

October 17, 2025

Dear Cheltenham Community,

As a follow-up to the public comment heard at Tuesday's board meeting, and the numerous conversations I've had and emails I've received regarding student safety and building security, I want the community to know of the actions we are taking to assess the safety and security of our buildings. To this end, Cheltenham School District is partnering with the [Center for Safe Schools \(Pennsylvania\)](#) (CSS) for a thorough audit of its processes and procedures surrounding student safety and building security.

CSS is an initiative of Center for Schools and Communities, a division of Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit. The Center for Safe Schools envisions a Commonwealth where every student and educator learns and works in a climate that is physically secure, emotionally supportive, and academically engaging.

CSS provides specialized Physical and Behavioral Health/School Climate Assessments to help schools align with best practices for safety and student well-being. These assessments are conducted by Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)-approved CSS assessors who evaluate school buildings and environments based on established criteria, producing actionable recommendations tailored to the school's needs.

Center for Safe Schools assessments use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and exceed standards set out by the PCCD Safety and Security Committee in April 2025.

Established in the late 1990s, CSS serves as Pennsylvania's statewide hub for school safety and climate supports, and has become a trusted partner for educators, law enforcement, health professionals, and community agencies. Since its inception, CSS has led major initiatives to promote positive school climates, prevent bullying, and strengthen district capacity in emergency planning and crisis prevention. In 1999, CSS launched the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Network, a lasting example of its commitment to proactive, evidence-based solutions.

CSS is committed to supporting schools, educators, parents/guardians, law enforcement, community partners, and local agencies to develop and practice emergency management and crisis response plans, create positive school climates, implement evidence-based programs, and establish proactive safety measures. Its services address threat assessment, emergency

management, crisis management, mental health, first aid training, and social and emotional learning.

CSS is dedicated to helping schools cultivate safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments. Through training, technical assistance, and access to leading research, CSS empowers districts to:

- Develop and exercise comprehensive Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs)
- Build prevention and intervention systems addressing school climate, social-emotional learning, and threat assessment
- Strengthen partnerships with local agencies and first responders
- Foster a culture of safety, trust, and belonging for every student and staff member

CSD will be engaging the Center for Safe Schools for a physical assessment of the high school to be completed by December. The entire district will follow, including the Administration Building.

The key areas of focus for our district that the Center for Safe Schools will support us with will be in the following areas:

- Emergency / All-Hazards Plans & Coordination - Ensure comprehensive Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) with hazard analysis, reunification, and coordination with first responders. Plans should be updated annually and accommodate individuals with special needs.
- Perimeter, Exterior, and Site Features - Evaluate lighting, fencing, access control, landscaping, and secure placement of dumpsters and storage to eliminate vulnerabilities.
- Building Access, Doors & Interior Layout - Doors must be lockable, monitored, and equipped with viewing panels. Visitor management systems and signage are essential for secure access.
- Security Systems & Technology - Assess surveillance, communication systems, alarm coverage, backup power, and network security to protect infrastructure.
- Policies, Procedures & Training - Evaluate policies for visitor management, key control, drills, and memoranda of understanding (MOU) with law enforcement. Ensure annual staff training and integration with behavioral safety protocols.

This audit is an important step forward in reinforcing our schools as places of learning, belonging, and justice where students feel safe. I am confident this partnership will strengthen our safety efforts and better support our vision that every student will “Belong, Engage, and Seek Justice.”

Thank you for your continued partnership and advocacy.

Respectfully,
Dr. Brian W. Scriven
Superintendent of Schools