

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

School Safety and Security Committee Skype Meeting

June 16, 2020

MINUTES

Members/Designees:

Mr. Derin Myers, Designee for Chairman Ramsey
Ms. Janice Bart, Member
Senator James Brewster, Member
Representative Donna Bullock, Member
Ms. Nikki Bricker Cameron, Member
Col. Robert Evanchick, Member
Mr. David Hein, Member
Dr. Gerald Huesken, Designee for Secretary Rivera
Mr. Mike Hurley, Member
Mr. Mike Kelly, Member
Senator Wayne Langerholc, Member
Representative Jason Ortity, Member
Dr. Kathleen Reeves, Member
Ms. Wendy Robison, Member
Mr. Jeffrey Thomas, Designee for Director Padfield
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member
Mr. Mike Vereb, Designee for Josh Shapiro

Staff:

Mr. Michael Pennington, PCCD Executive Director
Pamela Bennett
Lindsay Busko
Christina Cosgrove-Rooks
Chris Epoca
Heather Hewitt
Kirsten Kenyon
Rebecca Kiehl
Samantha Koch
Carol Kuntz
Crystal Lauver
Debra Sandifer
Shaun White

Guests:

Hannah Barrick, PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO)
Jonathan Berger, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Sean Brandon, PA House Democrats
Marcus Brown, Homeland Security, Governor's Office
Erika Brunelle, PA State Education Association (PSEA)
Gwenn Dando, PA Senate
Mike Deery, PA Senate
Bradley Keen, PA House of Representatives Appropriations Committee (D)
Christine Seitz, PA House of Representatives
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate

I. Call to Order and Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Myers called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM and welcomed participants. A quorum of members was established. Mr. Myers noted that the minutes from the April 1, 2020 meeting were posted on the private side of the website prior to the meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes from the April 1, 2020 meeting as submitted

Motion: Brewster. **Seconded:** Bullock. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 17, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

Mr. Myers introduced a new Member, Ms. Wendy Robison, who was appointed to this Committee by Governor Wolf on May 4. A resident of Beaver Falls, she is a Certified School Nurse with Western Beaver County School District and a Family Nurse Practitioner with Heritage Valley Health System and Heritage Valley Sewickley. Mr. Myers and the Committee members welcomed her.

II. Budget and School Code Update and Action Items

Action requested to approve the COVID-19 School Health and Safety Grants (FY20-21) solicitation and allocations

Mr. Myers noting that there have been a lot of moving parts on the framework, resulting in the short notice of the materials for today's meeting. He provided an overview and background information, beginning with Governor Wolf signing Act 30 into law on June 5, 2020, and pointed members to the summary provided in the meeting materials. Act 30 makes significant changes to the scope of the grants for FY20-21, immediately tasking PCCD with providing grants to address the needs resulting from COVID-19. The expedited process is also intended to help schools prepare to reopen in the fall.

Mr. Myers gave a quick summary of how the \$165 million is broken down, with \$150 million in federal CARES Act funding supporting public school entities (including school districts, intermediate units (IUs), and career & technical, charter, regional charter, and cyber charter schools), \$7.5 million to be awarded to nonpublic schools (of which there are around 3,000) through the IUs, and the remaining \$7.5 million for administering community violence prevention/reduction grants. While there are significantly more resources than in previous years, the funds are restricted to COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

Mr. Myers reviewed the Funding Framework document, including details on the timeframes, requirements, and expectations for the public and nonpublic COVID-19 School Health and Safety grants. PCCD anticipates releasing the funding announcements for both grants following today's meeting. Applications for the \$150 million available to the 779 public school entities are due by June 30, 2020. Schools must use the directly allocated (advance payment) funds by schools by October 30, 2020 but the monies are available retroactively to March 1, 2020. Any funds not used will revert back to the federal government. Mr. Myers noted that the transfer of an additional \$50 million to be made available for school entities per Act 30 is pending a resolution with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funding.

Solicitation for the \$7.5 million in state funds available to nonpublic schools will go out later today. Act 30 requires applications be submitted through the IUs by July 8, 2020. The IUs will be asked to identify the nonpublic school and the grant amount that would be provided to them. Mr. Myers noted that there are maximum award amounts and adjustments may have to be made to requested amounts since the total maximum amount for all nonpublic schools would be \$30 million, greatly exceeding the \$7.5 million available. He invited participation in a

workgroup to look at how the allocations will be made. Recommendations regarding what funds to grant will be made at July's School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC) meeting.

Solicitation for the \$7.5 in state community violence prevention/reduction grant funds is anticipated in September. An update on the framework for this funding will be provided at the July SSSC meeting, with the expectation of awards being made by March 1, 2021.

Mr. Myers opened it up for questions and responded to Committee members, as follows:

- Question regarding the application format, explained that will use a drop-down selection approach for the category, will need to be a certification of what funds are to be used, there will also be a more straightforward, general budget category; noted that after the award period is completed schools will be asked to describe how they spent the money, e.g. a spreadsheet of how the resources were used
- Noted that the Funding Availability section of the Funding Framework document describes how the allocations will work, with the base allocations being distributed according to the formula, and the School Health and Safety Allocation chart provided in the meeting materials delineating the funding available for each school entity
- Member asked if the amendment had been submitted to the Department of Education for the changes to the ESSER funds; Mr. Myers was not sure if it had been submitted yet, but was aware of the need to do so
- Member asked if there might be an extension for the use of the money, noting the backorder of some items, such as personal protection equipment (PPE); responded that the \$150 million is tightly aligned to the end of 2020 timeframe, so are trying to allow for flexibility but any unused funds must go back; yet assured that we will work with schools as much as possible
- Clarified that while the deadline is October 30, the project is retroactive to March 1, 2020, so can reimburse for funds already spent
- Noted that while the focus of this year's grants is COVID-19 mitigation efforts, some things that the school safety and security grants had previously supported may be able to be incorporated into this year's request, depending on the rationale provided
- We are hopeful that certification will be straightforward and readily accomplished, and will work with schools on any issues that arise
- Regarding the potential of a number of new applicants, Mr. Myers stated that we are working to get ahead of that by broadly circulating information through email as well as in also a press release and through a briefing call with education associations

Motion to adopt the framework of the COVID-19 School Health and Safety Grants (FY20-21) solicitation and allocations

Motion: Hurley. **Seconded:** Bart. **Abstentions:** Huesker. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 16, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

III. General Updates

- Right to Know Requests – *Mr. Derin Myers*
Mr. Myers noted that per the discussion at the last meeting, information regarding a recent Right to Know Law (RTKL) request was circulated and shared with Committee members on the private side of the website. PCCD staff redacted potential security vulnerability details, provided information, and responded to follow-up inquiries, and the RTKL request was executed.
- Workgroup Updates – *Ms. Carol Kuntz*
 - Baseline Standards
Ms. Kuntz shared that the Baseline Standards Workgroup has met several times and developed charts detailing tiered standards for both physical and behavioral baseline

criteria, which were provided in the meeting materials. Ms. Kuntz described the development process as she reviewed the charts, and invited Committee members to provide input, as the workgroup will be meeting one more time to finalize the information.

Ms. Kuntz noted that the workgroup also wanted to look at the environmental component but asked about referring to the structures and construction standards that are already established for schools by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and PDE. The leading member on this initiative thanked Ms. Kuntz for the update and the work that has been done thus far and the efforts made towards achieving consistency, noting that the environmental component now has an additional aspect with coronavirus.

Other members weighed in with their perspectives on the environmental component, including starting with what's already out there and adding anything else that's needed. One member noted that ensuring such things as clean water and the absence of mold are critical for schools to consider and asked if there's anything in PDE that takes environmental factors into consideration. The PDE representative said he did not know but would research the answer. PCCD staff noted that there are some requirements regarding reporting lead in water but not requiring testing. A member suggested having a category for annual maintenance of air, water, and physical environment quality.

- Assessment Criteria

The Behavioral Health & School Climate and Physical/Policy/Training Assessment Criteria Workgroups have met and begun reviewing and discussing the current standards. Ms. Kuntz noted that staff shared the draft baseline standards documents and the Workgroups are looking at how the assessment criteria can be put into a similar tiered structure. The Workgroups will continue their efforts with the goal of having something for the Committee to review by the end of the year.

- Assessor Update – *Ms. Carol Kuntz*

PCCD recommends that the Committee approve five new assessors, whose information was shared in the meeting materials. This brings the total number of assessors in the School Safety and Security Provider Registry to 105, including:

- 77 physical/security assessors
- 20 behavioral health/school climate assessors
- 8 assessors for both categories

- School Safety Survey – *Ms. Carol Kuntz*

The School Safety & Security Survey Workgroup will reconvene this summer to review and update the Survey as needed, in accordance with Act 144 of 2019.

- Coordinator Report Collection – *Ms. Carol Kuntz*

The Coordinator Report Survey was updated and sent out through SurveyMonkey on June 1 to all Safety and Security Coordinators. It was also sent to PDE and the Pennsylvania School Board Association (PSBA) for dispersal to school administrators. Ms. Kuntz reported that 180 responses have been received thus far, including 140 from school districts.

- NASRO and Equivalent Training Update – *Ms. Carol Kuntz*

Ms. Kuntz acknowledged that COVID-19 has put a strain on the NASRO trainings. PCCD contacted NASRO about creating a web-based program, which they did, consisting of web-based meetings and at-home work. Ms. Kuntz noted that Cardinal Point, currently the only equivalent program, offers a full 40-hour web-based face-to-face program.

Ms. Kuntz reported that four others are working on developing equivalent training programs. Indiana University of Pennsylvania's (IUP's) program, consisting of both a face-to-face course and an online course through their web portal and a certificate for

course completion, is nearly ready for approval. US Security Care is working on a face-to-face program, Standing Stone Consultants has developed a face-to-face program that should be completed within the next few weeks, and the University of Pittsburgh is developing an online certificate program that is specific to Pennsylvania and includes school security guards. Ms. Kuntz noted the interest of other vendors in creating programs, including Penn State Fayette County and Mansfield University in conjunction with the Innovation Center of State College.

- **Threat Assessment Team Training Update – Ms. Samantha Koch**

Ms. Koch provided an update regarding the sub-award of federal funding to Risk and Strategic Management (RSM) Corporation to develop a statewide K-12 Threat Assessment Technical Assistance and Training Network beginning in the 2020-21 school year. PCCD is working in collaboration with RSM Corporation as well as our federal partners to finalize a project budget. Adjustments have also been made to the project timelines due to the significant disruption from COVID-19, including postponing in-person training activities until at least spring 2021 and developing online training resources. More information will be shared as the work gets underway.

IV. Member Updates/Comments/Questions

As a point of interest, a member noted that he has had several school districts ask about a use of force policy for school police/resource officers/security guards, with some discussion of whether they should be armed, noting that the national conversation on appropriate use of force is filtering down to schools. Mr. Myers responded that we might request those developing NASRO equivalent trainings to incorporate that into their program. The PDE representative will also pass it along as a good conversation to have.

Another member reported that he has been hearing questions about what to buy to prepare for reopening in the fall. He said that there's no one answer as it varies building by building. He noted there are things to highlight, such as mechanical systems and indoor air quality, but schools will need to assess each building individually and the age of students in that building individually, as there is a myriad of things to consider.

V. Public Comment

There was no public comment offered.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Myers reminded of the next meeting dates, thanked everyone for their time and contribution to today's meeting. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 12:06 PM.

Motion to adjourn

Motion: Vereb. **Seconded:** Thomas. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 17; **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**