

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

School Safety and Security Committee Skype Meeting

August 26, 2020

MINUTES

Members/Designees:

Mr. Charles Ramsey, Chairman
Ms. Janice Bart, Member
Senator James Brewster, Member
Ms. Nikki Bricker Cameron, 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 Ortitay, Member
Director Randy Padfield, Member
Dr. Jamie Piraino, Member
Lt. Col. Scott Price, Designee for Col. Evanchick
Ms. Wendy Robison, Member
Mr. Jeffrey Thomas, Designee for Director Padfield
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member
Mr. Mike Vereb, Designee for Josh Shapiro

Staff:

Sally Barry
Pamela Bennett
Lindsay Busko
Leslie Cesari
Rolanda Chung
Christina Cosgrove-Rooks
Chris Epoca
Lynn Fidler
Kirsten Kenyon
Rebecca Kiehl
Samantha Koch
Geoffrey Kolchin
Carol Kuntz
Crystal Lauver
Roi Ligon
Derin Myers
Michael Pennington
Maddy Roman-Scott
Debra Sandifer

Guests:

Jonathan Berger, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Sean Brandon, PA House Democrats
Gwenn Dando, PA Senate
Mike Deery, PA Senate
Bradley Keen, PA House of Representatives Appropriations Committee (D)
Jenna McCarthy, Malady & Wooten
Christine Seitz, PA House of Representatives
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate

I. Call to Order and Adoption of Minutes

Chairman Ramsey called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM, welcomed participants, and asked Mr. Derin Myers to confirm those in attendance. Mr. Myers established a quorum of participating members. He noted that the minutes from the July 29, 2020 meeting were posted on the private side of the website prior to the meeting for members' review and asked for a motion to approve them.

Motion to approve the minutes from the July 29, 2020 meeting as submitted

Motion: Brewster. **Seconded:** Vereb. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 16, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

II. Status Update on COVID-19 School Health and Safety Grants

At Chairman Ramsey's invitation, Mr. Myers provided an update on the COVID-19 School Health and Safety Grants, noting that staff have been making good progress in processing the applications. He reported that as of August 25, 661 of the 775 grants have been awarded to school entities throughout the commonwealth, and most are now with the Department of the Treasury to be paid.

Mr. Myers stated that staff are still working on the nonpublic school grants, having processed applications submitted on their behalf by 12 of the 29 Intermediate Units (IUs) thus far. He apprised Committee members that after the July 29th meeting four of the IUs informed PCCD that they had missed the following four nonpublic schools in their applications:

- Abraxas LDP
- Rose Tree Day School
- Christ the Divine Teacher School
- Frederick Douglass Christian School

Three of the IUs asked if PCCD could incorporate the missed schools into their totals and recalculate the percentage for their grant applications. Staff complied, bringing the reconfigured amount to about 82% of the original funds requested by each school. The fourth IU opted to use their own funding for the missed school, so their funds were not affected.

Finally, Mr. Myers provided an update on the awarding of \$49 million in federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. He stated that discussions are still underway and productive dialogue is occurring. PCCD will keep the Committee apprised as development progresses.

III. Community Violence Prevention/Reduction Grant Framework for FY20-21

Mr. Myers shifted the agenda to the main subject for discussion, that of considering the funding framework for the \$7.5 m to support the Community Violence Prevention/Reduction Grant program. As discussed at the last meeting, PCCD reconvened the Community Violence Prevention/Reduction Workgroup with the charge to make some modifications and recommendations. Mr. Myers turned to the Workgroup lead, Mr. Geoff Kolchin, for the results of the Workgroup's discussions.

Mr. Kolchin reported that the reconvened Workgroup met twice in August and reviewed the five areas specified by the Committee:

- How to prioritize funding for projects serving communities and municipalities (including counties) in Pennsylvania with the highest rates of violence and need;
- Exploring the possible use of data elements (e.g., Uniform Crime Report offenses data) to assist in gauging levels of violence and need;

- Whether to restrict funding for programs or interventions that are evidence-based or evidence-informed;
- How to ensure geographic distribution while working to support those communities with the most significant needs; and
- And to review current maximum award amounts and whether a tiered approach could be utilized based on the activity and/or the population to be served.

Mr. Kolchin conveyed the Workgroup's recommendations that the Committee:

- Prioritize applications that intend to utilize evidence-based or evidence-informed programs to reduce or prevent community-based violence (e.g., gun violence, gang violence, etc.) in areas identified with high rates of violent crime using UCR offense data or similar local statistics by reviewing them collectively first;
- Consider all remaining applications addressing other types of community violence prevention and/or reduction by reviewing and scoring them regionally similar to the process used last year, using the proposed six regions based on the PA Department of Human Services' Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' Regional Field Offices' with the funds allocated according to the population of each region;
- Keep maximum award levels consistent with last year's Funding Announcement, which was a maximum of \$300,000 over a two-year project period.

Mr. Kolchin shared some additional points emerging from the Workgroup's discussions. In response to concern that grantees follow through with working in targeted areas, the framework includes a note requiring letters of support from municipalities and/or organizations so identified in the application. The Workgroup also advocated priority for direct services and looking at reasonable cost of overhead as part of the review process.

Mr. Kolchin reviewed next steps and the anticipated timeline moving forward. If adopted by the Committee, PCCD staff will take the proposed Framework & Scoring Criteria and use it to develop a Funding Announcement for release in early September. Similar to the FY 2019-20 Community Violence Prevention and Reduction Grants Program timeline, applications would be reviewed and scored in November and December. PCCD staff hope to take the final recommendations to the Committee at the January 2021 meeting with funding available immediately after that meeting.

Following his presentation, Committee members had the opportunity to pose questions and comments. One member asked how PCCD staff would prioritize evidence-based or evidence-informed programs. Mr. Kolchin responded that either more points would be given to those programs or applications that appeared to utilize evidence-based or evidence-informed approaches would be pulled out and reviewed separately from the other projects (after first identifying those targeting gun and gang violence, noting that all 5 areas are allowed). Another member commended the Workgroup for their time and effort, thanking them in particular for incorporating the letters of support from the communities involved.

Mr. Myers concluded the discussion by noting that the regional map and amounts will serve as a guide. He assured the Committee that PCCD staff will see what the applications look like per region and try to ensure geographic distribution. Mr. Myers asked if there was a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 20-21 Community Violence Prevention/Reduction Funding Framework as presented.

Motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Community Violence Prevention/Reduction Grant Funding Framework

Motion: Tuleya-Payne. **Seconded:** Thomas. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** None. **Aye Votes:** 16, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

IV. General Updates

Mr. Myers invited PCCD staff Carol Kuntz and Samantha Koch to provide their updates. Ms. Koch related the progress of the threat assessment team training under development through the federal STOP School Violence Threat Assessment Grant. PCCD is continuing to work with the subgrantee, RSM Corporation, to implement project activities. A planning team comprised of subject matter experts has been convened, with plans to engage stakeholders from the Committee's Threat Assessment Workgroup to help inform the development of training and technical assistance resources for school entities.

Ms. Koch also informed Committee members of an upcoming webinar in collaboration with the PA Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education and Office for Safe Schools. The PA Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) will facilitate this virtual roundtable discussion, "[Best Practices in Threat Assessment – Important Information for School Teams](#)," which will highlight resources that are currently available on threat assessment as well as those under development. Registration is open for the free online event, slated for Tuesday, September 29 from 9:00 – 11:00 AM.

Ms. Koch moved on to cover the status of PCCD's Strategic Planning efforts. In May, PCCD staff kicked off efforts to update the agency's Strategic Framework, utilizing a Committee of Chairs to ensure alignment with Advisory Committee priorities and responsibilities. Ms. Koch reviewed the 2021-2025 Strategic Framework Project Plan, which delineates the three phases of the Strategic Planning process, Initial Planning and Information Gathering, Identifying Priority Areas and Early Drafting, and Refining and Finalizing the Strategic Framework, taking place between May and December 2020.

Ms. Koch noted that PCCD has established an internal Strategic Planning Team comprised of senior leadership and office directors, deputy directors, and other key staff to help implement these activities. She reported that staff have developed and launched Grantee and Applicant Perception Surveys designed to gather feedback from organizations that have sought and received funding through the agency. PCCD also just launched a Stakeholder Survey to gather input from Commission, School Safety and Security Committee and Advisory Committee members, as well as Workgroup participants and other relevant partners connected to PCCD's mission and programs.

Ms. Koch stated that PCCD intends to use data from these surveys to better understand the characteristics and needs of applicants and grantees, as well as gauge the quality of the agency's communications, customer service, and funding processes. In addition, PCCD has conducted an analysis of relevant performance metrics and data related to the agency's mission, goals, and objectives, including measures that were identified within the agency's Performance-Based Budget Plan.

Ms. Koch reviewed the anticipated timeline, with the goal of presenting a preliminary draft of the 2021-2025 Strategic Framework to PCCD leadership and the Committee of Chairs for review and feedback in October. A revised draft will then be shared with Commission, School Safety and Security Committee, and Advisory Committee members for feedback, with the final version presented to the Commission for review and approval at their December 9, 2020 meeting.

Following the conclusion of Ms. Koch's reports, Ms. Kuntz provided updates on Workgroup activities, Coordinator report collection, and NASRO and equivalent training. She informed the Committee that with the addition of the recommended five new candidates, there are now 110 approved assessment providers in the Registry, comprising 82 physical/security assessors, 20 behavioral health/school climate assessors, and eight assessors qualifying for both categories.

Ms. Kuntz stated that the School Safety Survey Workgroup will be reconvening in September to begin the process of reviewing and revising the survey. Per the discussion at the last meeting, the survey will be disseminated in December/January with the anticipated presentation of the results for the Committee's review in February.

Ms. Kuntz provided current data on the collection of coordinator reports. She related that 474 school entities have submitted their school safety and security coordinator's report, including 349 school districts; 19 Intermediate Units; 37 Area Vocational Technical Schools; 68 Charter Schools; and one Approved Private School.

Finally, Ms. Kuntz gave a brief update on the development of NASRO and equivalent training. She informed the Committee that since January 2020, over 100 School Security Personnel Trainings have been held in Pennsylvania for approximately 1920 participants, noting that just this week there are eight courses running across the state. Ms. Kuntz was also pleased to announce that all of Philadelphia School District's security personnel are being trained. In addition, another training program is being held for multiple districts in Dauphin County.

V. Member Updates/Comments/Questions

Mr. Myers shared that PCCD has gotten some good feedback to pass on to schools that will provide some considerations for them if they are facilitating in person school outdoors. His comment prompted a related question by a member who asked if there was any comment on pros or cons regarding outdoor teaching. Mr. Myers clarified that the feedback received was not pro or con but rather things to consider if a school is going that direction, i.e. good communication, inform law enforcement, take place in an area not subject to vehicle traffic, have bollards in place if needed, etc.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment offered.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Myers stated that the next Committee meeting dates are uncertain. He noted that if ESSER funding materializes, another meeting would be convened fairly quickly to review the framework for those awards. However, if the funding is delayed or does not transpire, the next meeting will probably be in November to discuss revisions to the School Safety Survey instrument and any changes to that process. The PA Department of Education Designee added that discussions are being held today between the Department and the U.S. Department of Education regarding ESSER fund direction and certification, so will hope to have that information soon.

Mr. Myers thanked everyone for their time and contribution to today's meeting. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 1:40 PM.

Motion to adjourn

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