

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

School Safety and Security Committee Meeting

January 15, 2025

MINUTES

Members/Designees:

Mr. Michael Pennington, Designee for Chairman Davis
Ms. Sabrina Backer, Member
Mr. Andrew Barnes, Designee for DHS Secretary Arkoosh
Ms. Janice Bart, Member
Lt. Col. George Bivens, Designee for PSP Col. Paris
Dr. Benjamin Feeney, Member
Lt. Kyle Gautsch, Member
Ms. Rebecca Kilfoy, Member
Ms. Brittney Kline, Designee for Attorney General Henry
Dr. Scott Kuren, Designee for Acting PDE Secretary Fitterer
Senator Wayne Langerholc, Member
Senator Nick Miller, Member
Mr. David "Randy" Padfield, Member
Dr. Gennaro "Jamie" Piraino, Member
Representative Stephenie Scialabba, Member
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member
Representative Regina Young, Member

Staff:

Pamela Bennett	Jordan Lewis
Matthew Conn	Levi Looks
Christina Cosgrove-Rooks	Leo Lutz
Amelia Dizo	Patricia Manbeck
Jennifer Ely	Heather Masshardt
Chris Epoca	Betsy May
Alison Gantz	Heidi Metzger
Kristina Gonzalez	Zoe Miner
Stacey Herman	Ian Murray
Heather Hewitt	Derin Myers
Chuck Hogan	Debra Sandifer
Daniel Hull	Kayleigh Siemer
Kirsten Kenyon	Lindsay Vaughan
Samantha Koch	Mandy Weiser
Carol Kuntz	Emily White
Crystal Lauver	

Guests:

Diane Acri, PA House of Representatives
Kirstin Alvanitakis, PA Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Contrell Armor, PA Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network
Grace Ballard, Harrisburg Area YMCA
Hannah Barrick, PA Assn. of School Business Officials (PASBO)
Sean Beers, YMCA of Greater Erie
Patrick Bircher, PA Department of Education (PDE)
Erika Brunelle, PA State Education Association (PSEA)
Anthony Choi, PA Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LCFB)
Andrew Christ, PA School Boards Association (PSBA)
John Cole, PA Capital-Star
Leslie Coombe, PA Department of Health (DOH)
Gwenn Dando, PA Senate
Kristin Daniels, PA State Police – Homeland Security
Mike Deery, PA Senate
Stephen D’Ettorre, PA Office of the Governor

Guests, Continued:

Tobi Downing, Office of the Attorney General
Kelly Feiler, Selinsgrove Regional Engagement Center
Andrew Fueller, The Prevention Network
Jennifer Galloway, YMCA of the Roses
Ann Guskey, Greater Johnstown Community YMCA
Steph Hardman, PA Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Alisa Harris, PA State Alliance of YMCAs
Nicole Hendrickson, PA Department of Education (PDE)
Tanna Henry, Dauphin County
Amy Hockenberry, PA Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LCFB)
Tina Hoehn, Wayne County YMCA
Jeanette Hussemann, NORC at the University of Chicago
Bradley Keen, PA House
Megan Kennedy, University of Pittsburgh
J.R. Kenny, Boys & Girls Clubs of America
Sara Lauver, PA Early Learning Investment Commission
Thomas LeClair, PA House
Amy Lynch, Chambersburg Memorial YMCA
Westburn Majors, PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
Chris Misner, Chambersburg Memorial YMCA
Katie Moran, Greater Scranton YMCA
Nancie
David Ozmore, Harrisburg Area YMCA
Nedra Perkins, YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh
Deanna Renaud, YMCA of Greater Erie
Kira Schine, YMCA of the Twin Tiers
Chris Stone, Risk and Strategic Management, Corp. (RSM)
Cynthia Urban, PA Senate
Shannon Walker, PA House
Shawn White, PA State Police – Homeland Security
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate
Steven Williams, PA Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Unknown Caller (845-649-6597)
Unknown Caller (908-442-6445)

Call to Order of the January 15, 2025, Meeting and Adoption of Minutes

Chairman Davis's designee, Mr. Mike Pennington, called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM and welcomed participants. A quorum of members was established. Stating that the minutes from the November 26, 2024 meeting were included in the materials provided in advance of this meeting, Mr. Pennington called for a motion to approve them.

Motion to approve the minutes from the November 26, 2024, meeting as submitted.

Motion: Barnes. **Second:** Padfield. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Backer.
Votes: 15. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Mr. Pennington welcomed and introduced Sen. Nick Miller who has been appointed to fill the retired Sen. Brewster's seat on the Committee.

FY24-25 Building Opportunity Through Out-of-School Time (BOOST) Grant Program Recommendations

Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Zoe Miner to present on the BOOST grant program recommendations. Ms. Miner shared a PowerPoint presentation, briefly reviewing the three solicitations (VIP, BOOST and CCVI) funded by the \$56.5 million appropriated for Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) and highlighting the new carve-out of \$11.5 million to create the BOOST Grants Program.

Ms. Miner reported an overwhelming response to the three solicitations in which 478 applications were submitted requesting over \$174 million, more than three times the \$56.5 million available. She said that staff were especially thrilled with the high interest in the new BOOST program for which 289 applications were received requesting \$63.2 million, with the remaining 189 applications seeking \$111 million in VIP and CCVI program funds.

Ms. Miner described the review process for the three solicitations and then detailed the 284 local and 5 statewide track BOOST applicants, including location, agency type, and priority considerations. She identified the counties served by the recommended applications, noting that the FY24-25 BOOST Grants Project Summaries document included in the meeting materials provides more information on the individual projects.

Ms. Miner concluded with the PCCD staff and VIP Workgroup recommendation of 44 local and 2 statewide BOOST applications for an amount not to exceed \$11,599,483 in state FY 2024-25 VIP funds, pending the resolution of any outstanding programmatic and/or fiscal concerns. Mr. Pennington asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he called for a motion.

Motion to Adopt the FY 24-25 BOOST grants, as presented.

Motion: Tuleya-Payne. **Second:** Miller. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Backer
Votes: 15. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

NORC Presentation on Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP) Outcomes

Mr. Pennington announced the next agenda item of a presentation on the Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP) program evaluation underway by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago. NORC senior researcher Jeanette Hussemann apprised the Committee on the status of this collaborative effort with Temple University-Harrisburg.

Dr. Hussemann gave a brief overview of the project in which NORC at the University of Chicago and Temple University-Harrisburg will document successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the nearly 200 VIP and Coordinated Community Violence Intervention (CCVI) grantees that PCCD funded in 2021 and 2022. She reviewed what NORC has been doing to collect and evaluate data, starting with the development and distribution of a survey to grantees in the fall of 2024.

Dr. Hussemann noted the uniqueness of this opportunity, stating that there is no other project like it being done in the U.S. to learn about the work that these programs are doing. She provided a snapshot of their high-level findings, reviewing the characteristics of the 157 respondents across organization type, organization focus, PCCD funding and geographic reach. She also identified their eligibility requirements or considerations as well as any limitations or barriers.

Dr. Hussemann described how these findings were combined with performance data and used to stratify grantees into 8 domains from which a representative sample of 40, 5 grantees from each domain, were selected for in-depth process evaluation. She stated that their team has reached out to the 40 grantees and will be doing site visits to interview program leadership and key personnel and conducting focus groups with participants from 14 programs. Finally, all data collected during site visits will be analyzed to identify themes related to program successes, challenges, barriers and other key insights, which will then be evaluated and compiled into a final report.

FY24-25 VIP Grant Program Recommendations

Following the presentation, Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Miner to present the FY 24-25 VIP and CCVI Grant Program recommendations to the Committee. Ms. Miner noted that the definitions for Community Violence were updated to include domestic violence or intimate partner violence and firearm-related injury in addition to firearm-related crime. She reminded the Committee that applicants could apply under either Track 1 to continue, expand and/or enhance projects or Track 2 to create new programming.

Ms. Miner provided a snapshot of the 176 applicants requesting \$97.3 million, more than twice the \$45 million available. She said that about half were new to VIP funding, more than a third were for Mentoring, Out-of-School Time, and Youth Prevention programming, and the applications received

requested funding for projects in 28 of the Commonwealth's 67 counties. Ms. Miner highlighted the new priority consideration for applicants in counties with increased homicides in 2023 and said that expansion and youth-focused projects were cross-walked with current grants or BOOST funding.

Ms. Miner reviewed the 13 CCVI applications, 4 in Track 1 to support planning and 9 in Track 2 for implementation. She stated that historically, PCCD has funded 5 pilot projects, and last year funded a new project in Allentown. A track for planning was added this year with Lancaster City recommended to receive a planning grant, bringing the total to 7 projects across 6 counties.

Noting that VIP funds support a wide range of prevention, intervention, and response strategies, Ms. Miner showed a breakdown of the types of programs to be funded this year, adding that the Project Summary document provided in the meeting materials provides more detailed information on the individual projects. She concluded with the recommendation for one CCVI application and 66 VIP applications for an amount not to exceed \$44,945,473 in state FY 2024-25 VIP funds, pending the resolution of any outstanding programmatic and/or fiscal concerns.

Mr. Pennington thanked Ms. Miner and asked if members had any questions or concerns. Hearing none, he called for a motion.

Motion to adopt the FY 24-25 VIP and CCVI grants, as presented.

Motion: Tuleya-Payne. **Second:** Barnes. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None.

Votes: 16. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Act 55 Training Survey Presentation by RSM & General Training Update

Next, Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Lindsay Vaughan to provide an update regarding the Act 55 training and a presentation from Risk and Strategic Management Corporation (RSM) regarding the survey that was shared at the November meeting. Ms. Vaughan summarized the history of the Act 55 training requirements and reviewed the selection of RSM to deliver the training. She noted that to evaluate and improve the training, RSM conducted an end of year survey to solicit feedback from training participants.

She introduced Mr. Chris Stone from RSM, who first thanked PCCD and the intermediate units (IUs) for being fantastic partners in this training process. Mr. Stone shared a brief overview of the end of the year survey results, for both the School Safety and Security Coordinator (SSC) and School Employee trainings. For the coordinators, Mr. Stone noted that the majority of respondents had multiple roles within the school and 92% indicated that they used what they learned in their work. He also shared some of the feedback regarding follow-up training needs, adding that 357 respondents accessed the available resource documents with a positive response for them.

Mr. Stone reported that feedback from the end of the year survey for school employees was similarly very positive. He shared some utilization statistics, including that 70% of those participants accessing one module completed all 6 modules and that as of 12/31/24, the online modules have been accessed over 193,000 times since October 2023. Additionally, Mr. Stone reported that 964 participants have attended one of the 54 in-person Train the Trainer Emergency Drills Training sessions.

Mr. Stone stated that they started providing in-person SSC trainings in February 2024 and that 849 individuals have been trained at one of the 37 sessions held thus far. In addition, he noted that 73 SSCs have completed all 6 modules of the online training since its launch in October 2024. Recognizing that turnover occurs, Mr. Stone said that RSM anticipates holding more in-person training sessions in the fall for new coordinators.

Mr. Stone concluded by sharing information on their response to feedback and future training plans, including developing new in-person training opportunities with PCCD in response to participant and survey data. He added that they will also be developing additional online modules to provide more in-depth information on subsets of the standards which he anticipated will be ready by the start of 2025-26 school year.

Ms. Vaughan thanked Mr. Stone for his presentation. She reminded members that [Section 1310-B](#) and [Section 1316-B](#) of the PA Public School Code require the Committee to review the employee and school safety and security coordinator training standards at least every three years and revise or update them if necessary. Since they were adopted in September 2022, Ms. Vaughan stated that PCCD and RSM staff have begun internal review of the training standards with the goal to keep the baseline training in place but develop updated trainings as appropriate. She said that an update on the review process and an overview of recommended next steps will be provided at the March meeting.

Executive Committee Update

Mr. Pennington stated that the Executive Committee update will be shared at the next Committee meeting in March since their next meeting is not until tomorrow, January 16, 2025.

General Updates

Mr. Pennington invited the new Deputy Director of School Safety, Ms. Heather Masshardt, to share the following general updates.

FY24-25 School Safety & Mental Health Grants Update

Ms. Masshardt apprised members on the status of the FY24-25 School Safety & Mental Health grants. She stated that of the 765 applications received from the 779 possible applicants, 555 have been fully awarded and most of the remaining applications have been approved by program staff and are undergoing final fiscal review. She informed members that this solicitation is being kept open until January 30, 2025 to facilitate work with stragglers, however she was happy to report that all of the school districts have submitted an application for this grant award. Ms. Masshardt added that some of the older solicitations have been reopened and staff are working with those school entities that have yet to capitalize on their allocated funding.

School Security Personnel Waivers

Ms. Masshardt reminded members of the process approved at the last meeting for administering school security personnel waivers to school districts. She reported that 37 school districts have been issued a waiver as of January 10, 2025. She stated that most of those school districts are either in the process of hiring or training an appropriate school security personnel or have requested a waiver for instances where substitute personnel might not be available for full coverage when school security personnel are absent.

Physical Security and Behavioral Health Assessment Criteria Revisions

Ms. Masshardt provided an update on the [Physical Security and Behavioral Health Assessment Criteria](#). Noting the requirement in [Section 1303-B](#) of the PA Public School Code for the Committee to review and update the Criteria at least once every three years, Ms. Masshardt stated that PCCD staff have completed an initial review to align the documents with the updated [Baseline Criteria Standards](#), reflect current laws and regulations, and incorporate the separate Policy and Trainings criteria document into the Physical Security and Behavioral Health assessment checklists for easier use. She said that the Physical Security and Behavioral Health Assessment Workgroups will be reconvened in February to review the draft revised documents with the plan to present the final revised versions to the Committee at the March meeting. Ms. Masshardt invited Committee members and any recommendations for Workgroup participants to contact her or Ms. Kenyon.

Ms. Masshardt added that following finalization of the Assessment Criteria documents, PCCD staff will be reviewing the Physical Security and Behavioral Health [Provider Registration Criteria](#) and also contacting individuals on the [PCCD School Safety and Security Assessment Provider Registry](#) to ensure that their information is up-to-date and that all assessors are made aware of updates to the assessment criteria.

Cellphone Bags

Next, Ms. Masshardt informed the Committee of the interest by both the media and legislators in data regarding grant applications for use of cell phone bags. She reminded members that the purchase of cell phone lockable bags was added as an allowable grant activity and that school

entities applying for that funding were required to adopt a policy prohibiting the use of cell phones during the school day. She asked if Committee members have any concern with PCCD staff releasing only general, aggregate data regarding requests for grant funding toward lockable cell phone bags to members of the media or General Assembly. Hearing none, she added that there are currently about 18 applications requesting lockable cell phone bags but noted that number may likely decrease as the applicants go through the review process.

FY 2023 OJJDP Award – Building Local Continuums of Care for Youth

Ms. Masshardt apprised members of the FY2023 grant award the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for Building Local Continuums of Care for Youth. She said that this initiative was developed to identify and track data related to school-based diversion programs and other elements of the Continuums of Care model across the Commonwealth, with a goal of developing a statewide plan for more consistent implementation of Continuums of Care.

Ms. Masshardt said that in partnership with WestEd, the details and timeline for this project are being developed, including a statewide cross-systems steering committee to help drive development of the plan and recommended initiatives. She noted that an integral part of this program will be the data on school-based diversion programs, incidents and arrests that is monitored and tracked by the SSSC and PA Department of Education, and that more information will be shared as the project unfolds.

Upcoming release of the Biennial School Safety and Security Survey

Ms. Masshardt concluded by informing the Committee of the status of the preparations for the 2025 Biennial School Safety and Security Survey. She reminded members that [Section 1305-B](#) of the PA Public School Code mandates that the SSSC distribute a survey at least every two years to collect information from school entities regarding the measure of school safety and security preparedness. She said that staff are finalizing updates and will present the draft Biennial School Safety and Security Survey to the Committee for their review and approval at the next meeting.

Member Updates/Comments/Questions

Mr. Pennington asked if any member had updates or other business to bring before the Committee, but no one did. Mr. Pennington then took the opportunity to announce his plan to retire in early April after 32 years in justice and youth prevention-related work including 22 years with PCCD. He thanked Governor Shapiro, Lieutenant Governor and Chairman Davis for their support and commitment to this work, and all the legislative partners for the support they have provided. He personally thanked the Committee members for their service and support since the legislation creating the SSSC was passed in 2018, expressing appreciation for the members' commitment to this work and support to the incredible staff team with all that has been accomplished and will continue as this work moves on. Mr. Pennington added that this is not goodbye as he has 3 months to go but wanted to let the Committee know.

Public Comment

Mr. Pennington invited any public comment, with none heard.

Adjournment

Mr. Pennington stated that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 19, 2025, with the agenda anticipated to focus on the assessment criteria updates and upcoming school safety survey. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 1:55 PM.

Motion to adjourn.

Motion: Tuleya-Payne **Seconded:** Kilfoy **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Scialabba
Aye Votes: 15. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**