

A photograph of a school hallway. On the left, there is a row of blue lockers. In the center, a doorway with a wooden frame and glass panels leads into a classroom. The classroom has desks, a chalkboard, and a bulletin board. The floor is tiled in a pattern of red, blue, and white. The text "Act 55 of 2022: Summary of School Safety Provisions" is overlaid in white, bold font. A white horizontal line is positioned below the title.

Act 55 of 2022: Summary of School Safety Provisions

Presented to the School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC)

July 27, 2022

Act 55 of 2022: PA School Code Amendments

- [HB 1642](#) was signed into law by the Governor as part of the FY 2022-23 budget on July 8, 2022, becoming Act 55 of 2022.
- 137-page legislation enacts numerous amendments to the PA School Code of 1949, including new school safety and security provisions.
 - Amends [Article XIII-B \(School Safety and Security\)](#) and [Article XIII-E \(Threat Assessment\)](#).



What Does Act 55 Cover?



- School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC) membership;



- Survey of school mental health services;



- New, formula-based grant programs for School Safety and Security and School Mental Health;



- New School-based Mental Health Internship Grant Program within the PA Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA);



- New requirements for School Safety and Security Coordinators;



- Training and professional development requirements for current and future school personnel; and



- Threat assessment training, education, and awareness requirements.

SSSC Membership Provisions

- Amended Section 1302-B(e), which establishes that appointed SSSC members shall serve a four-year term and may be appointed for no more than one additional consecutive term.
- Clarifies that members that derive service from the office they hold shall serve as long as they are in that office.

Survey of School Mental Health Services

- Added Section 1305.1-B, requiring the School Safety and Security Committee to develop and distribute a new survey instrument to measure mental health services in school entities, including:
 - *Whether the school entity currently offers mental health education in the classroom and, if offered, how many employees provide the programming;*
 - *Whether the school entity has adopted mental or behavioral health curriculum as part of its health education or other subject areas and, if offered, how many employees provide the programming and who provides the programming;*
 - *The manner in which mental health programming is offered;*
 - *Whether any of the tiered supports from the Committee's Behavioral Health and School Climate Baseline Criteria have been met by the school entity; and*
 - *Resources/support needed to improve programming and to meet or increase tiered supports for the Baseline Criteria.*

Survey of School Mental Health Services

- Survey must be adopted by the Committee no later than August 1, 2022. It shall be part of the School Mental Health Grant application.
- Responses are confidential and exempt from Right-To-Know Law. *NOTE: Committee can release information in the aggregate.
- School entities must complete the survey instrument by August 31, 2022.
- School entities are school districts; intermediate units; area career and technical schools; and charter, regional charter and cyber charter schools.

School Safety & Mental Health Funding

- \$190M total state funds appropriated for School Safety and Security and School Mental Health Grants (\$95M each) in FY 2022-23.
- \$5 million allocated to support coordinator and school employee training
 - \$200,000 carve-out for Safe2Say Training needs
- \$5 million allocated to support School Mental Health Internship Program

School Safety & Mental Health Grants:

Allowable Uses of Grant Funding (2022-23)

- Amends Section 1306-B(j) of Article XIII-B to update existing allowable activities and add new eligible expenses for FY 2022-23 focused on expanding access to mental health (MH) services, resources, training, and supports.
- Seven new categories added to bring total of available activities to 30. See HB 1642 (Act 55 School Safety and Security Language) document for full listing.

School Safety & Mental Health Grants

- \$95M for School Safety and Security Grants (Physical Security Enhancements)
- \$95M for School Mental Health Grants
- SSSC must make the grant application and mental health survey available by no later than August 1, 2022.
- School entities must make application by August 31, 2022.
- Again, eligible school entities are school districts, IUs, CTCs, and charters.

School Safety & Mental Health Grants

- Grants are formula-based established by Act 55.
- School districts will receive a base amount of \$100,000 for mental health activities and \$100,000 for physical security enhancements for a total minimum of \$200,000, plus additional funding based on their 2020-21 adjusted average daily membership.
- Intermediate units, area career and technical centers, and charter schools (i.e., charters, regional charters and cyber charters) will receive a base amount of \$70,000 for mental health activities and \$70,000 for physical security enhancements for a total of \$140,000 each.

‘Baseline Criteria’ & Grant Funds

- School entities who have not met ‘Tier 1’ criteria of SSSC’s [baseline standards](#) must utilize grant funding to support initiatives that would help meet that level.
- School entities that have already met ‘Tier 1’ baseline criteria may use school safety (physical) grant funding for other allowable purposes delineated under section 1306-B(j) (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (7), (8), (9), (11), (12), (13), (14), (16), (18), (22), and (23).
- School entities that have already met ‘Tier 1’ baseline criteria may use school mental health grant funding for allowable purposes delineated under section 1306-B(j) (6), (10), (15), (17), (19), (20), (21), (23), (24), (25), (26), (27), (28), (29) and (30).

School Safety & Security Coordinators

School Entities' Responsibility

- School entities must ensure appointment of a School Safety and Security Coordinator within 30 days of the Act and/or vacancy and provide contact info to PCCD.
- Coordinator contact information can be supplied to PCCD via the following link:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QMSGSDX>

School Safety & Security Coordinators

- Develop required training criteria for School Safety and Security Coordinators, addressing minimum criteria outlined in Section 1316-B (School safety and security coordinator training) by September 30, 2022.
- Training must cover: 1) physical assessments and physical security; 2) emergency preparedness; 3) leadership; 4) coordination and communication with law enforcement and emergency personnel; 5) appropriate staffing; 6) situational awareness; 7) trauma-informed approaches; 8) behavioral health awareness; 9) suicide and bullying awareness; 10) substance use disorder awareness; 11) emergency procedures and training drills.
- Adopt required training hours for School Safety and Security Coordinators, not to exceed seven hours of training annually (in addition to other training requirements for administrators).

School Safety & Security Coordinators

- Make School Safety and Security Coordinator training criteria available to school administrators and groups, organizations, or providers.
- Review and update, if needed, the coordinator training criteria at least every three years.
- Provide training to support school entities.
- Coordinators must complete required training within one year of the availability of training, in accordance with criteria established by the SSSC.

Training & Professional Development

- SSSC must develop and adopt minimum training standards for school employees on situational awareness, trauma-informed approaches, behavioral health awareness, suicide and bullying awareness, substance use awareness, emergency training drills, and threat assessment by September 30, 2022.
- All school entities shall provide school employees with at least 3 hours of training annually as follows:
 - At least 1 hour of training specifically focused on emergency training drills (in-person delivery only) and on threat assessment (online or in-person delivery).
 - A minimum of two hours of training (online or in-person) on one or more of the following topics: situational awareness; trauma-informed approaches; behavioral health awareness; suicide and bullying awareness; and/or substance use awareness.

Training & Professional Development

- All training completed must comply with minimum standards adopted by the SSSC.
- Develop and provide ‘geographically disbursed’ training at no cost for school entities aligned with adopted standards (can be done virtually or in-person, and in partnership with a provider).
- Review and, if necessary, revise/update training standards at least every three years.

Threat Assessment Training & Education

Act 55 of 2022 amended [Article XIII-E \(Threat Assessment\)](#) to establish new training, education, and awareness requirements:

- All school entities must annually facilitate opportunities for members of threat assessment team to complete group or individualized training.
- School entities must also annually ensure that students, school employees, and parents/guardians are informed of the existence and purpose of the school entity's threat assessment team(s).
- School entities must provide threat assessment training per year to school employees (online or in-person).

Educator Preparation Programs

- Approved educator preparation programs and alternative programs must include a minimum of three semester hours or their equivalent of instruction incorporating subjects of training listed under section 1310-B(1)(i) through (v), aligned with standards approved by the SSSC.
- Requirements take effect for candidates who begin a Pennsylvania preparation program or alternate program after July 1, 2025.

School Mental Health Internship Program

- Establishes a new School-based Mental Health Internship Grant Program within the PA Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) to support eligible individuals enrolled in an educational specialist preparation program.
- \$5M in funding to support the program is transferred from PCCD to PHEAA.
- Through the program, individuals will enter into contracts with PHEAA to work in PA school entities as a school nurse, school psychologist, school counselor, or school social worker for a minimum of three years following completion of their educational specialist preparation program.
- PHEAA is responsible for developing program criteria, including funding levels.

School Mental Health Internship Program

- The statute also establishes an advisory committee within PHEAA to assist in implementation of the programs and make recommendations to identify and reduce barriers to becoming a school-based mental health professional (including best practices from internship programs in other states).
- The advisory committee includes representation from educational specialist preparation programs and other entities (Association of School Psychologists of PA, PA Association of School Social Work Personnel, PA School Counselors Association, PSEA, PSBA, PASBO, PASA, PDE, DOH, AFT, and other members as needed).
- PHEAA must prepare a report for the Governor, Secretary of Education, and General Assembly no later than September 30, 2023 and annually thereafter.

Questions?

Please email RA-CD-SSSC@pa.gov for assistance.

Thank you!