



2022 Safety and Security Coordinator's Report
Safety and Security Coordinator: Karen Shepherd, CEO
Report: Board Approved on September 20, 2022

Section 1309-B of the PA Public School Code requires the School Safety and Security Coordinator to make a report no later than June 30, of each year, to the school entity's Board of Directors. This report will include information on the school entity's current safety and security practices that identify strategies to improve school safety and security.

What are the current practices your school uses to improve school safety? (Select all that apply)

Policy development
Software/Technology
Youth-based programs
Staff training
School Mental Health/Behavioral Health Personnel
Assessment and Planning

In 2018 Pace School completed a safety assessment, through a contracted evaluator, updated and revised the school's Emergency Response Plan and completed active shooter and other safety training and drills with staff and students. Since that time, the Pace Emergency Response Team reviews, evaluates and modifies as necessary the Emergency Response Plan on an annual basis. In April of 2022, the Churchill Police Department reviewed the Pace Emergency Response Plan for compliance with established best practice. They had no recommendations for corrections or revisions.

During this safety assessment, quick and efficient communication throughout the building was identified as an area requiring improvement during moments of crisis, but especially if a life-threatening emergency were to occur. Pace purchased two-way radios for every staff member and installed a "booster" antenna on the building allowing for quick and efficient communication both inside and outside of the school. This enhanced communication allows for swift action if/when an emergency occurs, including the need for evacuation.

All classrooms and entrances to the building are numbered on the exterior of the building and the Churchill Police and Fire Department have a building map to assist if a quick response should one be necessary.

Regarding student practices, Pace completed initial and subsequent annual crisis management and de-escalation strategy training to assist students experiencing emotional or behavioral crisis. As part of our physical restraint reduction initiative, we have implemented, and complete annual training in, the use of UKERU which is a trauma informed de-escalation practice. This included the purchase of UKERU blocking pads for every classroom and shared communal areas throughout the building to avoid direct contact between staff and escalated/aggressive students.

During the 2018-2019 school year Pace introduced the Mind Up curriculum that teaches mindfulness strategies that help students remain calm and centered throughout the day. The entire Pace staff was initially trained in the curriculum and refresher training is conducted annually. The use of the MindUP instructional materials has been incorporated into the school's curriculum.

Pace School is a small school, Approved Private School with fewer than 140 students. Daily six (6) mental health therapists and/or School Social Workers are present to assist students as needed, and to provide Social and Emotional Learning classes and activities. These individuals also assist with parent engagement and communication and attendance monitoring and Attendance Improvement Plan development. Pace school also has an on-site licensed Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) which provides intensive mental health services for up to sixty students. With this program, a psychiatrist is onsite three days per week to provide support and guidance to the PHP students and classroom staff. Attending to the student's mental wellness is a large component of the Pace School program.

Due to the nature of the students served at Pace, all staff are trained in identifying high-risk behaviors (e.g., suicidal, or homicidal ideation, comment, or action; bullying or verbally or physically threatening behavior including on social media) and are trained in the response protocols for Pace. Immediately upon becoming aware of a threatening situation, the School Operations Coordinator and the student's Mental Health Therapist (MHT) or Social Worker (SW) is notified. The MHT/SW complete a high-risk assessment with the student to determine level of risk (low, medium, high) and then collaborates with members of the team to determine next steps to ensure safety. Next steps include contact with the family and potential police contact or psychiatric hospitalization. The "Duty to Warn" procedure outlines the steps to be taken to inform an individual if there has been a threat made to harm them. The police are notified immediately if the threat is assessed to be high-risk, includes a weapon or is made against the school.

Searches of student backpacks and purses and all students being searched using a metal detecting wand occurs each morning when students arrive.

Additionally, all staff and students are trained in the Safe2Say <https://www.safe2saypa.org/> Something process and posters are displayed throughout the school. Safe2Say Something information is also posted on the school's website and sent home to families.

With the assistance of the teacher and MHT/SW, all students develop a "Safety Plan" that can be used when the student is feeling emotionally dysregulated. This safety plan contains self-identified activities the student can do to help them calm and return to a baseline level of emotional regulation. Each student also has an Individual Behavior Support Plan and Individual Crisis Management Plan that also has strategies and response techniques specific to that student and their general behavioral profile. These plans are reviewed and modified as necessary any time a high-risk assessment has been conducted.

Another layer of response to any threat is a Root Cause Analysis. This process is conducted by the staff involved in the threat assessment and the student's classroom team to determine if the threat assessment protocols were followed and if there needs to be any modification, revision, or retraining of those protocols.

The school has a Safety Committee that meets monthly to discuss and review staff/student injuries and identify any other facilities issues related to safety that may need to be addressed.

An electronic "help-desk" is readily available on the Pace School website for staff to report any broken items or areas that may present concern for physical safety directly to the Supervisor of Building and Grounds.

**What strategies does your school intend to use in the coming year, to improve school safety?
(Select all that apply)**

Software/Technology

Staff Training

School Mental/Behavioral Health Personnel

Assessment and Planning

Staff and students will continue training in cyber security and cyber etiquette.

A Committee of students is being created to provide them a forum to discuss issues within the school, including safety, security, and anti-bullying practices.

The Churchill Police will be conducting an on-site Active Shooter training and drill for staff. Staff and students will be participating in several emergency response training related to intruders in the building and active shooter drills.

All the conditions mentioned in the previous section will continue with annual evaluation of effectiveness and modifications made, as necessary.

An evaluation the schools current Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) will be conducted with the assistance of a contracted facilitator/trainer and modifications will be made as identified for improvement.

Have any of the safety strategies used by your school changed due to COVID-19?

As a result of COVID many of our safety strategies have changed including, but not limited to:

- Limiting visitors in the building to only those essential to maintain the facility or providing direct services to students
- Changing traffic patterns within the building eliminating students moving in the hallways at the same time
- Modifying the cafeteria schedule to reduce the number of students in the cafeteria at any given time
- Creation of isolation rooms near the health office to separate symptomatic students from others until they could be picked up from school
- The use of online ZOOM technology for IEP meetings, remote instruction, when necessary, staff meetings and trainings and parent involvement
- Changing the student pick-up procedures to ensure less crossing of traffic, both pedestrian and vehicle, and eliminating the need for parents to enter the building

Threat Assessment Team and Summary Report for 2021-2022 SY

Pace School is partially compliant with Section 1309-B of the PA Public School Code. Policies and procedures are in place as required; however, the Safety Coordinator's report was not presented to the Board in June. It is scheduled for presentation to the Board for review in the September Board meeting. During the 2022-2023 school year the full Safety and Security Assessment will be completed, and summary of findings will be reported to the Board during the June 2023 Board meeting. for the 2022-2023 school year will be presented to the Board. Additionally, the Safety and Security Coordinator's Report, including the Threat Assessment Summary, will be made available on the Pace Website.

Pace School has one established threat assessment team. This team incorporates the individuals responsible for completing High-risk-assessments with students and facilitating any follow-up necessary, including police contact or psychiatric hospitalization.

During the 2021-2022 School year, there were approximately thirty-five threats assessed.

The Threat Assessment Team is comprised of:

- a. School health professional:
 - i. School Nurse, Becky Reynolds
- b. Mental Health Professionals:
 - i. Psychiatrists; Dr. Cox and Dr. Kannadan
 - ii. Mental Health Therapists; Brad Lathom, Jared Slodowick, Molly Wolfson
 - iii. Social Workers; Chris Seitz, Danielle Kolos, Keri Schreyer
- c. Special educators:
 - i. All school staff are trained to identify the types of behaviors and/or circumstances that would necessitate a Threat Assessment. They participate in the Threat Assessment process as they are often the first individuals to become aware of a threat being present.
- d. School administration:
 - i. Principal, Nathan Leeman
 - ii. Clinical Director, Kelly Schmitt
 - iii. Training and Development coordinator, Dan Showalter
- e. School safety coordinator or a designee of that office:
 - i. Karen Shepherd, Chief Executive Officer
- f. Law enforcement agency representation (as needed)
 - i. Primary collaboration with Churchill Police, but also with Forest Hills and Wilkins Township Police as necessary
- g. Individual identified by the school entity to receive reports from the Safe2Say program (as needed)
 - i. Principal, Nathan Leeman
 - ii. CEO, Karen Shepherd
 - iii. Clinical Director, Kelly Schmitt
- h. Juvenile probation professional (as needed and if assigned to a specific student).

Interactions with outside law enforcement

The police were contacted on four occasions to address aggressive students and/or students that had threatened to commit violence against a peer or to the school in general. On three occasions the students were suspended from school, however no legal action was taken by the school or the victims of the threat or action. On, one occasion, the student was detained by the police and charges were filed due to aggression toward the police.

The police were also contacted on numerous occasions to inform them that a student had left the building and was in the community. On some of these occasions, the call was to simply inform the police. On other occasions it was to gain their assistance in returning the student to the school. A meeting was held by the CEO and Principal of Pace School, The Pace CEO, Principal and Pace Board Member met with the Churchill Police Chief and Mayor in April 2022 to discuss utilization of the Police, their concern specifically about the students that run from the building, and general safety and security topics.

Assessment of the operation of the school entity's team.

The Threat Assessment Team operated as expected during the 2021-2022 school year. The systems used to document High-Risk-Assessment Assessment (Threat Assessment) did not work as expected. See below.

Recommendations for improvement of the school entity's threat assessment processes.

Upon review of the practices of the Threat Assessment Team it was determined that the way Threat Assessment information is collected and summarized needs improvement. The information is contained in the individual student record, however, was not maintained in a school wide data collection system, making it difficult to accurately account for the true number of high-risk assessments completed within the school year.

Beginning in the 2022-2023 School year, all high-risk-assessments will be documented in the same electronic database. This should eliminate the problem with collating and analysis of school-wide data.