

# **Michigan School Safety Commission Minutes – April 27, 2022**

The Michigan School Safety Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at the Michigan State Police (MSP) Headquarters in Dimondale, Michigan.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Lt. Col. Chris Kelenske.

Roll call was taken by Ms. Randa Hanes.

The following commission members were present:

- Lt. Col. Chris Kelenske
- Mr. Kyle Guerrant
- Ms. Chardae Burton
- Chief Ken Plaga
- Ms. Justine Galbraith
- Ms. Elizabeth Newell
- Mr. Brian Gard
- Mr. Rick Joseph
- Ms. Alicia Urbain
- Ms. Theresa Bassett

MSP Office of School Safety (OSS) Staff present:

- Ms. Nancy Becker Bennett
- Ms. Kimberly Root
- Mr. Jason Guthaus
- Ms. Logan O'Neal
- Ms. Beth Beattie
- Ms. Mary Gager Drew
- Ms. Randa Hanes

The following guests were present:

- D/Lt. Scott Layman, MSP, Michigan Intelligence Operations Center (MIOC)
- D/Sgt. Carlos Fossati, MSP, MIOC

### **Approval of January 26, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Guerrant motioned to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was supported by Chief Plaga and approved unanimously.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Guerrant motioned to approve the meeting agenda. The motion was supported by Ms. Urbain and approved unanimously.

### **Old Business**

#### **A. Incident Report - Ms. Becker Bennett**

An overview of the second quarter report for fiscal year 2022 was given. Incidences were reported by 17 intermediate school districts and 45 schools, and 70 percent of reports were made within 24 hours following the incident, as required. There were 4 reports of criminal sexual conduct, 101 reports of illegal possession of controlled substances or alcohol, 4 reports of larceny or theft, 16 reports of other crime, 66 reports of physical assault or other crime involving physical violence, 2 reports of trespassing, and 5 reports of vandalism. An estimated \$2,700 was needed to repair school property.

For incidents involving the attempted commission of a crime, there were 17 reports of illegal possession of controlled substances or alcohol, 2 reports of larceny or theft, 15 reports of other crime, 20 reports of physical assault or other crime involving physical violence, 1 report of trespassing, and 2 reports of vandalism.

Due to the confidentiality of the information, copies of the report were not distributed. Commissioners were invited to view the report during or after the meeting.

B. Office of School Safety (OSS) Updates – Mr. Guthaus

i. Final Recommendations Status

The OSS continues to work to implement the Final Recommendations of the School Safety Task Force. The results of the Department of Homeland Security survey on the new Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) K-12 School Security Guide and School Security Assessment Tool was released in February and is available on the OSS website. The grant funded work with Michigan State University on school resource officer training continues. The project has been transitioned to Michigan Virtual University for the development of online training.

ii. School-to-Parent Communication and Transparency for Emergent Situations

The OSS has requested any current guidance that is being used by schools and school districts in their communications with stakeholders during and immediately following a critical incident. To date, several schools have provided information, with more expected in the coming weeks. This information will be reviewed and used by the OSS to inform the development of resources regarding critical incident communications for K-12 schools and relevant stakeholders.

**New Business**

A. New OSS Manager – Ms. Becker Bennett

The MSP Grants and Community Services Division recently hired Ms. Kimberly (Kim) Root to fill the vacant OSS manager position. Ms. Root comes to the OSS from the Huron Valley School District where she served as Executive Director of School Safety, Communications and Strategic Initiatives for the past 11 years.

B. OK2SAY

i. Reporting/Tips Update – D/Lieutenant Layman

As was reported during the January commission meeting, OK2SAY staffing was down, with three technicians working the tip line. Three new technicians have been hired and are completing training.

In January 2022, 2,300 tips were received compared to 630 tips in January 2021; this is a 275 percent increase. February saw a 250 percent increase over February 2021 and March saw a 288 percent increase over March 2021. Historically, the top tip category has been suicide threats; however, tips regarding bullying outpaced suicide threats during the first three months of this calendar year.

Ms. Newell inquired about tip counts compared to pre-COVID numbers. D/Lieutenant Layman advised that those numbers are not available at this time, but the tip numbers in 2020 and 2021 dropped significantly due to covid-related school building closures.

Mr. Gard requested copies of tip numbers to compare the trends from year to year. D/Lieutenant Layman advised that this information can be provided at future meetings; however, tip numbers are also available in the annual reports, included in the OSS quarterly newsletter, and updated on the website monthly. Ms. Drew stated the 2021 Annual Report will be completed by July 31. Lt. Colonel Kelenske advised that if there are certain templates the commission would like to view each time they meet, the information will be provided. D/Lieutenant Layman was tasked with having copies of the tip numbers available for the commission at future quarterly meetings.

Ms. Newell asked if there is a tracking mechanism for suicides by county or district between agencies such as the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). She noted that there have been a number of districts in Michigan with recent suicides. Lt. Colonel Kelenske and D/Lieutenant Layman advised that suicide threats have always been in the top four tip categories and was often the top tip category during COVID. At this time, it is unknown if there is a tracking mechanism for suicides by county or district but Lt. Colonel Kelenske advised that this can be investigated on the Michigan Incident Crime Reporting System. Ms. Burton indicated that she is not familiar with a tracking mechanism maintained by MDHHS but would follow up. Ms. Newell and Ms. Urbain asked if there was a reason that suicide rates are up, yet suicide threats are down. D/Lieutenant Layman advised that suicide threat tip numbers have not gone down but bullying tips have gone up.

ii. Program Update – Ms. Drew

With the goal of creating awareness, OK2SAY has worked in the past with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters to promote the program to students who are interested in broadcasting as a career. OK2SAY has also worked with the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency to promote the program during Month of the Military Child. Through a partnership with the Michigan High School Athletic Association, OK2SAY reached approximately 50,000 student athletes during the winter sports season. Additional opportunities have included collaboration with the MSP Computer Crimes Unit, MSP Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division, and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

OK2SAY has delivered approximately 300 presentations to nearly 70,000 students this school year.

Mr. Gard expressed his appreciation for the presentations in schools.

Lt. Colonel Kelenske reported that the Great Lakes Homeland Security Conference is scheduled May 10-12, with the school track taking place Wednesday, May 11. Approximately 300 school leaders are registered to participate in the school track.

C. OSS Projects

i. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) School Safety Task Force – School Security Assessment Tool – Ms. Becker Bennett

The CISA School Security Assessment Tool is an improved resource for schools that replaces a cumbersome Excel spreadsheet platform. The online tool provides scenarios for schools and highlights deficiencies based on a series of questions. The tool has been distributed to schools and school districts and placed on the OSS website. Two training resources for users will be added to the OSS website in the very near future – one 10-minute PowerPoint presentation by CISA and one live training also by CISA. Lt. Colonel Kelenske advised that the assessment is intuitive and straightforward. Chief Plaga was tasked with gathering feedback from law enforcement to help spread awareness of the tool within the public safety community.

Ms. Newell asked for clarification on whether the assessment is for hardening of buildings or procedures used in response to a situation. Lt. Colonel Kelenske advised that the assessment is a little bit of both, as they go hand-in-hand. The assessment tool is available to help identify those gaps in infrastructure. Lt. Colonel Kelenske encouraged commission members to watch the training videos.

ii. Behavioral Threat Assessment Request for Proposal (RFP) – Ms. Becker Bennett

The OSS received two federal competitive school safety grants, or STOP grants, from the Bureau of Justice Assistance in 2019. The first is associated with the 29 recommendations and the second is more focused on mental and behavioral health. The OSS recently issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for development of and training on a model threat assessment program designed for Michigan schools. Responses are due May 5, 2022, and an update will be provided at the next commission meeting. Due to the expected dollar amount of the contract, this had to be bid competitively.

Mr. Gard asked about tracking and recording of behavioral threat assessments from school districts. Lt. Colonel Kelenske advised that, as a law enforcement agency, MSP is required to exhibit caution regarding recordkeeping to ensure constitutional rights are not violated. He indicated any such activity requires a discussion with MDE and MDHHS. There may be a process already in place for school records and a behavioral threat assessment potentially following a student when they change schools or school districts.

Concerns were also raised regarding how to help schools and students once a threat assessment is completed. Specifically, how to help schools and students where community resources are lacking. This RFP is intended to help develop a model and provide training to schools to guide the development of a behavioral threat assessment team including who should be involved, what should be considered, and what Michigan-specific pieces of information need to be documented. The hope is to also be able to direct schools to community resources.

D. 2022 Competitive School Safety Grant Program (CSSGP) – Ms. Becker Bennett

Announcements for the CSSGP will be made on Friday, April 29. The OSS received 337 eligible applications requesting approximately \$37 million for a \$10 million allocation. A diverse review committee that included members from MSP, the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, the Michigan Sheriff's Association, charter schools, non-public schools, MDE, and emergency management made the selections based on past award status, project categories, and the required balance of public and non-public school awards. The Governor's office will be issuing a press release.

Ms. Newell asked about the burden to schools to reapply for grants if they did not meet criteria this round and whether they can reapply. Ms. Becker Bennett advised that the legislative appropriation language gives priorities to schools that have not previously received a competitive school safety grant, schools requesting funds to secure exterior access points, and other specific guidelines. Ms. Becker Bennett stated that it is unknown whether OSS will be able to utilize any of the same applications for the next round of funding, as it is likely that some of the appropriation language may change.

Lt. Colonel Kelenske expressed his concern regarding the number of grant applications that were removed because they were not completed properly, and how this lends more support to the need to have school safety officials housed in the intermediate school districts to help coordinate school safety for their districts. He noted that many schools in both rural and urban communities are lacking basic infrastructure and have a significant need for hardening external access points.

Since 2015, and including this year's \$10 million, \$66 million in grants will have been awarded to Michigan schools.

E. House of Representatives School Safety Task Force – Lt. Colonel Kelenske

The task force has not provided a final report at this time; however, a letter of progress has been issued. Details on recommendations are still being discussed and there is a high level of consensus on different topics. The task force recognizes the commission's work of past years and is not starting over. Legislative and funding assistance has been needed for implementation of some of the items included in the 2018 Final Recommendations. These details were provided to the task force in late January 2022 by Lt. Colonel Kelenske, Ms. Becker Bennett, and D/Lieutenant Layman, and included recommendations 7, 10-11, 18, and 22.

Other:

Public Act 48 of 2022 amends fire prevention and school building codes to allow for the installation and use of temporary locking devices or systems, given certain stipulations.

Ms. Stephanie O'Dea is the new K-12 Education Policy Advisor for Governor Whitmer.

Fiscal Year 2023 budget recommendations from the Governor's office, House, and Senate include funding for competitive school safety grants.

**Public Comment**

No public comment.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Newell motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was supported by Ms. Galbraith. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 p.m.