commented regarding the VIP plan that he wanted to thank his colleagues and PCCD staff who worked on it, as it's a good plan developed under short notice.

VI. Public Comment

Mr. Myers invited public comment at this point, as the Committee will not be returning to general session afterward. There was no public comment offered.

VII. Executive Session: 2021 School Safety and Security Survey Presentation

Mr. Myers announced that the Committee was going to enter into Executive Session to receive a presentation on the results of the 2021 School Safety and Security Survey, since the data and results of that survey are confidential by law. He informed participants that entering the Executive Session will constitute the conclusion of the general meeting and there will be no more action items for today. Mr. Myers stated that the Committee will recess the meeting following the Executive Session discussion and will reconvene on August 25, 2021 at which time the Executive Session will be continued. The beginning of the August 25, 2021 meeting will include a report out of what was discussed and corresponding action will be taken.

Motion to enter Executive Session in order to receive a presentation on the results of the School Safety and Security Survey

Motion: Bullock. **Seconded:** Hurley. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None.
Aye Votes: 12; **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Recessed until August 25, 2021 meeting

August 25, 2021 meeting

Motion to conclude Executive Session and begin the General Session

Motion: Brewster. **Seconded:** Bart. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Bullock.
Aye Votes: 11. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

VIII. Call to Order of August 25, 2021 Meeting

Mr. Myers called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM, confirmed a quorum, and welcomed participants. Mr. Myers noted that this is a continuation of the July 28, 2021 meeting, which was recessed, not adjourned.

IX. Recap of Executive Session

Mr. Myers noted that the Committee just exited from the Executive Session period that was initiated at the end of the July 28, 2021 meeting. He summarized the Executive Session activities, which included a presentation on the results of the School Safety and Security Survey conducted earlier this year and review of a draft findings report, regarding which the Committee will shortly take action. In addition, Committee members received and reviewed the 2021 PA State Police RVAT Annual Report.

Motion to approve the issuance of the School Safety & Security Survey Findings reports reviewed in Executive Session to the school entities who participated in the Survey

Motion: Hein. **Seconded:** Tuleya-Payne. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Thomas. **Aye Votes:** 11; **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

X. Violence Intervention and Prevention Grants FY 2021-22

Mr. Myers reminded Committee members of the discussion and their approval at the July meeting of a plan for the \$30 million in Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) funding that we received on June 30, 2021 from the General Assembly. He reviewed the three-part approach of that plan, comprised of:

- Support quality applications from the FY 2021 Gun Violence Reduction grant solicitation, which closed on June 30, 2021;
- Reach out to current PCCD grantees supporting gun violence initiatives and ascertain their level of need to continue to provide quality services to reduce and/or prevent violence; and
- Convene a VIP workgroup that would develop a recommendation for the upcoming solicitation to award VIP funding.

Mr. Myers reported that staff have been busy going through the three items, and he thanked those who contributed to this process, both staff and Committee members who participated.

Mr. Myers went on to present a summary of the projects being recommended for consideration by the Commission for the FY 2021 Gun Violence Reduction Initiative as the first part of the three-pronged approach. He provided some background, starting with PCCD's announcement of the availability of \$5 million in state funding on May 18, 2021, commenting that this was before there was knowledge about the \$30 million that would subsequently be allocated. Projects supported by this initiative were expected to reduce shootings and increase public safety in the Philadelphia and other municipalities across the Commonwealth that have the highest rates of gun violence. An initial funding request online survey form was open to nonprofit organizations and local government entities between May 18 and June 30, 2021.

Mr. Myers said that the Committee's adopted VIP plan allowed PCCD staff to capitalize on these current applications by supplementing the original \$5 million in Gun Violence Reduction Grant Program funds with VIP funding to support as many quality applications as possible. Of the 144 funding requests received by the June 30, 2021 deadline, staff recommended approval of 53 projects. Per the VIP plan, their recommendation was considered and endorsed by the PCCD

Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) on August 11, 2021. It is then to be presented to the SSSC for consideration and finally to the Commission at their September 8, 2021 meeting. Mr. Myers assured Committee members that PCCD staff will be available to assist applicants needing support both through the Egrants application process and with finalizing the details.

Mr. Myers responded to several questions, as follows:

- Clarified that the recommendation for the 53 applicants under this first prong preclude the remainder of the 144 applications received, however those other applicants can apply through the upcoming VIP solicitation, and staff are providing some feedback to them, as well.
- Explained that rather than a post-audit with the community to verify they know funding has been provided, PCCD focuses on assessing at the front end that the applicant has engaged in collaborating with stakeholder groups and ensuring that communication and connectivity with the community is evident in the application.
- Confirmed that administrative costs of a grant project are built into the budget in several ways, and delineated as indirect funds or personnel costs by line item which are reviewed by staff to ensure the costs are reasonable, noting that there is a recommendation in the VIP solicitation to cap that at a certain level to encourage funding to primarily support service implementation rather than administrative overhead.

Motion to recommend approval of the 53 FY 2021 Gun Violence Reduction Grant Program projects requesting a total not to exceed \$10,609,183 in state funds, pending resolution of any outstanding programmatic and/or fiscal concerns

Motion: Bullock. **Seconded:** Hein. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Thomas. **Aye Votes:** 11; **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted; abstentions - none**

Moving on, Mr. Myers presented the second action item, *Adoption of the VIP Solicitation Criteria & Framework*, which addresses both the second and third prong of the VIP Plan. The VIP Workgroup, which met twice over two weeks, developed the various elements detailed in the document that was included in the meeting materials. Mr. Myers identified the Workgroup's members, which included Committee members Rep. Bullock, Rep. Gleim, Mike Vereb and himself; PCCD staff members Kirsten Kenyon and Samantha Koch; and the staff of the legislative members on this body.

Mr. Myers reviewed the key elements of the proposal, including:

- A tiered application amount approach, where the Workgroup specifically crafted the eligible funding amounts to correspond with the size and operating budgets of those entities making application;
- Allowing for 'umbrella' or sponsor organizations to come in on behalf of smaller community organizations that may or may not have their formal 501(c)(3) designation yet to serve as a fiscal sponsor and/or grant manager for those entities; and
- Utilizing SurveyMonkey to initiate the application process, to make the initial request easier.

Mr. Myers noted that with the tiered approach there was a lot of discussion and consideration of the award amounts that would be solicited. He also commented that the recent grant solicitation addressing gun violence received positive feedback for its initial use of SurveyMonkey in that process.

Mr. Myers reviewed the breakdown provided of the VIP funding distribution. He noted that the first line indicates that up to \$5.6 million will likely be utilized to support the FY 2021 Gun Violence Reduction grantees as approved by this committee, with the second line of just over a half million being the estimated amount of VIP funding needed to augment FY 2019 Gun Violence recipients to continue their services and programs through June 30, 2022.

Mr. Myers went into some detail on the third line item on technical assistance. While applicants are allowed to include technical assistance costs within their request, there is uncertainty as to whether they know what technical assistance they need or have access to needed and/or any other universal assistance as well as to any resources or human capital needed to complete implementation of their project.

Because of this concern, Mr. Myers presented the Workgroup's recommendation to temporarily set aside a portion of the funding (\$750,000) to determine if additional technical assistance will be needed in the future to support program implementation, fiscal accountability or professionalism efforts. This recommendation is based on the training and technical assistance costs of the Threat Assessment Team training grant that PCCD is currently administrating.

Mr. Myers stated that if staff review of the applications received from this solicitation and experiences with onboarding the 53 Gun Violence Reduction applicants indicates that a separate technical assistance solicitation is needed, the VIP Workgroup will be tasked with developing that solicitation and presenting it to the SSSC for consideration at the December meeting. Alternately, if it does not seem to be needed, the \$750,000 will be rolled into the VIP solicitation award amount.

Mr. Myers concluded by noting the last line item on the framework document indicating the expectation that \$23 to \$24 million will be made available to support awards from the VIP solicitation. He invited members to share any specific questions, comments or clarifications regarding the framework language, and hearing none called for a motion.

Motion to recommend approval of the draft VIP solicitation criteria and framework as presented

Motion: Helena. **Seconded:** Brewster. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Thomas. **Aye Votes:** 11; **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted.**

XI. General Updates

Mr. Myers informed participants that PCCD has started receiving a number of project modification requests for previously awarded grants, noting one specific area of requests. PCCD awarded funds to Intermediate Units (IUs) to pass along to non-public schools but have heard from some non-public schools that the funds did not get to them. Mr. Myers assured Committee members that PCCD is working through those issues with the IUs and are allowing some extensions of those projects so the awards can be made.

Mr. Myers invited Ms. Samantha Koch to share an update regarding the Threat Assessment Team training. She shared that PCCD and its partners hosted the first regional K-12 Training of Trainers sessions in August, one in Harrisburg and one in Archbald. She noted that there were about 140 participants in the two sessions, which were facilitated by subject matter experts. Ms. Koch stated that the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 94% reporting that they felt more knowledgeable, confident and more prepared. She shared a few other positive findings, concluding with 84% indicating that they would recommend participating to a colleague.

Ms. Koch identified some constructive feedback received, particularly regarding identifying and sharing documentation resources available for threat assessment teams. She noted that they have been directing inquires to resources available through partners such as PSBA. In addition, Ms. Koch informed the Committee that PCCD, PSBA and RSM Corporation are working on developing a webinar to address documentation and resources and the steps schools can take.

XII. Member Updates/Comments/Questions

None offered.

XIII. Public Comment

There was no public comment offered during either the July or August meetings.

XIV. Adjournment

Mr. Myers noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 1:00 PM during which time the Committee will review the recommendations around the VIP funding solicitation responses. Mr. Myers thanked everyone for their time and contribution to the discussion. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 1:55 PM.

Motion to adjourn

Motion: Bullock. **Seconded:** Hein. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Thomas. **Aye Votes:** 11; **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**