

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

School Safety and Security Committee Meeting

November 26, 2024

MINUTES

Members/Designees:

Lt. Governor Austin A. Davis, Chairman
Maj. Michaelann Andrusiak, Member (non-voting)
Mr. Andrew Barnes, Designee for DHS Secretary Arkoosh
Maj. George Bivens, Designee for PSP Col. Paris
Senator James Brewster, Member
Dr. Benjamin Feeney, Member
Ms. Angela Fitterer, Designee for PDE Secretary Mumin
Lt. Kyle Gautsch, Member
Mr. Mike Kelly, Member
Ms. Rebecca Kilfoy, Member
Ms. Brittney Kline, Designee for Attorney General Henry
Senator Wayne Langerholc, Member
Mr. David "Randy" Padfield, Member
Dr. Gennaro "Jamie" Piraino, Member
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member

Staff:

Pamela Bennett	Carol Kuntz
Matthew Conn	Crystal Lauver
Camila Contreras	Elizabeth Locke
Christina Cosgrove-Rooks	Levi Looks
Amelia Dizo	Leo Lutz
Jennifer Ely	Betsy May
Chris Epoca	Heidi Metzger
Alison Gantz	Zoe Miner
Stacey Herman	Ian Murray
Heather Hewitt	Derin Myers
Chuck Hogan	Mike Pennington
Daniel Hull	Kayleigh Siemer
Kirsten Kenyon	Lindsay Vaughan
Rebecca Kiehl	Emily White
Samantha Koch	

Guests:

Diane Acri, PA House of Representatives
Patrick Beaver, PA State Police (PSP)
Sean Brandon, PA House of Representatives
Erika Brunelle, PA State Education Association (PSEA)
Gwenn Dando, PA Senate
Kristin Daniels, PA State Police – Homeland Security
Mike Deery, PA Senate
Stephen D'Ettorre, PA Office of the Governor
Tobi Downing, Office of the Attorney General
Steve Fickes, Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LCFB)
Steph Hardman, PA Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Amy Hockenberry, Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LCFB)
Bradley Keen, PA House
Scott Kuren, PA Department of Education (PDE)
Heather Masshardt, PA School Boards Association (PSBA)
Matthew Thomas, Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LCFB)
Michele Walsh, Office of the Attorney General
Shawn White, PA State Police – Homeland Security
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate

Call to Order of the November 26, 2024, Meeting and Adoption of Minutes

While present, Chairman Davis requested that his designee, Mr. Mike Pennington, run today's meeting. Mr. 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 September 4, 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 September 4, 2024, meeting as submitted.

Motion: Barnes. **Second:** Padfield. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Brewster, Kelly, & Kline. **Votes:** 11. **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Before moving to the agenda, Mr. Pennington took a few moments to recognize Senator Brewster, since it's likely his last meeting due to his well-deserved pending retirement after a long career of public service. Noting Senator Brewster's constant presence on the Committee since its inception, Mr. Pennington credited him with the idea to develop Baseline Criteria standards to provide guidance to schools on how to prioritize their resources effectively.

At Mr. Pennington's invitation, Sen. Brewster made a few comments. He said that it's been an honor to be on the Committee and serve with all of the other members. He acknowledged the accomplishments of what the SSSC has done, stating that its creation and subsequent efforts will go down in history as landmark legislation. Recognizing the expertise of members and observing that all the work has been done quietly, the Senator said that this is the one committee that will stick out to him for what was done. He noted the many differences between the various school districts, with the tour he did with Sen. Hughes and the work on mental health issues as particular highlights. Sen. Brewster concluded by thanking the Committee for what it's doing and for listening to his rhetoric, and he offered to be available if needed moving forward (but doubted that it will).

Mr. Pennington thanked Sen. Brewster for his commitment and passion for this work and wished him the best in his retirement. Other Committee members used the chat function to express their congratulations and thank him for his service to the Commonwealth's educators and students.

Targeted School Safety and Security Grants for Nonpublic Schools

Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Kirsten Kenyon to present on the Nonpublic School Grant recommendations. Ms. Kenyon shared a PowerPoint presentation, providing an overview of the funding, solicitation and review process, and award recommendations. She noted that Act 33 moved this grant program from the PA Department of Education (PDE) to PCCD, increased the funding allocation to just under \$20 million, and allowed nonpublic schools to apply directly rather than through their Intermediate Unit (IU).

Ms. Kenyon went on to review the eligible applicants, maximum amounts, and the timeframe for this funding. She noted the priority of funding requests from persistently dangerous schools, and items meeting Level 1 of the Baseline Criteria and/or recommended by a formal assessment. She stated that applications were reviewed by IU region to ensure equitable distribution of grants throughout the Commonwealth.

Ms. Kenyon described the initial Survey Monkey solicitation through which 407 applications requesting \$25.3 million were received. She covered the review process, scoring, and target allocation per IU region, noting that to stretch funding, requests for applications that were not needed to meet baseline criteria or assessment recommendations were reduced. Ms. Kenyon stated that Committee members have access to the application executive summaries for more detail on what was requested in the applications.

Ms. Kenyon concluded with the recommendation that 8 municipalities and 359 nonpublic schools be funded for a total of 367 awards. She noted that the meeting materials include the project summary and analysis of the recommended projects. She stated that staff plans to issue a press release and notify all applicants of their recommended or non-recommended status via email

following the meeting and provide more detailed and individualized instructions to grantees after the Thanksgiving holiday.

Mr. Pennington asked if there were any questions. A member asked if the ones that were not recommended were due to not meeting the criteria or to weak applications. Ms. Kenyon explained that some were not eligible applicants while others did not provide enough information, adding that staff always offer non-awarded applicants the opportunity to reach out for details. Hearing no further questions, Mr. Pennington called for a motion.

Motion to Adopt the FY24-25 Targeted School Safety Grants for Nonpublic Schools, as presented.

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

School Security Personnel Waiver for School District

For the next item Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Kenyon to apprise the Committee on the school security personnel waivers for school districts. Ms. Kenyon reviewed the new requirement created by Act 55 that every school district must have at least one full-time school security personnel (which can be a School Resource Officer, School Police Officer, or School Security Guard) who meets all the requisite training on duty during the school day. The law allows school districts to request a one-year waiver by attesting that they attempted but were unable to hire or contract with school security personnel in a manner that satisfies the requirement.

Ms. Kenyon stated that at their September meeting the Commission adopted the waiver process recommended by the Committee, which staff implemented through a [webpage](#) to accept the waiver forms that was made live on the [PCCD website](#) earlier in November. Ms. Kenyon reviewed highlights of the additional [clarification guidance](#) jointly developed with PDE which was circulated to the public school entities and is posted on the PCCD website, noting the recommendation that schools err on the side of caution and apply for a waiver if they only have one school security personnel and would not have substitute coverage if that person was absent.

Ms. Kenyon informed members that staff has received 33 waiver requests thus far, copies of which were included in the meeting materials. She added that staff has reviewed the requests and recommends that all of them be approved. Hearing no questions or concerns, Mr. Pennington called for a motion.

Motion to recommend approval of the submitted School Security Personnel Waivers.

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

Ms. Kenyon reviewed the second action item, to handle these waiver requests in a similar way to the Third-Party Security Guard Vendor and Assessment Provider Registry approvals and delegate authority to the SSSC Chair, PCCD Executive Director, and PCCD staff the ability to receive, review and accept waivers on a rolling basis. She stated that staff would provide updates to Committee members regarding the total number of waivers received and any other pertinent information at each SSSC meeting. With no comments or questions heard, Mr. Pennington called for a motion.

Motion to recommend a delegation of authority to the PCCD to receive, review and accept waivers to the School Security Personnel requirement.

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

Executive Committee Update

Mr. Pennington invited Ms. Michele Walsh from the PA Office of Attorney General to update members on the activities of the Executive Committee. Ms. Walsh stated that at their meeting last week the Executive Committee members provided reports and updates on what their agencies were seeing and/or doing in terms of school safety. She was pleased to report that members were collectively seeing a decrease in reported threats, which had been fairly high at the beginning of

the school year, likely as a result of the active shooter incident that occurred in Georgia in early September. She credited much of the reduction to the public service announcement that was recorded earlier this fall in partnership with the Lieutenant Governor, PDE, PA State Police (PSP), and others to discourage false tips and encourage reporting of credible concerns.

Ms. Walsh stated that most of the Executive Committee meeting was focused on an overview of the edits being made to the [Model K-12 Threat Assessment Procedures and Guidelines](#). She noted that this will be the 3rd edition of these guidelines (which were last updated in 2022), and invited Ms. Samantha Koch to provide more details on the proposed revisions.

Ms. Koch shared a short PowerPoint presentation, including a review of the original and previously revised Guidelines. She covered highlights of the proposed draft, stating that this 3rd edition is focused more on practice than statute, elevates behavioral health challenges, and integrates aspects of training along with statistics and available resources. She concluded with next steps, including providing the current draft to Committee members for feedback with the goal of posting and circulating the final version by mid-December.

Ms. Walsh thanked Ms. Koch for her presentation, noting that a copy will be posted in the private section of the PCCD website for members to review. Ms. Walsh stated that the next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for January 16, 2025.

General Updates

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

FY24-25 School Safety & Mental Health Grants Update

Ms. Kenyon apprised members on the status of the FY24-25 School Safety & Mental Health grants. She stated that of the 759 applications received out of 779 possible applicants, 323 have been fully awarded and most of the remaining applications have been approved by program staff and are into their final fiscal review. Ms. Kenyon informed members that this solicitation will remain open until December 15, 2024 to facilitate work with stragglers; additionally, some of the older solicitations have been reopened to encourage school entities that have not yet applied to capitalize on their allocated funding.

Other School Safety-Related Updates

Ms. Kenyon shared several school safety-related updates. She stated that a [link](#) to the PDE school safety incident data collected through the PA Information Management System (PIMS) has been added to the PCCD website to meet the annual reporting requirement of Act 33. In addition, Ms. Kenyon informed members that the [School Safety and Security section](#) of the PCCD website now includes information on the new requirement to submit School Police Officer court orders to PCCD and how to provide that documentation.

Finally, Ms. Kenyon announced creation of a new deputy director position focused on school safety and that Heather Masshardt will be starting in that position on Monday, December 2. Ms. Kenyon stated that PCCD is excited to have her join the team, as Ms. Masshardt has been with the PA School Board Association for the past 20 years where she focused on various school safety initiatives, has regularly attended the SSSC meetings and participated in workgroups, and is intimately acquainted with the Committee's work.

Status of Act 55 School Safety and Security Criteria and Training

Next, Ms. Lindsay Vaughan provided a brief update on the requisite Act 55 training for school employees and safety and security coordinators. She reminded members that the legislation added mandated training for coordinators and changed the employee school safety training requirements. For the employee training, Ms. Vaughan stated that PCCD has been working with the selected vendor, Risk and Strategic Management, Corp. (RSM) since 2023 on the six topics that can be provided [online](#). She reported that over 170,000 individuals have been trained using these modules, with most users reporting that the trainings were helpful/very helpful.

For the emergency training drills session required to be taught in person, Ms. Vaughan stated that over 850 individuals have completed one of the 43 Train the Trainer (TTT) sessions conducted and are now empowered to train their own employees on that subject. In addition, she reported that based on school requests RSM developed advanced training sessions on the following topics which have been accessed by nearly 400 individuals:

- Behavioral Health Awareness
- Suicide Prevention
- Trauma Informed Approaches
- Physical Assessments

Ms. Vaughan noted that school entities also have the option to utilize the [PCCD recognized training provider list](#) and contact any of the 114 individuals who have certified that they offer trainings that meet the training criteria for school employees to provide the requisite courses.

For the safety and security coordinators, Ms. Vaughan stated that 818 individuals have attended one of the 33 in-person coordinator trainings offered since the training launch on February 2, 2024, adding that participant response was very positive. She stated that two more sessions of the 7-hour training on the 11 safety topics are scheduled for this year. In addition, she said that 45 individuals have completed all six modules of the new online version which launched in October. Ms. Vaughan reminded members that all coordinators appointed prior to the initial launch date have one year – until February 2, 2025 - to complete the training.

Ms. Vaughan concluded her update by referencing the results of the year-end survey that RSM conducted regarding these trainings which were included in the meeting materials. She noted that RSM received over 3,000 responses, adding that RSM staff will be available at the January 2025 meeting to provide further information.

VIP/BOOST Updates

Finally, Ms. Zoe Miner gave a quick update on the status of the Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP), Collaborative Community Violence Intervention (CCVI), and Building Opportunity through Out-of-School Time (BOOST) solicitations. Following the funding framework adopted for these funding announcements at the last meeting, Ms. Miner stated that 478 applications requesting \$174 million in funding were received by the October 31, 2024 deadline. Noting the challenge given that the award allocation for these grants is only \$56.5 million, she said that the applications for all three solicitations are currently being reviewed and staff expect to present recommendations to the Committee at the January 2025 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.

Public Comment

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

Adjournment

Mr. Pennington stated that the next meeting is scheduled for January 15, 2025. He noted that the December meeting was cancelled due to the need for additional time to review and score the competitive VIP and BOOST grant solicitations. Thanked everyone again, wished everyone a safe holiday season. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 1:45 PM.

Motion to adjourn.

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