

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

**School Safety and Security Committee Meeting**

January 10, 2024

MINUTES

**Members/Designees:**

Mr. Mike Pennington, Designee for Chairman Davis  
Ms. Sabrina S. Backer, Member  
Mr. Andrew Barnes, Designee for DHS Secretary Arkoosh  
Ms. Janice Bart, Member  
Senator James Brewster, Member  
Representative Donna Bullock, Member  
Dr. Benjamin Feeney, Member  
Representative Barb Gleim, Member  
Mr. Mike Hurley, Member  
Mr. Mike Kelley, Member  
Dr. Scott Kuren, Designee for PDE Secretary Mumin  
Dr. Gennaro "Jamie" Piraino, Member  
Dr. Kathleen Reeves, Member  
Ms. Wendy Robison, Member  
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member

**Staff:**

Sally Barry	Rebecca Kiehl
Pamela Bennett	Samantha Koch
Kiara Brown	Geoffrey Kolchin
Corinne Burr	Crystal Lauver
Lindsay Busko	Jordan Lewis
Christina Cosgrove-Rooks	Elizabeth Locke
Amelia Dizo	Levi Looks
Stephen Ekema-Agbaw	Leo Lutz
Jennifer Ely	Betsy May
Chris Epoca	Heidi Metzger
Lynn Fidler	Zoe Miner
Alison Gantz	Kariem Morssy
Stacey Herman	Ian Murray
Heather Hewitt	Derin Myers
Chuck Hogan	Debra Sandifer
Kirsten Kenyon	Lindsay Vaughan

**Guests:**

Diane Acri, PA House  
Kara Beem, Keystone Ingenuity for Alliance of Approved Private Schools  
Christian Belker, Attorney General's Office  
Gwenn Dando, PA Senate  
Kristen Daniels, PA State Police – Homeland Security  
Mike Deery, PA Senate  
Kat deVries, NeuroLogic  
Bradley Keen, PA House of Representatives  
Kate Krueger, PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO)  
Carol Kuntz  
Westburn Majors, PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)  
Heather Masshardt, PA School Board Association (PSBA)  
Sherri Smith, PA Association of School Administrators (PASA)  
Angel Stewart, PA Juvenile Court Judges' Commission  
Camille Traczek, PA Department of Education  
Kathy Van Horn, NeuroLogic  
Shannon Walker, PA House of Representatives  
Shaun White, PA State Police – Homeland Security  
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate  
Steven Williams, PA Office of the Lieutenant Governor

### **Call to Order of the January 10, 2024, Meeting and Adoption of Minutes**

Mr. Mike Pennington called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM and welcomed participants. A quorum of members was established. Moving to the agenda, Mr. Pennington noted that the minutes from the November 30, 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 November 30, 2023, meeting as submitted.**

**Motion:** Brewster. **Second:** Bart **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Bullock, Gleim & Reeves. **Votes:** 11. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Mr. Pennington thanked the Committee for convening on short notice and thanked PCCD staff for all the work they have done since the recent passage of the omnibus School Code bill on the grants, funding, and other school safety-related activities associated with Act 33 of 2023. He referenced the school shooting in Iowa just a few days into the new year as a reminder of the importance of community and school safety and the work of the SSSC to try and prevent these types of tragedies, as well as other safety and mental health issues.

Moving on, Mr. Pennington welcomed Major Michaelann Andrusiak, the Director of the Office of Homeland Security, to the Committee as a nonvoting member in accordance with inclusion of that position in Act 33. He also apprised members that PCCD (along with the Departments of Education and Human Services) was invited to be part of a panel for an upcoming hearing by the House Education Committee focusing on mental health in schools. In response to the specific request to provide an overview of the school mental health grants that have been administered, PCCD intends to provide data released during the last iteration of school safety grants, which this Committee allowed to be posted in the aggregate on PCCD's website. Updates on the hearing outcome will be provided at the next meeting.

### **Presentation on Act 33 of 2023**

Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Kirsten Kenyon to present information on [Act 33 of 2023](#). Ms. Kenyon shared a PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of the changes in that legislation enacted on December 13, 2023. She reviewed details regarding some of the significant updates, including:

- Establishment of a new Executive Committee, covering its composition, purpose and duties;
- Option to create County Safe School Collaboratives, including benefits, purpose, state technical assistance in establishing, and reporting requirements; and
- New SSSC/PCCD responsibilities transitioned from the PA Department of Education (PDE) Office for Safe Schools, such as developing policies and providing resources, training, guidance, and assistance, approving vendors, school incident data and reporting, regulations, and grant programs for nonpublic school entities.

Ms. Kenyon presented highlights of the grant funding allocations included in Act 33 pertaining to:

- Mental Health: \$100 million in federal COVID Relief (ARPA) funds with \$90 million in noncompetitive, formula grants for specified school entities, \$5 million to PDE for training and certification of school-based mental health professionals, and \$5 million to the PA Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) for the School Mental Health Internship Grant Program
- School Safety and Security Fund: \$50 million, with \$45 million designated for meritorious and competitive grants and \$5 million legislatively earmarked "for grants to implement innovative school safety and security initiatives"
- Targeted School Safety Grants for Nonpublic Schools and School Entities: Shifted from PDE's Office for Safe Schools with an increased allocation to \$22 million, with at least \$14,551,000 going to Intermediate Units for Nonpublic School Grants

Finally, Ms. Kenyon reviewed some additional statutory updates, including:

- Permanent inclusion of the Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) grant program authorization in statute and funding for FY 2023-24

- Court orders for School Police Officers (SPOs) and reports of their annual training to be submitted to PCCD
- Shifts the statutory language for the Office of Safe School Advocate (OSSA) to a different section with edits to make the OSSA more victim-centered

She also reviewed a timeline for the major components of Act 33, including for the school safety grant funding and VIP awards, convening of the Executive Committee, and regulation update deadline. Ms. Kenyon responded to a question regarding the timeframe for expending the grant funding, stating the anticipated start date for all projects is January 1, 2024 with conclusion of these two-year projects on December 31, 2025. She also confirmed that the [Act 33 of 2023 Presentation](#) would be posted on both the PCCD website and in the members-only section.

### **School Safety and Security Grant Framework**

Mr. Pennington asked Ms. Kenyon to proceed with the presentation on the School Safety Program FY23-24 Grant Funding Framework. She reviewed the document included in the meeting materials, providing comments on the funding sources and allocation details. She stated that the separate solicitations make it a smoother process than last year. She also noted that though the deadline is February 29, 2024, PCCD staff will work with any stragglers to get their applications submitted. In response to a question regarding the use of state or federal procurement standards, PCCD staff stated the legislation clearly identifies that the state procurement standards are in play, though there will be some additional items for the federal funds, and PCCD will work with schools to ensure compliance.

For the competitive grants Ms. Kenyon stated that the solicitation blends the traditional School Safety and Security Grant Program and PDE's Targeted School Safety Grant program into a single application. She also reviewed the expanded eligibility to now include municipalities, law enforcement agencies, and approved vendors applying to provide school security personnel services, along with the previously eligible school entities. Ms. Kenyon noted the maximum award amounts and reviewed the priorities and scoring for these grants.

A member asked how PCCD plans to get the word out about these funding opportunities. Ms. Kenyon described the different email blasts that will go out directly and through partners such as PDE and trade associations (e.g., PASBO, PSBA, etc.). She added that the longer application timeframe (seven weeks compared to 30 days in 2022) and planned webinars will also help.

Ms. Kenyon concluded by discussing the \$14.5 million available for Targeted School Safety Grants for Nonpublic Schools. Given the significant increase from the prior allocation, she estimated that 180 projects would be awarded, a little over double the previous amount. Ms. Kenyon also relayed the recommendation to increase the maximum award amount from \$50,000 to \$75,000 to greater benefit the nonpublic schools. Ms. Kenyon stated that the Baseline Criteria will still be used for priority consideration. She shared the plan to utilize methodology similar to the Nonprofit Security Fund and use SurveyMonkey to gather initial proposals, obtain SSSC approval, and then work with the IUs to formally apply with the approved nonpublic schools as subrecipients, like the process used to distribute the COVID-19 grant funds in FY 2020-21.

Mr. Pennington asked the members of the committee for a motion to approve the School Safety and Security Grant Framework as presented.

### **Motion to adopt the School Safety and Security Grant Framework as presented**

**Motion:** Hurley **Seconded:** Brewster **Discussion:** None. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Kelly & Reeves. **Aye Votes:** 12. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

### **General Updates**

Mr. Pennington acknowledged that while a general update document was not included in the meeting materials, he wanted to apprise the Committee that PCCD was officially contacted by the Legislative Budget & Finance Committee (LBFC) this week to formally engage with them on the study of the school safety grants per [SR 178](#). He reminded members of the main goals of their

review as outlined in SR 178 and stated that PCCD staff will keep the Committee updated as the study progresses.

Mr. Pennington also informed the members that three more assessors were added to the Assessment Provider Registry since the last meeting, bringing the total to 129 physical security assessment providers, 41 behavioral health assessment providers, and 11 dually able to conduct both physical and behavioral health assessments.

A member who serves as Vice Chair of the LBFC shared his perspective that the SSSC has done a lot of great work but many are not aware of it, so he is anxious for the LBFC report to come out. Mr. Pennington agreed, commenting that it provides also an opportunity for improvement.

#### Baseline Criteria- Example Enhancement

Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Samantha Koch to provide an overview of the baseline criteria examples document. Given the significant role that the Baseline Criteria Standards still play in the funding this year, Ms. Koch said that PCCD wanted to ensure that school entities had as much opportunity and guidance possible regarding the revised Baseline Criteria standards adopted last May. To that end, she stated that several documents created as additional resources will be posted along with the currently available revised standards and crosswalks.

Ms. Koch reviewed the new resource documents, including the Baseline Criteria with examples of eligible options for schools to consider as they develop their applications and the new Self-Assessment Checklist Tools to help schools identify where they stand by providing a quick snapshot of where the school meets the Baseline Criteria and the gaps they may have

#### Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program

Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Zoe Miner to share an update on the Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grant Program. Ms. Miner gave a brief overview, reminding the Committee PCCD opened the FY 2023-24 VIP funding opportunity on November 30, 2023 and hosted two webinars for potential applicants in December, one for the regular VIP grant and the other for the Coordinated Community Violence Intervention (CCVI) grant, both of which were very well attended. In addition, both PCCD and WestEd, the VIP technical assistance provider, responded to questions and offered support to prospective applicants.

Noting that the application deadline for the VIP and CCVI grant submissions is January 18, 2024, Ms. Miner stated that 100 applications have currently been started, but only a handful have actually been submitted. Given that status and since this funding opportunity opened during the holiday season, a decision to extend the application period by a week (or possibly longer) to give applicants time to apply is being considered.

#### VIP Evaluation Project

Ms. Miner moved on to report on the VIP evaluation project, stating that the VIP evaluator, National Opinion Research Center (NORC), distributed a survey in December to the VIP grantees to assist them in making their selection for a more in-depth analysis of certain projects. NORC has also been reviewing and analyzing the required performance data submitted by grantees in the Egrants system. She noted that they will be working closely with the VIP technical assistance provider, WestEd, on the project, including on developing a strategy for evaluating the 5-pilot CCVI strategies grants.

Finally, Ms. Miner shared that WestEd traveled to each CCVI grantee in the months of November and December to provide technical assistance and ensure projects are proceeding as projected. Additionally, in February WestEd will be convening with each coordinator so they can connect and ensure best practices and lessons learned across sites.

#### Act 55 School Safety and Security Training Update

Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Lindsay Vaughan to apprise the Committee on the Act 55 School Safety and Security Training. Ms. Vaughan reminded members that Act 55 created a new training

requirement for school safety and security coordinators (SSC) and the Committee adopted standards for the 11 prescribed topics to be included in a full day (7-hour) training. As a result of Act 33, Ms. Vaughan noted that some of the legal citations changed, so the training standards needed to be updated. Since the changes were minimal and all technical (not substantive) in nature, she informed members that PCCD made those corrections and will post the updated criteria this afternoon.

Ms. Vaughan stated that work with RSM, the training vendor, to develop the training curriculum for school safety coordinators has continued. The first in person training will be held on February 2, 2024, marking the start of the one-year compliance period for coordinators to complete the training. Ms. Vaughan said that they already have another 20 sessions scheduled regionally throughout the Commonwealth from February to May, which should accommodate all currently appointed coordinators. She added that these sessions are open for registration and a communication about them will be sent to coordinators and chief school administrators in the next day or so. In addition, Ms. Vaughan stated that an online version of the training is being developed but will not be ready to launch until the fall.

Regarding the three hours of school safety and security training required annually for school employees, Ms. Vaughan said that of the six topics able to be offered [online](#), five are currently available and the final topic will be available later in January. She reported that over 15,000 individuals have taken one or more of those trainings thus far and about 85% of the survey responses state that the sessions are helpful or very helpful.

Regarding the Emergency Training Drills Module that is required to be offered in person, Ms. Vaughan reported that 28 Train the Trainer sessions have been conducted, teaching just under 700 different individuals to be able to offer the training.

Finally, Ms. Vaughan reported that 53 external providers have gone through the process to certify that the training they provide on these topics meet the standards. These providers are now listed on the [training webpage](#) and are able to be utilized as a resource by school entities.

### **Member Updates/Comments/Questions**

Mr. Pennington asked if any member had updates or other business to bring before the Committee, but no one did.

### **Public Comment**

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

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Pennington noted that upcoming meetings are tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, March 27 and Wednesday, April 24, both at 1:00 PM, though he acknowledged that they may need to change depending on how the grant review goes. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 2:24 PM.

### **Motion to adjourn.**

**Motion:** Tuleya-Payne. **Seconded:** Backer **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Hurley, Kelly, & Reeves **Aye Votes:** 11. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**