

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

**School Safety and Security Committee Meeting**

November 20, 2019

MINUTES

**Members/Designees:** Mr. Michael Pennington, Executive Director  
Mr. Derin Myers, Designee for Mr. Ramsey  
Ms. Janice Bart, Member (via Skype)  
Senator James Brewster, Member  
Ms. Nikki Bricker, Member  
Lt. Col. Evanchick, Member  
Mr. David Hein, Member  
Mr. Mike Hurley, Member  
Mr. Mike Kelly, Member  
Representative Jason Ortitay, Member (via Skype)  
Dr. Gennaro "Jamie" Piraino, Member (via Skype)  
Dr. Kathleen Reeves, Member (via Skype)  
Mr. Joseph Regan, Member  
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member  
Dr. David Volkman, Designee for Secretary Rivera

**Staff:** Pamela Bennett  
Jeff Blystone  
Kathy Buckley  
Lindsay Busko  
Christina Cosgrove-Rooks  
Chris Epoca  
Rich Finley  
Kirsten Kenyon  
Samantha Koch  
Carol Kuntz  
Crystal Lauver  
John Pfau  
Debra Sandifer  
Megan Staub  
Danielle Wilbert

**Guests:** Angela Fitterer, PA Department of Education (PDE)  
Jay Himes, PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO)  
Roger A. Kohr, KOVA Corporation  
Vince Kovach, PA Department of Education (PDE)  
Heather Masshardt, PA School Boards Association (PSBA)  
Jenna McCarthy, Malady & Wooten  
Christine Seitz, Representative Ortitay (via Skype)  
Matthew Shields, PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO)

**I. Call to Order and Adoption of Minutes – Designee Derin Myers**

- Call to Order
  - Mr. Myers called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM and welcomed those in attendance and on the phone
  - A quorum of members was established
- Review and adoption of the minutes from the August 28<sup>th</sup> meeting

**Motion to approve the minutes**

- Senator Brewster made the motion, which was seconded by Dr. Tuleya-Payne
- There was no discussion or public comment
- The minutes were approved by unanimous vote

**II. Chairman’s Update – Designee Derin Myers**

- Referenced the legislation enacted in June 2019 defining the role of school security guards ([Act 67 of 2019](#))
  - Requires them to go through the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) Basic School Resource Officer (SRO) Training or an equivalent
  - Restricts arrest abilities, though that is under reconsideration for School Police Officers (SPOs)
  - Also tasks the Commission with establishing criteria for certifying approved third-party security vendors and publishing and posting the list of those vendors online

**III. Security Guard Vendor Registration – Carol Kuntz**

- The PA State Police (PSP), PA Department of Education (PDE), and PCCD worked together to develop criteria and guidelines
- Reviewed Criteria for Certifying Approved Third-Party Vendors to Provide School Security Guard Services document, highlighting key parts, including:
  - Business information, along with a history / track record of being in the security management field
  - Provide proof of insurance, and any certificates or credentials
  - Assurances to provide and maintain up to date background checks on all their employees
  - Coordination with current law and need for NASRO / equivalent training to identify what training they are providing
  - Getting references regarding their work in the field
- Application Process
  - Developed an online application for vendors to complete and submit
  - PCCD staff will review the information, research the business, contact the references, and do any related follow-up assessment
  - Applicants will receive a letter stating approval or denial
  - The business name and contact information for approved applicants will be posted on PCCD’s website
  - Anticipate it will be similar to what’s available now for the list of security assessment providers and criteria, as schools are looking for a point of reference relative to these organizations with some vetting of those groups

- Will ask the Commission to delegate authority to PCCD to apply the criteria to vendors and make those approvals, and notify both the SSSC and the Commission of vendors recommended for approval

#### **IV. NASRO Equivalency Standards – Carol Kuntz**

- Noted that there's been a lot of conversation around the required training
  - Have fielded inquiries by training providers that want to be able to offer an "equivalent" training to NASRO's Basic SRO training
  - Only a few have moved forward in developing something that is truly similar
- Noted the challenge of availability of the NASRO course long-term
- Standards provide an overview of the minimum requirements that vendors should incorporate when developing an equivalent program.
- Reviewed School Security Personnel Training Standards document
  - Was a great collaborative effort across the state, of PCCD, PDE, and PSP staff, SROs, NASRO members, sheriffs and others on how to work with kids in schools
  - Touched on the main areas delineated in the document
    - Broadened to be for all school security personnel
    - Looks at roles, ethics, reporting, understanding special needs students, etc.
    - Big part is being a role model and mentor
    - Reflects awareness of current trends and issues
    - Incorporates federal and current state laws
    - Includes a practicum of case scenarios specific to PA
- Two vendors are currently submitting curriculum to be considered as equivalent to NASROs Basic SRO Training
- The duration would be 5 days / 40 hours, equivalent to NASRO
- Responded to questions and comments from Committee members
  - Will there be continuing education offered, to keep up to date? Vendors will have to work with the authorizing agencies to provide credits for participants
  - In light of the number of incidents of reported over-the-top use of force in schools, would it perhaps be important to include appropriate use of force? Some vendors are choosing to extend beyond the 40 hours to be able to address some of these areas
  - Can we share this information with municipalities? Absolutely
  - Would some of the Act 44 funds be available to municipalities for funding SROs? PDE and the Office for Safe Schools provide targeted grants to school entities, municipalities, local law enforcement agencies and approved vendors to fund programs which address school violence, including costs associated with the training and compensation of school resource officers and school police officers. More information on PDE funding can be found at [Article XIII-A Safe Schools](#) of the Pennsylvania School Code
  - Any mention of weapons training? No
    - Have concerns about security guards coming in and not having the weapons training, would like to see them have the same as retired police officers
    - Noted that [HB 49](#), which is moving through the legislature, addresses this

- Does the Committee have the capability to require weapons training beyond what state law says?
  - May be able to require annual training by policy
  - Would be challenging to address here in policy with funding
  - A member noted that retired police generally do their own annual training to remain certified; was required for anyone carrying a weapon in schools
  - Concern that private security firms could hire people and not be required to have that training – a loophole to review from a legal perspective
- Have received a lot of feedback from those who recently attended the NASRO training
  - There's nothing on the use of force or PA-specific information
  - Disheartening, not appropriate for those who have been working in schools
- [Pending legislation](#) being circulated to push the deadline back, to be required by the beginning of the 2020/21 school year
- Will present the criteria to the Commission for consideration at their December 11, 2019 meeting.

**V. Threat Assessment – Carol Kuntz and Samantha Koch**

- Statutory requirement to research, develop and compile informational materials, guidelines, and training curriculum within 180 days of enactment (by 12/25/19)
- Asked Committee members to review the materials and provide feedback by December 6
- PCCD staff thanked all who participated and contributed to the plan's development
  - Identified statewide partners and others who participated in this process
  - Expressed appreciation for everyone's time and commitment to this endeavor
- Based on what's required in [Article XIII-E](#) of the PA School Code
- Provided an overview of the efforts of the Threat Assessment Workgroup, achieved through the work of 4 subgroups which convened regularly by phone to discuss:
  - Model procedures and guidelines
  - Guidance documentation on communications and confidentiality
  - Informational material to school staff and parents
  - Information material for students
- Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence program grant
  - Provides grant funding for training and curriculum development
  - The 3-year award timeline fits nicely with what we're required to implement
  - Notified in October that we received a 3-year award of \$777,282
    - The bulk will go to a dynamic, well qualified provider of training and technical assistance to help schools work through the questions and challenges of implementing threat assessment
    - Anticipate providing in-person and online trainings by fall 2020
    - Will do 10 regional Train-the-Trainer sessions across the state
    - Have a decent turn-around in terms of the training being available
  - Recognized the support in this process of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, PDE, PSP, the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) and others

- Reviewed the draft Model K-12 Threat Assessment Procedures and Guidelines
  - Relied heavily on the National Threat Assessment operational guides put out by the US Secret Service and Department of Education (DoE) for both structure and scope, as well as reliance on statute and best practices
  - Put information in terms of steps and procedures
  - Identified important considerations raised by workgroup / subgroup members
  - Highlighted key pieces of the draft document
  - Tried to synthesize a lot of good information that's already out there and make it specific to Pennsylvania
  - Questions and feedback
    - What is meant by "equity"?
      - If not implemented with fidelity and care, this process could potentially exacerbate existing disproportionate responses, i.e. to minorities, referrals to AEDY, individuals with disabilities, etc.
      - Tried to approach with care and emphasize that it's not a disciplinary process but is designed for a specific purpose and to be implemented in conjunction with other areas of support
      - If you don't do it well, has the capacity to do harm rather than good
    - Need anything more beyond feedback? Not really, it includes a lot of resources, but asked for members to provide any resources that we may have missed, especially that are Pennsylvania-specific
- Reviewed the draft Questions and Answers on Threat Assessment Procedures and School-based Intervention Teams
  - Statute specifically identifies special education and Student Assistance Program (SAP) teams
  - Gave a brief overview of the main topic areas
  - Organized in a Q&A format
  - If there are additional questions that are not reflected here, please let us know
  - There were no additional questions or feedback from participants
- Reviewed the draft Information for School Staff, Parents and Guardians PowerPoint
  - Briefly reviewed slides and highlighted key pieces
  - Schools can download and adapt it for their purposes, including adding in local resources
- Reviewed the draft Informational Material for Students: Students and Threat Assessment PowerPoint
  - Briefly reviewed slides and highlighted key pieces
  - Noted that PDE has a grant to work with Sandy Hook Promise to implement their [Start with Hello](#) program
  - Maybe in the future look at developing more information for youth, as there's not much out there, particularly for elementary school students
  - Like the other PowerPoint, schools can adapt this into a webinar, add cartoons, other resources, etc.
  - Member had concern about use of the term "threat assessment" – don't want students to be confused and think that they are responsible to assess a threat, but need to report it if they perceive a threat

- Responded to questions and comments from Committee members
  - Plans for rolling this out, perhaps in collaboration with the PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO), the PA Association of School Administrators (PASA) and other groups?
    - All are great programs, but want to roll-out in a way so folks know that it's available
    - Roll-out plan is still being discussed, is something to consider
    - Member offered PASBO's support; another participant noted the PA Association of School Social Work Personnel (PASSWP), Association of School Psychologists of PA (ASPP), PA School Board Association (PSBA), and others who likely would assist with disseminating the information
    - Noted the need to continue informing and updating school board members, as they change every four years
    - Staff noted that the federal grant has a roll-out component for outreach
    - Will have some structure on the roll-out plan for the December meeting
  - Any resources for staff, teachers or students who might be triggered by something? Want to make this a trauma-informed approach
    - Welcome folks to send in appropriate resources to support that
    - PDE staff commented that under Act 18, PDE has a responsibility to provide trauma-informed educational components to administrators and teachers, and is developing courses for school leaders, system leaders and teachers to assist educators in the field

## VI. General Updates

- 2019/20 Grant Update – *Kirsten Kenyon*
  - Grant application period has closed
  - Meritorious grants
    - 492 applications were submitted on time (491 last year)
    - Will follow up with the 8 districts that haven't yet submitted their application
    - The amount allocated for the 492 applicants is \$18.44 million, however the total requested is only \$18.17 million, as 103 districts came in under and only 34 came in over, their district's allocation amount
    - Breakdown of top 5 categories
      - Most (74%) came in under category 12 (technology and equipment), about the same as last year (76%)
      - Category 18 (SROs/SPOs) was the next highest category at 22%, an increase from 14% last year
      - 14% came in for category 11 (planning), nearly the same as last year (15%)
      - The final two categories, #21 (trauma-informed approaches) at 11% and #1 (assessments) at 10%, were new to the top 5 categories this year

- Competitive grants
  - Received 484 applications from an eligible pool of 883 (vs. 638 of 778 last year), but had to administratively reject 10 that were not eligible
  - The 474 eligible applications requested a total of \$116 million (compared with a total of \$177.6 million last year); the available allocation remains \$33 million
  - Breakdown of top 5 categories
    - The top 3 are the same as last year: #12 (technology) at 73%, #21 (trauma-informed) at 29% (6% more than last year), and #11 (planning) at 22% (3% less than last year)
    - The other two categories, #19 (staff training for counselors) at 21% and #3 (positive behavioral supports) at 18%, are new to the top 5 this year
- Community Violence grants
  - Had 64 applicants, though had to reject four that were ineligible (they were school districts)
  - The 59 eligible applications are requesting a total of \$14.3 million in funding
  - There were significantly less applicants than last year, when there were 123 applications requesting \$37.2 million in funding
  - Breakdown of categories
    - Three-quarters came in for fostering and promoting communication between the school entity, community and law enforcement
    - The next highest was increasing access to quality trauma-informed support services and behavioral health care (62%)
- Responded to questions and comments by Committee members
  - Is some of the decrease due to the option of a 2-year roll-out last year, so those that are doing a two-year grant may have decided not to apply this year? Did not get to run that comparison of who came in this year vs. last year, but could run that later
  - Challenge again of more funding requested (\$116 million) than allocated (\$33 million), so we're in the same situation as last year, with having to reduce the requested amount by nearly 80%. How will that be handled? Are we able to pick and choose different things, like prioritizing, or will we go back to the schools and ask them to prioritize their requests like last year?
    - Schools will not have an opportunity to revise their applications, like last year
    - We can consider other things, like that the Committee is able to prioritize funding and partially fund projects
    - Will provide information to the Committee in January; will interact with school entities and resolve those issues in January and February, and have a final version in February for the Committee to review/consider pursuing
    - Suggested considering reevaluating the competitive grant process award system (like we did for the meritorious), and set baseline funding structures, would be much better for the school districts and eliminate the need to pick and choose what school districts need in their funding requests

- Coordination with PDE on grant programs – Dr. Volkman provided breakdown on PDE’s grant funding
  - Over \$4 million was awarded to public local education agencies (LEAs)
  - Equipment grants – Providing \$1.75 million to LEAs and \$2.75 million through the intermediate units to non-public school entities
  - Program grants – Providing \$1 million to LEAs and \$446,000 through the intermediate units to 31 non-public school entities
  - Providing \$583,378 to support School Police Officers (SPOs) and \$742,719 to support School Resource Officers (SROs) in LEAs
  - Complete information is available on the [PDE website](#)
- Baseline Workgroup Update – *Carol Kuntz*
  - Held an initial meeting of the workgroup
  - Plan to review information with Sen. Brewster and then convene another meeting
  - Senator Brewster shared his perspective
    - Concept that we’re at the point now with the competitive grant funding that we should have a baseline of what should be in every district, and anyone who wants to go beyond the baseline is welcome to do that
    - Focus competitive funding on ensuring that every district has met the baseline
    - Can audit the baselines, to make sure they are being reached, and then raise the threshold by determining what’s the next level that should be reached
    - Every district that has armed security should have them undergo the same training, so there’s consistency throughout the network
    - As we get the funds out there, we can guide the ship
    - Every school district should have a school psychologist on staff and a school psychiatrist on retainer – but how many do?
    - Can fine tune the process and make it more structured, quantifiable, and accountable from an audit perspective, in a supportive, not punitive way
- Assessor Registry Update
  - There are 90 approved Assessors
    - Physical: 70
    - Behavioral Health: 15
    - Both: 5
  - Seeking confirmation and approval of six new applications today
- Nonprofit Security Grant Fund Update – *Kirsten Kenyon*
  - Governor signed [HB 859, Act 83 of 2019](#) into law on November 7, 2019
  - Will direct \$5 million to PCCD to administer grants to “nonprofit organizations ... which ... principally serves individuals, groups or institutions that are included within a bias motivation category for single bias hate crime incidents identified by the federal bureau of investigation in its 2017 hate crime statistics publication”
  - Means that any nonprofit in PA that serves a population that has been or could be identified as a victim of a hate crime would be eligible for security enhancement funding
  - The application period opens March 1, 2020, and each October 1<sup>st</sup> thereafter

- PCCD is to collaborate with the Office of Homeland Security and PSP in determining which grant applications are awarded
- Grants will range from a minimum of \$5,000 to a potential maximum of \$150,000, if the applicant provides 50% matching funds
- Will go through the Commission, but will keep the SSSC posted
  - The grants are very similar to the planning, training, and physical security enhancements that the SSSC has approved
  - Anticipate some of the nonprofits that apply for these funds may also serve schools, and want to avoid duplication of services

**VII. Special Council on Gun Violence Update – Mike Pennington**

- Provided background of the Executive Order signed by Governor Wolf in August
- Reviewed some of the tasks of the Council, which is comprised of 18 members from a variety of professions and perspectives
- First meeting was held on October 9, 2019
- Need to provide final report of findings and recommendations within 180 days, so the goal is to have a final product by the March 11, 2020 Commission meeting
- Special Council identified 5 workgroups based on key areas in the Executive Order
  - Mass shootings
  - Accidental shootings
  - Suicide by firearms
  - Domestic violence-related shootings
  - Community gun violence
- Executive order directed involvement of a wide range of stakeholders to look at recommendations, best practices, research, etc.
- Holding five hearings on pertinent topics across the state, reviewed dates, location and focus of the various hearings
  - Complete information is on the [PCCD website](#)
  - Will also post testimony [online](#)
- Developed a webpage and an online public comment survey on the [PCCD website](#)
- Are at the start of this process; looking forward to discussions and input

**VIII. Member Updates/Comments**

- None

**IX. 2018/19 Grants – Executive Session**

- Action requested on use of School Safety and Security Grant Funds

**Motion to enter Executive Session**

- The motion was made by Mr. Hurley and seconded by Dr. Volkman
- There was no discussion and the motion carried by unanimous vote

**Motion to exit Executive Session and return to normal session**

- The motion was made by Dr. Volkman and seconded by Senator Brewster
- There was no discussion and the motion carried by unanimous vote

**Motion to accept PCCD staff recommendation regarding the modification request by York Suburban School District for the use of their approved School Safety and Security 2018-2019 Competitive Grant Award**

- The motion to accept the PCCD staff recommendation to not approve the modification requested by York Suburban School District regarding their current competitive grant award due to significant changes in scope from the originally submitted and approved grant application, but to allow York Suburban School District until December 31, 2019 to implement the project as initially submitted was made by Mr. Hurley and seconded by Mr. Regan
- There was no discussion and the motion carried by unanimous vote

**X. Public Comment – None**

**XI. Adjournment**

- Noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 10 AM – Noon
  - Note change of day (Tuesday) and time (morning)
  - Will primarily convene virtually by conference call/Skype rather than in person
- Reviewed upcoming 2020 meeting dates:
  - Wednesday, January 29, 2020, 1 – 3 PM
  - Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 1 – 3 PM
- Thanked everyone for their time and contribution to today’s meeting

**Motion to adjourn the meeting**

- The motion was made by Mr. Hein and seconded by Mr. Kelly
- The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 3:04 PM