

Office of School Safety

Grants and Community Services Division

September 2020



Introduction

Greetings from the Office of School Safety!

The Michigan State Police (MSP), Office of School Safety (OSS) is committed to delivering quality services to schools throughout the state of Michigan. By fostering communication with law enforcement, the OSS will promote strategies to encourage safe and secure learning environments that reduce threats, build trust, and improve the quality of life for K-12 students in Michigan.

Michigan has been at the forefront of school safety efforts since 1999, when state legislation first directed school officials, local law enforcement, and other key stakeholders to report and share information regarding incidents and persons that could pose a significant risk to the safety of students, staff, or school property. Over the past 20 years, Michigan has implemented multiple school safety initiatives including funding for building safety and security, issuing planning and response guidelines, and instituting confidential tip lines. In 2003, Michigan's schools were identified as critical infrastructure, allowing them to directly benefit from homeland security grants. In 2005, the Michigan legislature became the first in the nation to mandate lock-down drills in schools, which were to be coordinated with local first responders. The All-hazards Emergency Operations Planning (EOP) Guidance for Schools and the corresponding EOP template were released and distributed to all schools and law enforcement agencies in 2014. Also included were hazard-specific quick reference guides for classrooms and offices.

The OSS was formed under the authority of Public Act 435 of 2018 and established as a section within the MSP, Grants and Community Services Division (GCSD). In accordance with the legislation, and through a partnership with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), the OSS has the following goals:

- Assist in the development of model practices for school safety and engage with local law enforcement agencies to assess school buildings for which EOPs are being developed.
- Seek and apply for federal funds relating to school safety and reducing violence and disruptions in schools. This includes federal funding for alternative schools or programs.
- Create and administer a grant program to disburse competitive school safety grants to improve the safety and security of school buildings, students, and staff.
- Develop and offer training to school staff on school safety.

One of the roles of the GCSD is to manage and administer federal, state, and private grants, applications, and awards. Through partnerships with numerous government agencies and community groups, the GCSD works to bring the MSP into the forefront of community engagement and outreach. The OSS will enhance safety and security measures in Michigan's K-12 schools by providing model practices, safety assessments, training, and grant writing and administration.

Meet the Staff [\(click on name to email\)](#)

- **[Ms. Nancy Becker Bennett, Division Director](#)**
Ms. Becker Bennett has 24 years of state and federal grant writing and administration experience. She has led multiple statewide projects for the MSP, including chairing the 2013 statewide School Safety Task Force, overseeing the development of the MSP's community policing plans (2014) and the original 21 grant-funded Community Service Troopers (2011), and coordinating the statewide rollout of the MSP Angel Program. Ms. Becker Bennett received her bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Michigan and her master's degree in justice from the American University in Washington, D.C.

➤ **Spl/Lt. E. Scott Seida, Section Manager**

Spl/Lieutenant Seida is a 20-year veteran of the MSP and currently serves as section manager and commander of the OSS. His experience includes six years of patrol as a trooper and 13 years in an undercover capacity. He was promoted to specialist lieutenant upon being named section manager and commander of the OSS in 2019.

➤ **Ms. Beth Beattie, Departmental Analyst**

Ms. Beattie has been involved in public school education for over 30 years. She holds a bachelor's degree as well as a master's degree in the field of education and has taught elementary and secondary math and science. Prior to joining the OSS, Ms. Beattie spent several years as the International Baccalaureate Coordinator for Redford Union Schools.

➤ **Mr. Jason Guthaus, Departmental Analyst**

Mr. Guthaus is in his second year with the MSP and administered the 2018 and 2019 Competitive School Safety Grant Programs. Prior to joining the MSP, he served roles in K-12 school security, juvenile justice, local law enforcement as a sheriff's deputy, and college campus safety as senior command staff. Mr. Guthaus holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Western Michigan University and a master's degree in youth development from Michigan State University.

➤ **Ms. Logan O'Neal, Departmental Analyst**

Ms. O'Neal has worked for the MSP for over two years. Prior to joining the OSS, she served in the MSP, OK2SAY Unit where she worked to provide actionable intelligence to schools and local law enforcement agencies to prevent mass casualty incidents, youth suicides, bullying, and drug use. Ms. O'Neal holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Grand Valley State University.

COVID-19 Information

Michigan, along with the nation, is facing extraordinary challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic. The OSS is committed to providing support and resources for schools as they resume, whether instruction takes place in person or virtually. Governor Whitmer, the Return to School Advisory Council, and the COVID-19 Task Force on Education published the MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap in June 2020. The Roadmap provides comprehensive guidance on required and recommended safety protocols for schools in accordance with the six-phase MI Safe Start Plan. The Return to School Roadmap can be found [here](#) and a quick reference summary created by the OSS can be found [here](#).

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools will need to make adjustments in order to provide a safe, secure, and comforting learning and working environment. The OSS has created a resource for school administration, teachers, and staff with recommendations and best practices for school safety during this challenging time, available [here](#).



Contact Us

We'd love to hear from you!

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