

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

School Safety and Security Committee Meeting

April 24, 2024

MINUTES

Members/Designees:

Mr. Derin Myers, Designee for Chairman Davis
Maj. Michaelann Andrusiak, Member (non-voting)
Ms. Sabrina S. Backer, Member
Ms. Janice Bart, Member
Senator James Brewster, Member
Rep. Donna Bullock, Member
Dr. Benjamin Feeney, Member
Ms. Angela Fitterer, Designee for PDE Secretary Mumin
Lt. Kyle Gautsch, Member
Mr. Mike Kelly, Member
Ms. Brittney Kline, Designee for Attorney General Henry
Senator Wayne Langerholc, Member
Mr. David "Randy" Padfield, Member
Dr. Gennaro "Jamie" Piraino, Member
Ms. Wendy Robison, Member
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member

Staff:

Pamela Bennett	Samantha Koch
Matthew Conn	Carol Kuntz
Camila Contreras	Crystal Lauver
Christina Cosgrove-Rooks	Jordan Lewis
Amelia Dizo	Elizabeth Locke
Stephen Ekema	Levi Looks
Jennifer Ely	Leo Lutz
Christopher Epoca	Betsy May
Heather Hewitt	Heidi Metzger
Chuck Hogan	Kariem Morssy
Daniel Hull	Ian Murray
Kirsten Kenyon	Lindsay Vaughan
Rebecca Kiehl	

Guests:

Diane Acri, PA House of Representatives
Dwight Bard, Greencastle-Antrim School District
Sean Brandon, PA House of Representatives
Andrew Christ, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Gwen Dando, PA Senate
Kristen Daniels, PA State Police – Homeland Security
Mike Deery, PA Senate
Stephen D'Ettorre, Office of the Governor
Jess Drylie, Moon Area School District
Tobi Downing, Office of the Attorney General
Neil Fredrickson, Security Integrator
Dave Freidenbloom, Chestnut Ridge School District
Jared Gerace, Pottsville Area School District
John Gooley, Cardinal Point Security Group
Preston Hartman, Plum Borough School District
Jim Hollis, Everett Area School District
Eric Kahler, Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center (RMCTC)
Jeremy Kozich, Advanced Electronic Security
Kate Krueger, PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO)
Scott Kuren, PA Department of Education (PDE)

Heather Masshardt, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Shelley Neff, Governor's Budget Office
Alison Piccolino, PA Senate
Sherri Smith, PA Association of School Administrators (PASA)
Orla Treacy, Cardinal Point Homeland Security Group
Shaun White, PA State Police – Homeland Security
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate
Steven Williams, PA Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Tammy Yurkovich, Moon Area School District
Jeff Z.
Megan Zweiback, Souderton Area School District

Call to Order of the April 24, 2024, Meeting and Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Derin Myers called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM and welcomed participants. A quorum of members was established. Moving to the agenda, Mr. Myers noted that the March 27, 2024 meeting minutes 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 March 27, 2024, meeting as submitted.

Motion: Brewster. **Second:** Bullock **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Piraino **Votes:** 13. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Update on the Status of School District Meritorious Grants and Mental Health Grants

Mr. Myers invited Ms. Kirsten Kenyon to update the Committee on the status of each of the school safety solicitations for FY 2023-24. She first reviewed the School District Meritorious Grant Program, noting the availability of a little over \$18 million for school districts to expend on any eligible activity allowed in [Section 1306-B\(j\)](#) of the PA Public School Code. Ms. Kenyon reported that to date, 478 of the 500 school districts have submitted applications and 437 awards totaling \$16.3 million have been distributed thus far.

Moving on to the second solicitation for the School Mental Health Grant Program, Ms. Kenyon stated that \$90 million in noncompetitive, formula-based funding was made available for school districts, charter schools, intermediate units, and area career and technical centers to address student mental and behavioral health needs. She reported that 721 of the 778 eligible school entities have applied for these funds with 372 awarded, totaling \$46.3 million to date. Ms. Kenyon informed members that confidential copies of the executive summaries for both of these grant solicitations have been posted to the private SSSC webpage.

Ms. Kenyon stated that staff continue to work with the remaining eligible "stragglers" and thanked members for their assistance in reaching out to them. She reported that 12 schools responded regarding their FY22-23 formula-based funding and several other schools followed up on their FY23-24 available funding. However, she noted that there remains a small cohort of 10 school entities that have not taken advantage of the FY22-23 funds, due to closing (4 charter schools), not having students (1 school district), or formally declining the funds (5 schools). Given that it has been nearly two years since the FY22-23 funds were made available, Ms. Kenyon shared PCCD's recommendation to use their collective lapsed funding of \$1,460,102 to support the FY23-24 competitive school safety grant awards.

A member asked if there was any common theme of schools that have refused funding and if there is anything that could improve outreach efforts. Ms. Kenyon responded that she would have to defer to staff who talked to these schools, but it is generally a combination of either not knowing what to spend funding on or not having the bandwidth to apply for the grant. Hearing no further questions, Mr. Myers called for a motion to redirect the funding as recommended.

Motion to redirect any unused FY22-23 formula-funding to support the FY23-24 Competitive School Safety and Security Grant Program, as presented.

Motion: Bullock. **Second:** Padfield **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None **Votes:** 14. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

FY23-24 Competitive School Safety and Security Grants

Ms. Kenyon shared a PowerPoint presentation on the Competitive School Safety Grants covering an overview of the process and applicants, how geographic distribution was addressed, the scoring process, and the final recommendations for the Committee. She reviewed details of the funding announcement, including the total funding, cap per school entity, and timeline. She said that PCCD conducted a series of webinars to provide details on the solicitation and provided one-pagers summarizing the details, noting priority consideration for requests addressing Level 1 [Baseline Criteria](#) needs or needs identified in a professional assessment.

Ms. Kenyon reported that by the time the funding announcement closed, PCCD had received 635 applications requesting \$197 million. The final application pool consisted of 619 unique entities requesting \$193.6 million. She noted that this was six times the amount of available funds for distribution, and that this was a major uptick in applications from the 2019 solicitation.

In explaining the review process, Ms. Kenyon said that to ensure geographic distribution, twelve regions were organized based on population, contiguous intermediate units, and the total number of possible grant requests. Allocations for each region were then determined by averaging the total percentage of the population and the total percentage of the funding requested by applicants in that region. Next, thirteen individual review teams were created, one for each region plus one for municipalities, law enforcement, and approved vendors. The 12 region-based teams were comprised of three internal and external reviewers with the goal of having one physical security expert, one behavioral health expert, and one staff reviewer from each team.

Ms. Kenyon shared a chart detailing the recommended award amount for each region. She noted that the buffer funds the Committee just approved will be invaluable, given that the total is more than the targeted amount. She reviewed the recommended projects from 104 applications, including 74 school districts, 11 charter schools, six area career and technical centers, five intermediate units, six approved private schools, and two municipalities/law enforcement/approved vendor applicants. Ms. Kenyon stated that most applications were for physical security enhancements, adding that while the majority cited recent assessments in their request, they will need to submit pertinent documentation as verification. She also noted an emerging trend of behavioral health assessments being conducted using the PCCD criteria.

A member asked Ms. Kenyon to comment on her observation that schools are using a blend of resources for behavioral health services rather than hiring certified school counselors. Ms. Kenyon responded that the Level 1 Baseline Criteria standard is access to services, so it is the school's discretion on which services they utilize, whether those available in the community or those provided by internal staff. With no more questions raised, Mr. Myers called for a motion.

Motion to approve the FY23-24 Competitive School Safety and Security Grants as presented.

Motion: Brewster. **Second:** Tuleya-Payne. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None **Votes:** 14. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Targeted School Safety Grants for Nonpublic Schools

Ms. Kenyon shared a PowerPoint presentation on the targeted grants for nonpublic schools. She provided some historical background and the changes made in Act 33 of 2023 to shift this funding from PDE to PCCD along with increasing the amount available from \$3.2 million to over \$14.5 million. She reviewed use and eligible activities, noting the \$75,000 maximum award amount for up to two years. She reminded members of some additional requirements, including the definition of a nonpublic school, prioritized funding for persistently dangerous schools for Level 1 Baseline

Criteria needs and professionally completed assessments, and geographic considerations to ensure equitable distribution of awards.

Ms. Kenyon described the application process whereby nonprofit schools used SurveyMonkey to submit 432 initial requests totaling \$27.8 million, which was twice the amount available. She said that in order to stretch the available funding, reviewers only recommended items either identified in a physical or behavioral health assessment or to cover Level 1 Baseline Criteria needs.

Ms. Kenyon showed a chart of the applications by intermediate unit identifying the targeted amount and the recommended amount, which funds just over half of the applications and at least one project in each intermediate unit region. She stated that most applicants requested funds for Level 1 Physical Security Baseline Criteria needs. Of the behavioral health requests, she shared that many schools requested funding to support counseling services over and above what they currently receive from their intermediate unit to support mental health needs.

A member asked about the role of intermediate units in this process. Ms. Kenyon responded that the intermediate units will be responsible for submitting a formal application, receiving the award, and working with the nonprofit schools to administer the awards. She also confirmed that if requested, this process is subject to an audit to verify that the funds are utilized as intended. With no more questions, Mr. Myers called for a motion to approve is funding recommendation.

Motion to approve the FY23-24 Targeted School Safety Grants for Nonpublic Schools as presented.

Motion: Tuleya-Payne. **Second:** Bullock. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Piraino
Votes: 13. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Coordinator Survey Modifications

Ms. Kenyon presented an update on the annual School Safety and Security Coordinator Survey. She reminded members that every year PCCD issues a school safety survey, as coordinators are required to annually provide a report to their school boards about their school's safety and security needs and provide documentation to the Committee that it has been done.

With the passage of Acts 55 and 33, Ms. Kenyon apprised members of some recommended additions to the survey to incorporate the new information. She shared that these modifications include confirmation of the coordinator's information and reminders about the Act 55 training required for both school employees and safety and security coordinators. She also reviewed other added questions on such areas as threat assessment teams, general school safety information, school security personnel, school violence reporting, school police officers and court orders, general school safety practices, school-based diversion, and general feedback on school safety.

A member expressed her appreciation for the efforts to expand the survey, believing that it will be helpful in the future to collect more information. Mr. Myers echoed her appreciation and acknowledged all of the hard work Ms. Kenyon and her team have put into this revision.

General Updates

Mr. Myers apprised members of the status of the review being conducted by the Legislative Budget & Finance Committee (LB&FC) regarding school safety grants and other school safety related topics pursuant to [SR 178](#), which requires them to study what PCCD has accomplished to date and how it compares nationally. He shared that having completed several other projects the LB&FC are now focused on PCCD for the next few months and expect to have a final report ready by November. He advised members to feel free to speak with LB&FC staff if contacted as they gather information on the role and perspective of Committee members regarding the work of the SSSC.

Mr. Myers noted that there is no report from the Executive Committee as they do not meet until later in May and that an update will be provided at the next meeting. He also mentioned that staff

anticipate reviewing and potentially revising both the assessor registration criteria and the assessment criteria in the next few months.

Status of Act 55 School Safety and Security Criteria and Training

Mr. Myers invited Ms. Lindsay Vaughan to update the Committee on the status of Act 55 School Safety and Security Criteria Training. She reviewed the responsibilities of the Committee, including developing and providing standardized training to school employees on multiple topics and the shared responsibility with PCCD to develop and offer standardized mandatory training for school safety and security coordinators.

Ms. Vaughan apprised members of the efforts thus far with the approved vendor, Risk and Strategic Management Corporation (RSM), in meeting these goals. She shared that since the last Committee meeting more than 10,000 additional school employees have completed the online training modules, covering six of the topics outlined in the statute. Response to the training continues to be very positive, with around 85% the 68,000 school employees now trained indicating that these modules are helpful or very helpful. For the Emergency Training Drills module, which is required to be offered in person, Ms. Vaughan stated that 740 participants have completed 31 Train-the-Trainer sessions to deliver this in-person module. She noted that these Train-the-Trainer sessions will continue to be offered regionally throughout the year.

Regarding the School Safety and Security Coordinator trainings, Ms. Vaughan said that 20 seven-hour trainings have been conducted thus far with around 85% of the more than 550 participants indicating improved knowledge as a result. She noted that there are 14 more sessions scheduled for April through June, and an online option will be launching in the fall along with additional in-person courses. Based on feedback, Ms. Vaughan stated that there are plans to develop and provide additional practical training for coordinators on hot topics such as “developing an emergency operations plan” and “drafting your annual report.”

Finally, Ms. Vaughan provided an update on the certified training providers. She stated that there are now 66 providers on the list, which is posted on the [PCCD website](#) as a resource for schools.

Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP) Grant Program Update

Mr. Myers invited Ms. Samantha Koch to update the Committee on the status of the VIP grants. Ms. Koch referenced the Committee’s action at the last meeting to approve one Coordinated Community Violence Intervention (CCVI) application and 63 VIP applications totaling \$40 million in projects. She said that staff provided guidance for the recommended cohort on the Egrants system, along with a detailed funding announcement and a toolkit to assist them in submitting their application by the May 15, 2024 deadline. Ms. Koch stated that as of today, 56 of the 64 applicants have started and five have submitted their applications. She noted that staff are reviewing these as they come in and will reach out to any stragglers.

As in prior years, Ms. Koch shared that staff received an overwhelming response to the solicitation with more than 270 organizations requesting \$169 million in funds – more than four times the amount available. In notifying unsuccessful applicants, staff provided funding and resource information, as well as the opportunity to request individualized feedback. She said that staff are sending letters and scheduling feedback calls and are pleased with the great response as it is a good way to help understand the process.

Moving on to the VIP evaluation project, Ms. Koch said that the VIP evaluator, National Opinion Research Center, has selected 40 VIP sites to evaluate, and will be reaching out to them. She noted that this selection will also cover all five of last year’s pilot sites.

Finally, Ms. Koch reported that March marked one year for the PA Peace Alliance, stating that in recognition, WestEd and PCCD hosted the lead coordinators of the five CCVI sites with the opportunity to learn from one another, meet PCCD Chairman Davis, and share progress and lessons learned thus far. In addition, Ms. Koch stated that Pennsylvania’s community VIP technical assistance efforts were highlighted at a recent U.S. Department of Justice conference in Chicago,

noting that there is a lot of interest from other states on Pennsylvania's community-based violence prevention strategies.

Member Updates/Comments/Questions

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

Public Comment

Mr. Myers invited any public comment. Neil Frederickson from Security Integrator asked to see the map of recommended awarded locations again, which Ms. Kenyon subsequently showed.

Adjournment

Mr. Myers stated that the next meeting is anticipated to be in June or July after the passage of the next state budget. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 PM.

Motion to adjourn.

Motion: Tuleya-Payne. **Seconded:** Padfield. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Kelly, Langerholc, Piraino, & Robison. **Aye Votes:** 10. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**