

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

School Safety and Security Committee Meeting

March 19, 2025

MINUTES

Members/Designees:

Mr. Michael Pennington, Designee for Chairman Davis
Maj. Michaelann Andrusiak, Member (non-voting)
Mr. Andrew Barnes, Designee for DHS Secretary Arkoosh
Ms. Janice Bart, Member
Mr. Jeffrey Boyle, Designee for PEMA Director Padfield
Dr. Benjamin Feeney, Member
Ms. Angela Fitterer, Designee for Acting PDE Secretary Rowe
Lt. Kyle Gautsch, Member
Mr. Michael Hurley, Member
Ms. Brittney Kline, Designee for Attorney General Henry
Senator Nick Miller, Member
Dr. Gennaro "Jamie" Piraino, Member
Dr. Kathy Reeves, Member
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member
Representative Regina Young, Member

Staff:

Pamela Bennett	Elizabeth Locke
Matthew Conn	Leo Lutz
Camila Contreras	Heather Masshardt
Christina Cosgrove-Rooks	Betsy May
Jennifer Ely	Heidi Metzger
Alison Gantz	Zoe Miner
Heather Hewitt	Ian Murray
Chuck Hogan	Derin Myers
Daniel Hull	Kayleigh Siemer
Kirsten Kenyon	Lindsay Vaughan
Samantha Koch	Mandy Weiser
Crystal Lauver	Emily White

Guests:

Diane Acri, PA House of Representatives
Patrick Bircher, PA Department of Education (PDE)
Taylor Brown, PA Senate
Anthony Choi, PA Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LCFB)
Andrew Christ, PA School Boards Association (PSBA)
Gwenn Dando, PA Senate
Kristin Daniels, PA State Police – Homeland Security
Mike Deery, PA Senate
Tobi Downing, Office of the Attorney General
Kirsten Heine, Office of the Attorney General
Bradley Keen, PA House
Scott Kuren, PA Department of Education (PDE)
Shannon Walker, PA House
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate
Steven Williams, PA Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Dylan Wyatt, PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO)

Call to Order of the March 19, 2025, Meeting and Adoption of Minutes

Chairman Davis's designee, Mr. Mike Pennington, called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM and welcomed participants. A quorum of members was established. Stating that the minutes from the January 15, 2025, 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 January 15, 2025, meeting as submitted.

Motion: Hurley. **Second:** Feeney. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Bart, Piraino, & Young. **Aye Votes:** 10. **Nay Votes:** 0.

Mr. Pennington announced that Rep. Scialabba stepped down from the Committee and he welcomed and introduced Rep. Dane Watro who has been appointed to complete her term on the Committee.

Revised Physical Security and Behavioral Health Assessment Criteria

Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Heather Masshardt to present the proposed updates to the Assessment Criteria, based on the recommendations of the Assessment Criteria Workgroups. Through a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Masshardt provided the background of the assessment criteria, noting that they had been reviewed but no major changes had been made since their creation. She thanked the participants of both the physical security and behavioral health workgroups for their time and for sharing their expertise during this review process.

Ms. Masshardt highlighted the items that were updated, noting that most of the changes were to align the Assessment Criteria with the revised Baseline Criteria, shift the terminology from Tiers to Levels, and incorporate current laws and regulations. She added that the revised documents merge the policy and training assessment items into their respective criteria, eliminating the need for separate toolkit documents. Ms. Masshardt stated that there were significant revisions made to the Student Assistance Program (SAP) items in the behavioral health assessment criteria to reflect changes made in current PA Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS) guidance.

Ms. Masshardt identified next steps, including posting the revised Assessment Criteria in both editable and pdf formats and notifying school entities and registered assessment providers of their availability. She anticipated also looking at the current criteria for assessment providers and reaching out to those listed in the Registry to ensure current and accurate contact information.

Mr. Pennington asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he called for a motion.

Motion to Adopt the Physical Security Assessment and Student Assistance, Behavioral Health, and School Climate Assessment Criteria, as presented.

Motion: Tuleya-Payne. **Second:** Bart. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Young
Aye Votes: 12. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

2025 Biennial School Safety Survey

Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Heather Masshardt to share an update on preparations for the biennial school safety survey. Ms. Masshardt reminded members of the statutory requirement tasking the Committee with administering this survey instrument to school entities to measure school safety and security preparedness at least every two years and revising it as necessary.

Ms. Masshardt reviewed some of the more notable updates included in the recommended survey questions that were provided in the meeting packet; one of those recommended updates was to request respondents who indicate that they have had a physical or behavioral health assessment completed to provide a copy of the cover page or signature page for the completed assessment. Once approved by the Committee, staff plan to send the survey to all of the School Safety and Security Coordinators and head administrators at the end of March. She stated that the results will be analyzed following the survey's closing, which would likely be in May, and the findings presented to the Committee.

Mr. Pennington thanked Ms. Masshardt and asked if members had any questions or concerns. A member asked that the Committee be notified when the survey is sent out, so that they can work with their local school entities in completing it. Ms. Masshardt agreed to do so. Hearing no further questions, Mr. Pennington called for a motion.

Motion to adopt the 2025 Biennial School Safety Survey questions and administration of these questions through a survey instrument to school entities, as presented.

Motion: Piraino. **Second:** Reeves. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Young.
Aye Votes: 12. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Act 55 School Safety and Security Training School Employee Standards

At Mr. Pennington's invitation, Ms. Masshardt continued with an update regarding the Act 55 training standards. She reminded members that the statute requires the Committee to review the standards at least every 3 years and revise or update them as needed. Noting that 2025 is the year for their review, she shared that PCCD staff divided the review into two parts and is focusing first on the training standards for school employees and then will cover the changes to the School Safety and Security Coordinator training standards separately.

Ms. Masshardt informed members that staff from PCCD and our training partner Risk and Strategic Management (RSM) reviewed the training standards for school employees and found that minimal revisions were needed. Given the strong positive feedback from participants and that there have been few changes in law or recommended practices that impacted the current training standards, Ms. Masshardt stated that a formal workgroup will not be convened to review the standards. Instead, she reviewed the minor changes made in the revised standards and presented them as an informational item for consideration with formal approval anticipated at the next meeting. She invited members to reach out to her or Ms. Kirsten Kenyon with any questions or comments.

Moving to the School Safety and Security Coordinator training standards, Ms. Masshardt stated that staff are currently finalizing their review and plan to share their recommended updates as an informational item at the May meeting before seeking final approval at a subsequent meeting.

While on the topic of the Act 55 training requirements, Ms. Lindsay Vaughan provided an update on the current status of employee and coordinator trainings. She stated that as of February 28, 2025, the six online training modules for employees have been accessed 230,562 times since their October 2023 launch, with 87% reporting that the training was either helpful or very helpful. For the emergency training drills training that is required to be taught to employees in person, Ms. Vaughan reported that 999 individuals have completed one of the 60 the Train-the-Trainer sessions that have been held thus far, adding that RSM will be scheduling more sessions later this year.

Ms. Vaughan noted that February 2, 2025, marked one year since PCCD and RSM launched the School Safety and Security Coordinator training, the date all Coordinators appointed prior to February 2, 2024, were required to complete that training. She informed members that 849 individuals have participated in one of the 38 training sessions held in person thus far. She stated that RSM is in the process of scheduling in-person trainings for this fall which will include any approved updates to the Coordinator training standards. In addition, Ms. Vaughan reported that as of February 28, 2025, 141 individuals have completed the online version of the training that was launched in early October 2025, with positive reviews.

Executive Committee Update

Mr. Pennington stated that the Executive Committee met on Thursday, January 20, 2025. He reviewed the items discussed, including:

- Status of reported threats from school entities
- Status of School Security Personnel Waiver requests received by PCCD
- Updates to the school security personnel third-party vendor webpage and outreach to current vendors
- Status of the Physical and Behavioral Health Assessment Criteria Workgroups

- Update on threat assessment model procedures and guidelines that were posted in December 2024
- Discussion of upcoming projects, including the Chapter 10 regulations and possibility of opportunities for federal grant funding

Mr. Pennington said that the Executive Committee thanked Michele Kelly Walsh for her service as chair and welcomed Kirsten Heine, Executive Deputy Attorney General, as their new chair starting at the next meeting, to be held on March 20, 2025.

General Updates

Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Masshardt to share the following general updates.

Status of School Safety & Mental Health Grants

Ms. Masshardt apprised members on the status of the various FY 2024-25 grants under the Committee's purview. She stated that of the 766 School Safety & Mental Health grant applications received, 714 have been fully awarded, adding that most of the remaining applications have been approved by program staff and are undergoing final fiscal review. For the Targeted School Safety Grants for Nonpublic Schools, Ms. Masshardt reported receipt of 347 completed applications of which 155 have been fully awarded with the remainder working their way through program and fiscal approval.

Ms. Masshardt said that all 46 BOOST selected grantees submitted their applications and eight have been fully awarded thus far. For the VIP grants, she reported that nine applications have been fully awarded as the remaining applications for this grant, as well as for the BOOST grant, undergo the review and approval process.

School Security Personnel Waivers

Ms. Masshardt reminded members of the process approved at the November 2024 meeting for administering school security personnel waivers to school districts. She reported that 4 additional school districts have been issued waivers, bringing the total to 41 as of March 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.

Threat Assessment Training Delivery

Ms. Masshardt said that recent review of the K-12 Threat Assessment Training and Technical Assistance project led to the decision by RSM and PCCD staff to schedule and advertise full-day Train the Trainer sessions for threat assessment team training regionally moving forward to increase both awareness of the opportunity and participation. She announced that a threat assessment training session will be held in the Lancaster area on May 28 at IU 13 and additional sessions will be scheduled in the fall in other regions.

School Safety and Security Coordinator Data Collection

Next, Ms. Masshardt informed the Committee that an updated [form](#) to collect School Safety and Security Coordinator appointment and contact information was created and posted on the PCCD website to facilitate and streamline the process to submit this information to PCCD. She stated that baseline data on all current Coordinators was collected throughout January and February and staff are reviewing the 710 responses received thus far, removing any duplicates, and reaching out to school entities that did not submit a Coordinator contact. Ms. Masshardt added that a listing of the primary job titles of School Safety and Security Coordinators compiled from the data collected is included in the meeting materials, as members might find the information helpful.

Legislative Budget & Finance Committee Report

Finally, Ms. Kenyon presented an update on the [report](#) adopted by the Legislative Budget & Finance Committee (LB&FC) on March 19, 2025 pursuant to [SR 178 of 2023](#) evaluating the outcomes of Act 44 of 2018 and the School Safety and Security Grant Program. She reviewed some highlights of

the report and touched on a few of the 16 recommendations, seven of which reference the School Safety and Security Committee or PCCD to implement.

Ms. Kenyon stated that PCCD provided a feedback letter to the LB&FC on the draft report, noting that implementation is already underway on one of their major recommendations regarding the assessment criteria, as reported earlier. The letter supported several other recommendations but expressed concern with collecting individual school assessments as part of the biennial school survey due to the level of detail and potential vulnerability risk and liability concerns. She concluded by reporting that the Committee came across quite well overall and the LB&FC report acknowledged the assistance provided by the Committee and PCCD staff in the process.

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 took a few moments to remind members that this was his last School Safety and Security Committee meeting, as he will be officially retiring on April 4, 2025. He assured the Committee that he is leaving PCCD in good hands, announcing that Ms. Kirsten Kenyon will be stepping into the Executive Director role starting on April 7, 2025. He concluded his comments by stating that it has been a pleasure and noting the amazing work that has been done over the past 6 years. He acknowledged the partnerships and incredible staff team at PCCD to support these efforts and the positive impact on schools and communities. Committee members thanked Mr. Pennington for his leadership and all he has done to help to make schools safer.

Public Comment

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

Adjournment

Mr. Pennington stated that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 28, 2025, with the agenda anticipated to include presentation of the revised Act 55 School Safety Training standards for employees as an action item, and presentation of the revised standards for Coordinators for review. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 1:38 PM.

Motion to adjourn.

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