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Commission on Crime and Delinquency Highlights Riverside School District's Work to Support Student Mental Health with School Safety Grant Funding

Since January 2024, PCCD has awarded \$90 million in school mental health grants to provide behavioral health supports for K-12 students.

Governor Shapiro proposed and secured this critical funding in the 2023-24 budget to support student mental health and safety.

Taylor, PA — In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, the **Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)** visited Riverside High School to highlight their work to support student mental and behavioral health with PCCD school safety mental health grant funding.

PCCD recently [awarded](#) \$155 million in federal and state school safety funding, including \$90 million in formula-based school mental health grants to support school-based mental and behavioral health supports, including the hiring of counselors and other resources for students. This funding was a top priority proposed by Governor Shapiro and enacted in the 2023-24 state budget. The Governor has doubled down on this significant investment in his proposed 2024-25 budget, again showing the importance of youth mental health and wellbeing to the Shapiro-Davis Administration.

"The most recent data from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey shows that four in 10 students reported feeling depressed or sad most days, and the number of students reporting self-harm, suicide ideation, and suicide attempts has increased in recent years, said **PCCD Executive Director Mike Pennington**. "The numbers don't lie— mental health concerns are prevalent among our youth. At the state level we will continue to ensure that Pennsylvania schools have the resources they need to provide the mental health services and support that our kids need to live their best lives."

Along with hundreds of other school entities around Pennsylvania, Riverside School District received more than \$459,000 in school safety grant funding across three 2023-24 solicitations, including almost \$119,000 to support student mental health. With their mental health grant funding, Riverside plans to support a mental health supervisor for the district to oversee the

professional mental health staff and a mental health and wellness coordinator responsible for educational activities for students on the topics of healthy eating habits and physical exercise, and to provide mentoring during out of school time.

Riverside School District's Mental Health Matters initiative is focused on improving access to care through a whole person approach to mental health. Using a focused educational approach with students and staff, the district is addressing the individual challenges youth face and reducing the stigma that remains around mental health. Since the start of the 2023-24 school year, Riverside School District's counseling department has received over 170 referrals from students, staff, families, or community agencies that have been promptly responded to within the natural environment of the school setting. Riverside School District's timely response to at-risk students is a direct result of the additional Licensed Professional Counselors and supervisory staff made possible by PCCD school safety grant funding.

"The unwavering dedication of our mental health team has not only erased stigma and nurtured our students' well-being but they have also sculpted a foundation of resilience, ensuring every child at Riverside School District thrives, not just academically, but in life," said **Riverside School District Superintendent Paul Brennan**.

The school safety grant program is set up to advance PCCD's School Safety and Security Committee's goal of ensuring that all Pennsylvania students can learn in safe, healthy school environments by helping school entities address basic safety needs and mental health services identified in the Committee's [Revised Baseline Criteria Standards](#).

For a full list of school safety grant awards, including dollar amount and school entities approved for funding, visit [PCCD's School Safety and Security webpage](#).

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