

Michigan School Safety Commission Minutes – January 26, 2022

The Michigan School Safety Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, January 26, 2022, at 7150 Harris Drive, Dimondale, Michigan.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Lt. Col. Chris Kelenske. Lt. Colonel Kelenske began the meeting with a moment of silence to honor the victims of the Oxford High School shooting that took place on November 30, 2021.

Roll call was taken by Mr. Jason Guthaus.

The following commission members were present:

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

Michigan State Police (MSP), Office of School Safety (OSS) Staff present:

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

The following guests were present:

- D/Lt. Scott Layman, MSP, Michigan Intelligence Operations Center
- Mr. Tim Bourgeois, MSP, Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES)
- F/Lt. Matt Williams, MSP, Government Relations Section
- Ms. Michelle Richard, Executive Office of the Governor

Approval of October 27, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Guerrant motioned to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was supported by Chief Plaga and all were in favor. The meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Galbraith asked to add a discussion of what could be done to assist districts in providing messaging for families about firearms access prevention. It was determined that this would be included in the Gun Lock Initiative discussion. Ms. Galbraith motioned to approve the meeting agenda. The motion was supported by Mr. Johnson and all were in favor. The agenda was approved as presented.

Lt. Colonel Kelenske asked members of the public to fill out a public comment form if they wished to speak at the end of the meeting.

Old Business

A. Incident Report - Ms. Becker Bennett

An overview of the fiscal year 2022 first quarter report was given. While the incident report is required, there is no way to penalize noncompliance. Incidents were reported by 21 intermediate school districts and 41 schools. Seventy-four percent of reports were made within 24 hours of the incident, which is part of the requirement. There was 1 report of gang activity, 110 reports of illegal possession of controlled substances or alcohol, 1 report of larceny, 15 reports of other crimes, 37 reports of physical assaults, 1 report of trespassing, and 2 reports of vandalism. Approximately \$4,000 was needed to repair school property. For incidents involving the attempted commission of a crime, there were 28 reports of illegal possession of controlled substances or alcohol, 1 report of larceny, 6 reports of other crimes, 11 reports of physical assaults, and 1 report of trespassing. Due to the confidentiality of the information, copies were not made of the report but Ms. Becker Bennett offered to show it to any of the commissioners who wanted to see the report.

Lt. Colonel Kelenske asked if the numbers had stayed consistent since reporting began. Ms. Becker Bennett advised it was difficult to tell due to the effects of COVID-19 and the shooting at Oxford High School.

B. Office of School Safety Updates – Mr. Guthaus

i. Final Recommendations Status

The OSS continues to work to implement the Final Recommendations of the School Safety Task Force. The 3rd edition of the Department of Homeland Security K-12 Security Guide and Survey will be released in February with a mobile-friendly assessment guide. The OSS will put the K-12 Security Guide and Survey on the OSS website and provide it to schools. The hardening recommendations in the Final Recommendations of the School Safety Task Force have been put on the OSS website.

New Business

A. Oxford School Shooting – Lt. Colonel Kelenske

Lt. Colonel Kelenske stated he believes that the training, drills, and exercises that were previously conducted saved lives at Oxford High School. While the OSS does not perform investigations or reviews into school incidents, numerous agencies will create their own after-action reports and the OSS will review those reports for promising or best practices.

i. 2019 Competitive School Safety Grant – Ms. Becker Bennett

Oxford Schools received a Competitive School Safety Grant Program (CSSGP) award in 2019. Ms. Becker Bennett could not provide details of how Oxford Schools used the grant funds but advised that the school district has publicly released that information and it is available online. Oxford Schools applied for Project Area 2, which required the district to provide a 25 percent match. A total of \$592,000 was spent, which included \$444,007 in grant funds and \$148,000 in matching funds. Oxford Schools completed all grant requirements and submitted their final report on January 28, 2021. The district had also previously applied for CSSGP funds in 2018 but did not receive an award.

ii. Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Program – Ms. Becker Bennett

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) has two programs that provide grant funds to reimburse unexpected state and local costs incurred during an emergency: the Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance (EFLEA) Program and the Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP). An invitation is required to apply for the grants and Michigan was invited to apply for both. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is applying for the AEAP grant; the MSP has submitted an application for

EFLEA grant funds to the federal government to reimburse first responders from eight or nine agencies that responded to Oxford on November 30 and assisted with community needs and events during that week.

iii. **OK2SAY – D/Lieutenant Layman**

The OK2SAY tip line received 898 tips on December 1, 2022; 892 tips on December 2, 2022; and 336 tips on December 3, 2022. The number of tips received over the two days following the incident were about equal to the total number of tips received in the six months prior to the incident. The OK2SAY technicians did an outstanding job triaging the tips as many tips involved the same information as tips that had already been addressed. OK2SAY shared information with the FBI as much of the same information was being forwarded to their agency.

A couple of examples were provided such as an instance in which the OK2SAY team received a tip involving a threat to what was identified only as “CHS Schools.” The technicians managed to link it to a tip from 2018 and were able to determine it was not a valid threat. In addition to threats made on social media, OK2SAY also received tips about threats made by old-fashioned means such as writing on walls. The OK2SAY team is beginning follow-up on the tips and a number of apprehensions and arrests have been made.

Lt. Colonel Kelenske asked D/Lieutenant Layman to relay the commission’s appreciation to the OK2SAY staff.

B. 2022 Competitive School Safety Grant Program – Ms. Becker Bennett

Application materials for the upcoming round of grants will be made available on February 1, 2022. \$10 million has been appropriated for this fiscal year. The eligible expenditures and the application are similar to previous years and will be due on March 24, 2022; award announcements will begin April 29, 2022. Applicants are limited to \$50,000 per school building and \$250,000 per district as per the appropriation language.

Ms. Newell asked how many grant awards had been made in the past. Mr. Guthaus stated that the GCSD had made a total of 477 grant awards.

C. Emergency Operations Plan – Lt. Colonel Kelenske

The OSS is continuing to update the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) guidance, which is an ongoing process. Schools have advised that developing and updating EOPs is difficult to maintain when they have so many other issues that need to be handled. Lt. Colonel Kelenske stated that this is a reason why the local school safety positions are necessary.

i. **Mental/Behavioral Health Considerations – Mr. Guerrant, Mr. Knezek, and Ms. Newell**

31n funding for onsite mental health services has grown since 2019, but not nearly enough. 31o funding will provide funding to schools to help hire psychologists, social workers, nurses etc. It is difficult for schools to find qualified personnel to hire using 31o funds, but the principal issue for most schools is funding.

The MDHHS MIKidsNow initiative focuses on children’s behavioral health with the purpose of removing barriers to mental health access. The initiative is still in the early stages and more information will be available later.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is how behavioral supports are provided and students connected to mental health services. Students’ needs must be identified and primary educators and mental health personnel must work together as a seamless team. The

MDHHS is working with Central Montcalm Schools as a model district. MTSS connects with behavioral threat assessment.

D. OK2SAY

i. Reporting/Tips Update – D/Lieutenant Layman

OK2SAY staffing was down to four technicians in December and is now down to three technicians. Two new technicians have been hired and will start on February 3, 2022, pending final approval from Human Resources, giving the program a full staff of six technicians in February.

Statistics are currently being compiled for the 2021 Annual Report. Preliminary statistics indicate that OK2SAY received 6,255 tips, which is a substantially higher number than last year (due to Oxford). The top three tip categories were: planned school attacks, threats, and other (depression, anxiety, etc.). In October, 423 tips were received which was a 97 percent increase from October 2020. In November, 498 tips were received and in December 3,567 tips were received which was a 2,709 percent increase over December 2020. Tips have increased and the trend indicates students are using the program to help break the code of silence. In October, 13 planned school attack tips were received for “CHS Schools.” OK2SAY technicians managed to track the threat to Missouri and alerted schools in Michigan that there was no valid threat. In another tip, a student posted a screenshot of a handgun on Snapchat captioned “you better watch out.” The tip was referred to law enforcement and the student was apprehended.

Ms. Newell asked how it is determined that there is no potential threat and what a district needs to do to determine that there is no threat.

Lt. Colonel Kelenske stated that when a threat occurs, schools need to include law enforcement agencies and mental health personnel. The stigma that a situation is treated as a criminal incident because law enforcement is involved needs to be broken, as there is a need for a multidisciplinary approach. Schools should emphasize that threats are vetted by law enforcement. Information on threat vetting should be communicated to parents.

Ms. Newell moved to task the OSS with the review of the EOP guidance and, in general, to identify what information should be disseminated by schools both pre- and post-incident, what parents/guardians can and should know, and what questions parents should be asking school officials about school safety. Ms. Galbraith supported the motion and all were in favor.

ii. Program Update – Mr. Guthaus

OK2SAY conducted 198 virtual seminars with over 50,000 attendees. There was a direct correlation between the presentations and an influx of tips. OK2SAY received 500 requests for promotional materials over the holidays and a free OK2SAY advertisement was played in 258 screenings at movie theaters.

Ms. Newell asked about funding for promoting OK2SAY. Currently, funds from the Department of Attorney General exist, but it is felt that promotional funding needs to be added into the OSS budget.

E. MCOLES Update – Mr. Bourgeois

Recommendation 17 to define roles of individuals involved in school safety and security into three tiers has been completed. Recommendation 18 requires specific training for those involved in school safety and security; MCOLES personnel have been discussing this recommendation with the legislature, as requiring training for law enforcement personnel requires legislation and funding. Recommendation 19, which requires ongoing training and continuing education for those involved in school safety and security, also needs legislation to be passed in order to be implemented.

Recommendation 21, ensuring MCOLES provided additional guidance regarding sources of training, was completed but now needs to be updated. National Association of School Resource Officers training could be used for school resource officers (SROs) and security officers.

F. OSS Projects – Mr. Guthaus

The OSS continues to work with Michigan State University under the federal BJA grant to develop mental health training for SROs. A six-module training is being developed and will be implemented by Michigan Virtual, a K-12 online school program. The development of the first module is well underway.

The OSS has support from other state organizations and school personnel to develop guidance and best practices for behavioral threat assessment. Training will be provided across the state. The OSS has interim guidance and resources from other states available on their website.

G. Gun Lock Initiative – Mr. Gard

Safe storage of firearms is critical. Ms. Galbraith advised that schools in Oakland County have made resolutions about communicating safe gun storage practices to families and asked what the OSS could do to support districts. Lt. Colonel Kelenske stated that the OSS has previously provided guidance through gun safe storage initiatives and newsletters but could provide additional guidance. Lt. Colonel Kelenske stated that more extensive research would need to be done on statistics regarding how many guns related to school shootings have come from the home. Aside from providing guidance about firearm safety and safe storage, there is not much that can be done without legislation.

Ms. Galbraith stated that the Be SMART for Kids program was a free resource that could be used to help educate families about safe gun storage practices. Ms. Galbraith moved to task the OSS to research the Be SMART for Kids program and information about safe gun storage that could be shared with families. Ms. Newell supported the motion. All were in favor.

H. New Michigan House School Safety Task Force – F/Lieutenant Williams

The goal of the new eight-member task force is to make school safety recommendations to the legislature. The task force intends to develop policies and solutions to eliminate violent acts. There is a need for more SROs and the task force is working to pass funding to support additional SROs. The task force will be limited to this session. The Michigan Attorney General is also creating a task force on school safety and is planning a statewide tour to seek community input.

I. Discussion

i. School Safety Measures

People gravitate towards school safety measures such as restricting backpacks, installing door locks and barricade devices, duress/panic alarm systems, security cameras, and metal detectors. Often, implementation of these measures is an emotional response and the potential downsides are not always considered. The OSS is working to develop brief one- to two-page documents that document the pros and cons of each school safety measure. Federal organizations housed at the University of Michigan will be assisting in the research and development of these documents and the OSS will be meeting with them on January 31, 2022.

This is expected to help schools with limited resources implement the best safety measures possible with limited funds. Continuous improvement and long-term sustainment should be included.

J. Executive Office of the Governor – Ms. Richard

Governor Whitmer is giving the State of the State address tonight and will begin by honoring the victims of the Oxford shooting. The budget will be available on February 9, 2022, and school safety will be a focus.

Public Comment

Mr. Anthony Beattie commented that it would be beneficial for the commission to weigh in on the school safety measures and encourage prioritization. He was concerned that schools could be sidetracked by considering one measure as a solution instead of focusing on the big picture.

There were no additional public comments.

Adjournment

Chief Plaga motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was supported by Mr. Johnson. The motion was approved by all.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m.