

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

School Safety and Security Committee Meeting

March 29, 2023

MINUTES

Members/Designees: Hon. Austin A. Davis, Lieutenant Governor, Chairman
Mr. Andrew Barnes, Designee for Acting DHS Secretary Arkoosh
Ms. Janice Bart, Member
Maj. George Bivens, Designee for PSP Col. Christopher L. Paris
Senator James Brewster, Member
Dr. Benjamin Feeney, Member
Lt. Kyle Gautsch, Member
Representative Barb Gleim, Member
Mr. David Hein, Member
Mr. Mike Hurley, Member
Mr. Mike Kelly, Member
Ms. Brittney Kline, Designee for Attorney General Michelle Henry
Dr. Scott Kuren, Designee for Acting PDE Secretary Mumin
Mr. Randy Padfield, Member
Dr. Jamie Piraino, Member
Dr. Kathleen Reeves, Member
Ms. Wendy Robison, Member
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member

Staff:

Sally Barry	Carol Kuntz
Pamela Bennett	Crystal Lauver
Kiara Brown	Roi Ligon
Lindsay Busko	Elizabeth Locke
Christina Cosgrove	Levi Looks
Stephen Ekema-Agbaw	Zoe Miner
Jennifer Ely	Derin Myers
Chris Epoca	Mike Pennington
Heather Hewitt	Debra Sandifer
Kirsten Kenyon	Alyssa Subsinsky
Rebecca Kiehl	Shaun White
Samantha Koch	

Guests: Diane Acri, PA House
Hannah Barrick, PA Assn. of School Business Officials (PASBO)
Sean Brandon, PA House
Stephen Bruder, PA Senate
John Chilleri, Inert Products LLC
Andrew Christ, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Mike Deery, PA Senate
Steve D'Ettorre, Governor's Office
Neil Hartnett, Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Heather Masshardt, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Rachael Miller, PA Partnerships for Children
Caroline Riegel, PA Partnerships for Children
Mark Rosenstein, Stevens & Lee
Taylor Wamsher, PA Senate
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate
Steven Williams, Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Call to Order of the March 29, 2023 Meeting and Adoption of Minutes

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM and welcomed participants. A quorum of members was established. He introduced himself as Pennsylvania's new Lieutenant Governor and PCCD Chairman and expressed his pleasure at recently being appointed by the Governor as Chair of the School Safety and Security Committee. He recognized the significant work accomplished by the Committee over the past five years and briefly reviewed priorities in Governor Shapiro's budget pertaining to investments in schools, students, and safety.

Moving to the agenda, he noted that the minutes from the January 11, 2023 meeting were part of the packet of materials made available prior to today's meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes from the January 11, 2023 meeting as submitted

Motion: Brewster. **Seconded:** Bart. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None
Aye Votes: 18. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Chairman Davis welcomed and introduced several new members of the Committee:

- Acting Secretary for the Department of Human Services Dr. Valerie Arkoosh (Designee Andrew Barnes)
- Acting Attorney General Michelle Henry and her Designee, Ms. Brittney Kline
- Acting Secretary for the Department of Education Dr. Khalid Mumin, who will continue to be represented by Dr. Scott Kuren as his Designee
- State Police Commissioner Colonel Christopher Paris and his Designee, Major George Bivens

School Employee and School Safety Coordinator Training

Chairman Davis invited Samantha Koch to present information on this action item. Referencing the document provided in the meeting materials, Ms. Koch gave a brief background regarding the standards that were previously developed and approved and the subsequent competitive grant for up to \$4.8 million to develop curricula, deliver training, and provide technical assistance. She informed Committee members that three applications were received, reviewed and evaluated with staff recommending approval of one application. Chairman Davis thanked Ms. Koch and invited a motion to approve this action item.

Motion to approve the adoption of the application of Risk and Strategic Management Corporation (RSM) as the vendor for the school employee and school safety coordinator training program not to exceed \$4,384,643 in state school safety and security grant program funds, pending the resolution of any outstanding programmatic and/or fiscal concerns, and that the remaining \$415,357 in funds be held in reserve relative to implementation of the training

Motion: Hein. **Seconded:** Tuleya-Payne. **Discussion:** None. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 18. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Upcoming Surveys

Chairman Davis invited Kirsten Kenyon to share information regarding several upcoming surveys. Ms. Kenyon shared the plan to develop and issue a survey to the field to gauge training needs. She stated that this approach has been very beneficial with other training programs and has helped tailor the training to what is needed. The proposed survey would be developed collaboratively with Risk and Strategic Management (RSM) Corporation, with the goal of having preliminary results to present at the next Committee meeting.

Ms. Kenyon moved on to the next item, providing context and background for the annual *School Safety & Security Coordinator Survey*. She noted that the statute requires each school entity's School Safety and Security Coordinator to make a report no later than June 30th each year to the school entity's board of directors and to submit documentation confirming that occurred to PCCD. Ms. Kenyon stated that the survey is kept short and focused on the report, strategies used by schools to improve safety, and a few other pertinent questions (i.e. Threat Assessment teams, awareness of PCCD resources, etc.). Ms. Kenyon said that some tweaks will be made so that this year's survey does not duplicate what was recently asked in the training needs survey. Since the

survey remains open for a longer period to allow for the June 30 deadline, the results will be shared with the Committee at the July meeting.

Finally, Ms. Kenyon presented the proposed plan for the *School Safety Survey* that the original statute requires be conducted every two years, noting that the confidential results are shared with the Committee in Executive Session and the findings provided to the individual school entities. While the first one was done in 2018, due to the pandemic the next survey was delayed a year and conducted in 2021, putting the next survey on track for completion in 2023.

Ms. Kenyon shared that similar questions pertaining to school safety preparedness, as well as mental health and baseline criteria status, were part of every school entity's 2022 grant application. Given the timing of the other two surveys in the next few months and the surveys that were part of the 2022 grant applications (which staff are still analyzing), Ms. Kenyon presented the recommendation that the Committee consider delaying administration of the *School Safety Survey* until either much later this year or possibly into next year. She stated that such a delay will both give time to process the extensive information currently available and mitigate confusion with multiple surveys, as has previously been experienced.

Chairman Davis asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he called for a motion.

Motion to approve the delay of the issuance of the School Safety & Security Survey until later in 2023 or into 2024

Motion: Hurley. **Seconded:** Reeves. **Discussion:** None. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 18. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Presentation and Discussion on Preliminary Draft Update of Baseline Criteria

Chairman Davis invited Kirsten Kenyon and Samantha Koch to present on the progress made thus far by the Baseline Criteria Workgroup in considering updates and modifications to the guidance previously adopted by the Committee. Ms. Kenyon shared a PowerPoint presentation on the first-year implementation of the baseline criteria standards. She gave a brief history on why and how the criteria were developed, noting the "program potpourri" of the initial grant funding and the significant resource disparity prompting Committee member Sen. Brewster to ask for the establishment of baseline criteria to help guide future investments.

Ms. Kenyon stated that the first iteration created baseline standards on physical security and behavioral/mental health, which were adopted by the Committee in 2021, adding that environmental standards were also drafted but not made publicly available. She reviewed the three tiers of the criteria that build on each other and are guidelines to help schools, noting that while some reflect statute, others comprise best practices identified by the workgroups.

Ms. Kenyon reviewed the role of baseline criteria established by Act 55 of 2022 for the FY 2022-23 School Mental Health and School Safety and Security Grants Program, which required schools to meet Tier 1 areas first before spending funds on other eligible areas. She noted the process has been impactful and showed data from the mental health portion of the grants related to 'moving the needle' on baseline criteria standards using grant dollars. While initial findings were released in the fall, Ms. Kenyon showed aggregate information reflecting the further analysis that has been done and how school entities were using their mental health funding to fill gaps.

Ms. Koch continued the presentation with a recap of the experiences and lessons learned during the first 'pilot' year of utilizing the baseline criteria with grants. She said that, while not perfect, the process is valuable as a helpful exercise for schools in terms of prioritizing available resources. She identified some potential areas for improvement noted during workgroup discussions, such as common language and clearer definitions, and shared feedback received from workgroup meeting discussions thus far. Ms. Koch reviewed some considerations for the future based on the first year of implementation, including greater flexibility, particularly for school based mental health services and supports (certified psychologists, social workers, etc.), re-evaluating criteria based on common gaps and feedbacks, looking at ways to streamline or expedite the review process, and reframing

the criteria to acknowledge the different nature or contexts of school entities to fit non-school district entities (career and technology centers, charters, etc.) and tailor requirements more appropriately.

At the conclusion of the presentation, PCCD staff responded to a few questions raised by members. One member asked where newly hired social workers came from, to which staff replied they would look into that if possible. A member asked how much is still to be awarded with the response that \$130.4 million of the \$190 million available has been awarded, so a little less than \$60 million remains outstanding. Finally, a member commented that regarding physical security, there have been some discussions of the possible use of Plan Con funding to address building security if or when it becomes available.

General Updates

Chairman Davis invited Kirsten Kenyon to apprise the Committee on the status of the FY22-23 School Mental Health & School Safety and Security Grants. Ms. Kenyon provided a brief refresher, noting that out of the 784 eligible school entities, 738 submitted applications by the August 31, 2022 deadline. PCCD reached out to the remaining schools and 25 applied to take advantage of this funding opportunity. Out of the 763 total number of applications received, 531 (70%) have been awarded amounting to \$130.4 million of the \$190 million available.

Ms. Kenyon shared a breakdown of the awards by school entity type, with Intermediate Units having the best award rate at 79% followed by school districts at 72% (361 of 499). Charter schools are next at 65% followed by career and technical centers (57%), probably due to more back and forth regarding Tier 1 issues. She indicated that nearly two-thirds of the remaining grantees have cleared the program staff review and are working with fiscal staff on their final review, leaving only 83 applicants that are working on program approval.

Ms. Kenyon noted awareness of the amount of time it has taken to process and approve these grants and she confirmed that schools will have opportunity to extend the timeframe if needed to complete their projects and fully expend the funds. A member shared a concern he has heard from schools that with the delay in awarded funds, the costs of items in the grant has significantly increased, and the available funding may now not be sufficient to meet all the areas specified in the grant. Ms. Kenyon responded that staff are aware, and schools may need to submit a Program Modification Request to revise their grants, adding that this also shows that the need is ongoing.

Member Updates/Comments/Questions

Chairman Davis noted that the general updates document was provided in the meeting materials and reviewed items included. He invited members to share any comments, questions or updates. One member had a question going back to the trainer provider approval and asked staff if there was any projection of notification to school districts of the new provider and obtaining training to staff and any projected date when school districts will be notified for the 1 year start for Coordinator training. Ms. Kenyon replied that PCCD is in the process of updating the website and notifying the field that a vendor has been chosen, though she noted that some time will still be needed before the curriculum is developed and training is made available.

Public Comment

The Chairman invited any public comment; however, none was received.

Adjournment

Chairman Davis noted upcoming meeting date for Wednesday, May 31 with the agenda including action on the Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grants Research/Evaluation funding recommendation. He stated that the following meeting will likely be in July after the budget enactment. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 2:06 PM.

Motion to adjourn

Motion: Bart. **Seconded:** Davis. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Reeves.
Aye Votes: 18. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**