



Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting of the

School Building Projects Advisory Council

December 6, 2023 at 10:00 am

Held via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Video:

[School Building Projects Advisory Council – 12.06.2023-Meeting-Recording.mp4 \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Council Members Present:

First	Last
Alice	Pritchard, Chair
Chlo Anne	Bobrowski
Angela	Cahill
Louis	Casolo
Paul	Hinsch
Antonio	Iadarola
Julia	McFadden
Don	Poulin
Omarys	Vasquez

Members Absent: Lance Hall, William Turner

Departmental staff present:

- David Barkin, DAS
- William Turley, DESPP

1. Call to Order by Chair Alice Pritchard at 10:01 am.
2. September 6th Meeting Minutes adopted and approved unanimously with a motion by Julia McFadden and seconded by Don Poulin.
 - a. Angela Cahill abstained as was not present at September 6th meeting
3. Proposal for review/update process for School Safety Infrastructure Criteria (SSIC)
 - a. Chair Alice Pritchard noted that the Council started a review of the school safety infrastructure criteria in 2022. She thanked members for providing comments, particularly Julia and Angela for their work.
 - b. DAS staff is going to be working with this body throughout the year to do some research and review. DAS has captured the original 2022 feedback and that is also going to be part of what we look at in the coming months.
 - c. We wanted to start by asking our colleagues at the Department of Administrative Services and at the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to share their experiences in reviewing school construction and safety plans. Kermit Thompson and Nicole Velarde have offered to share their perspectives from their various teams. We will also hear from our colleague Jack Butkus who offered to share an external perspective as someone who has been working with a variety of partners as it relates to these criteria.
4. Panel Discussion on School Safety Infrastructure Criteria
 - a. Kermit Thompson, *DAS Office of School Construction and Review*
 - i. Gave an overview of the Plan Approval process relating to school construction. In addition, Kermit shared the SSIC report from 2015 which details the safety and security criteria elements that school districts must consider with priority list school construction projects. He noted several challenges related to the criteria such as the use of protective glass in vestibules and operable window in classrooms. These criteria need further discussion and clarity.
 - ii. Refer to the SSIC Report 2015 and meeting recording for additional details.
 - b. Nicole Velardi, *CT Department Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Region 2 Coordinator*
 - i. Discussed information related to the School Security Infrastructure Competitive Grant Program. Since 2013, there have been six rounds of funding and Nicole explains how the funds have been used including significant investments in cameras, access control and door enhancements. Despite investments, she noted gaps or ambiguities in security needs throughout the past years.
 - ii. Refer to the attached presentation and meeting recording for additional information.
 - c. Jack Butkus, *Licensed Architect & Senior Project Manager, Arcadis U.S. & Retired CT Building Official*
 - i. Used the SSIC Report from 2015 to provide a narrative of what school districts have done to improve safety infrastructure in school building projects. He focused specifically on the application of the building code in certain projects and potential conflict with criteria in some cases. He also highlighted areas that are problematic such as those criteria that appear to be both mandatory and voluntary based on their language. In addition, he noted the need for a technical compliance manual to guide districts and their planning partners. His presentation noted several areas in need for further review.
5. Questions for the Panel and Open Discussion
 - a. The committee held a discussion based around questions related to the three presentations.
 - b. Question was raised about status of Appendix E in the SSIC document and why it was never completed.

- c. Suggested that DAS look at what other states are doing, what current waivers are requested, etc. Also suggested that they engage broad range of knowledgeable experts, architects, security industry professionals, local police and fire officials, etc. in the revision process.
 - d. Several members and participants agreed that the classroom is the last layer of defense in an emergency, and we can improve upon safety infrastructure and practices.
 - e. Council members suggested requiring a security subcommittee of building committees when a project is being put together to review the process.
6. Reviewed and approved the 2024 Meeting Calendar with motion from Angela and second from Julia. Motion passed unanimously. Meghan will send invites for member calendars for 2024.
- a. March 6, 2024 at 10:00 AM
 - b. June 5, 2024 at 10:00 AM
 - c. September 11, 2024 at 10:00 AM
 - d. December 4, 2024 at 10:00 AM
7. With no further business, the Chair requested motion to adjourn. Motion by Don Poulin and second from Paul Hinsch was approved unanimously and meeting was adjourned at 11:07 AM.

Presentation by Nicole Velardi, Region 2 Coordinator at the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection

School Security Infrastructure Competitive Grant Program: 10 Year Review

Nicole Velardi
Region 2 Coordinator
Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection

Slide 2

Overview

- Purpose is to provide an assessment of the SSGP
- Identify:
 - Funding made available
 - Use of funds
 - Gaps, ambiguities, best practices

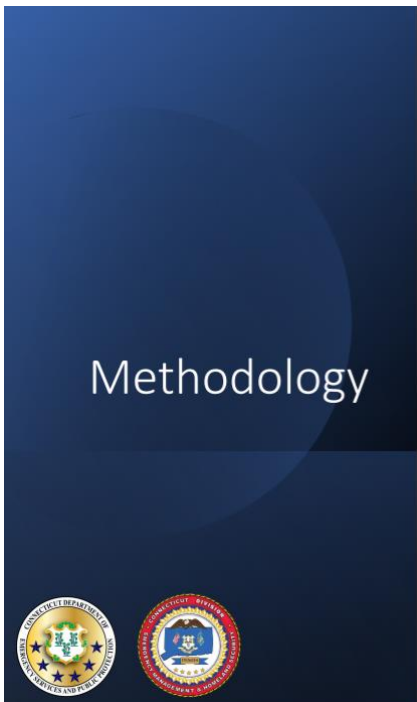
Slide 3

The slide features a dark blue background with a large, semi-transparent white circle in the center. The word "Background" is written in white, sans-serif font across the middle of the circle. At the bottom left of the slide, there are two circular logos: the Seal of the Connecticut Department of Education and the Seal of the State of Connecticut.

Background

- Implemented in 2013 under Connecticut Public Act 13-3
- Development or improvement of schools' security infrastructure
- Review includes 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018, and 2021 SSGP

Slide 4



The slide features a dark blue background with a large, semi-transparent white circle in the center. The word "Methodology" is written in white, sans-serif font across the middle of the circle. At the bottom left of the slide, there are two circular logos: the Seal of the Connecticut Department of Education and the Seal of the State of Connecticut.

Methodology

- Quantitative and qualitative data collected
- Historical funding information
 - Grantee/school district
 - Public
 - Nonpublic
 - Award amounts
 - Equipment purchased
 - Cameras (interior and exterior)
 - Door enhancements
 - Window enhancements
 - Vestibule or double-door access
 - Access control
 - Alarm systems (non-fire)
 - Panic buttons
 - Perimeter security
 - Security lighting
 - Intercom or public address systems
 - Radios
 - Portable screening devices
 - Vendor-provided training
 - Interoperability (2017, 2018 only)

Slide 5



Methodology

- School statistics:
 - National Center for Education Statistics
 - CT Data
 - Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation
- School Safety Infrastructure Council (SSIC)
- Other states' programs

Slide 6

Results & Findings: Funding

Round of Funding	Bond Funding Allocated	Number of Projects Funded
Round 1 -2013 SSGP (Public only)	\$21,300,000.00	604
Round 2 – 2014 SSGP	\$22,000,000.00	446
Public	\$19,800,000.00	381
Non-Public	\$2,200,000.00	65
Round 3 -2017 SSGP	\$10,000,000.00	190
Public	\$9,000,000.00	179
Non-Public	\$1,000,000	11
Round 4 – 2018 SSGP	\$10,000,000.00	200
Public	\$9,000,000.00	190
Non-Public	\$1,000,000	10
Round 5 – 2021 SSGP	\$5,000,000.00	105
Public	\$4,500,000.00	90
Non-Public	\$500,000.00	15
Round 1 – 2023 MMSSGP	\$5,000,000.00	225
Public	\$4,500,000.00	216
Nonpublic	\$500,000.00	9
Round 6 – 2023 SSGP	\$10,000,000.00	207
Public	\$9,000,000.00	165
Nonpublic	\$1,000,000.00	42
Round 2 – 2023 MMSSGP	\$5,000,000.00	160
Public	\$4,500,000.00	144
Nonpublic	\$500,000.00	16
TOTAL	\$88,300,000.00	2,137
Public	\$81,600,000.00	1,969
Nonpublic	\$6,700,000.00	168

\$68.3 million was allocated to **1,545 projects**

- \$63.6 million allocated to public schools for 1,444 projects
- \$4.7 million allocated to nonpublic schools for 101 projects

2023 - Estimated number of projects

Slide 7

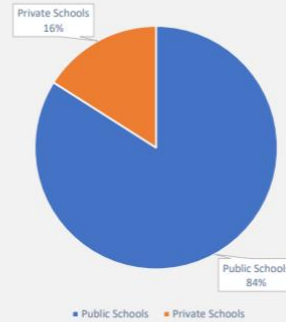


Slide 8

Results & Findings:
School Statistics



Public and Private Schools in Connecticut



- CT Data (2023) – 1,213 public educational organizations registered in Connecticut
- National Center for Educational Statistics (2020) – 231 private schools in Connecticut
 - Not including private pre-schools and daycares

Slide 9



Results & Findings:
Gaps, Ambiguities & Best Practices



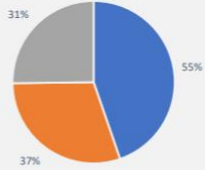
- Nonpublic schools permitted 10% of funding, \$100,000 budget gap with a 50% match requirement
 - New Jersey – each participating nonpublic school receives funding “equal to the product of the rate per pupil...and the school enrollment of the last school day prior to October 16 of the preceding year.”
- Unfunded security needs
 - Pennsylvania – identified a flat-rate set aside (up to \$450,000 in 2019-20) for eligible school entities, competitive application for additional funding
 - Has since shifted to a formula-based model to identify a set-aside amount for each school
 - Average daily membership > 3,900 – minimum allocation of \$45,000
 - Average daily membership 2,100-3,900 – minimum allocation of \$40,000
 - Average daily membership 1,200-2,100 – minimum allocation of \$35,000
 - Average daily membership < 1,200 – minimum allocation of \$30,000
- Eligibility recommendations
 - Report of the School Safety Infrastructure Council (2018)

Slide 10

Results & Findings: Gaps, Ambiguities & Best Practices

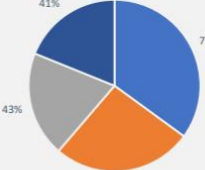


Physical Safety Training Needs



Category	Percentage
Behavior Threat Assessments	55%
Safety and Security Assessments	37%
Digital Threat Assessments	31%

Most Prevalent Safety Concerns in Schools



Category	Percentage
Cyberbullying	76%
Bullying	57%
Mental Health	41%
Culture and Climate	43%

- Unmet needs
 - Connecticut K-12 Schools Safety and Security Needs Assessment (2022)