Joseph M. McKenna, Ph.D.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Degree	Year	University	Major	Thesis/Dissertation
Ph.D.	2016	Texas State University (San Marcos, TX)	Criminal Justice *4.0 GPA	*Examining the Use of Police in Schools: How Roles and Training May Impact Responses to Misconduct*
M.S.	2013	Texas State University (San Marcos, TX)	Criminal Justice *4.0 GPA	*School Disorder and the Current Strategies Utilized: An Analysis of Texas Schools*
B.S.	2011	Roger Williams University (Bristol, Rhode Island)	Criminal Justice/ Psychology	*Examining School Violence in Massachusetts Schools*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Position	Organization	Dates
Founder and CEO	School Safety Solutions, LLC	December 2018 – present
Senior Director of Projects, Programs, & Training	Safe and Sound Schools	Oct 2024 – July 2025
Vice President of Threat Detection and Prevention Program Development	Navigate 360	May 2023 – Oct 2024
Director of School Safety	WestEd	February 2021 – May 2023
Adjunct Instructor	I Love U Guys Foundation	January 2023 – present
National Trainer	School Threat Assessment Consultants LLC	January 2023 – present
Deputy Superintendent	Comal ISD	April 2022 – August 2022
Executive Director of Safety and Student Support	Comal Independent School District	August 2018 – February 2021
Associate Director of Research and Education	Texas School Safety Center-Texas State University	October 2017 – August 2018
Lecturer	School of Criminal Justice, Texas State University	August 2017 – present
Associate Director of Research and Evaluation	Texas School Safety Center-Texas State University	July 2015 – October 2017
Research Program Manager	Texas School Safety Center-Texas State University	September 2014 – July 2015
Research Specialist	Texas School Safety Center-Texas State University	November 2011 – August 2014
Graduate Assistant	Texas School Safety Center-Texas State University	August 2011 – November 2011

Select Professional Duties:

Safe and Sound Schools

- Lead the development and expansion of key programs, creating assets such as training curricula, instructional videos, and other educational resources.
- Build sustainable and scalable training models for each program to increase reach and impact.
- Recruit, build, and manage specialized training teams for each program, ensuring consistency and quality across all offerings.
- Oversee the delivery of high-impact training sessions, both in-person and virtual, for educators, school administrators, and community partners.
- Lead, mentor, and manage a team of program managers, trainers, and project staff, fostering a collaborative and high-performance culture.

Navigate 360

- Develop and oversee program development and implementation services related to threat detection and other prevention efforts aimed at improving school safety and reducing violence.
- Develop programmatic resources to improve implementation fidelity and long-term sustainability of threat detection and prevention efforts for local schools, regions, and states.
- Collaborate with local, state, and federal school safety leaders to develop and support best practices in school safety.

WestEd

- Manage a team of researchers and technical assistance specialists dedicated to improving school safety and student support nationally.
- Seek national, state, and local funding opportunities, including grants and contracts.
- Develop competitive proposals to meet the needs of a diverse set of clients and stakeholders.
- Lead school safety business development for the organization.
- Maintain and develop relationships with partner organizations as well as state and federal funders.
- Provide strategic and tactical level technical assistance to states and local jurisdictions in the areas of school safety and student support.
- Conduct rigorous research in the areas of school safety and student support, including data collection and analyses.
- Widely disseminate products to researchers, elected officials, policy makers, and various stakeholder groups.
- Manage project and departmental budgets.

Comal ISD, Deputy Superintendent

- Oversee all operational aspects of the district, including transportation, facilities, food service, technology, safety, counseling, student support, and land/real estate.
- Managed a diverse team of Executive Director and Directors with the goal of coordinating work among the operational departments of the district to achieve maximum efficiency.
- Coordinate cross-departmental projects to ensure efficiency and fiscal responsibility.
- Oversight over all budgets related to operational aspects of the district, including setting budgetary priorities.
- Served as a member of the Superintendent's Executive Leadership Team and engaged in districtwide strategic planning and progress monitoring;

performance management; budgeting; and other issues impacting the district as whole.
- Served as Superintendent in the absence of the Superintendent.
- Worked collaboratively with community partners to achieve common goals and outcomes.
- Provided input and support to legislative issues and priorities of the district by working with external legal counsel and testifying in front of legislative committees.
- Provide regular presentations to the community, district stakeholders, leadership staff, and Board of Trustees.

Comal ISD, Executive Director of Safety and Student Support

- Responsible for developing and implementing all safety, security, emergency management, and student support/mental health initiatives and programs for the district, which spans 589 sq. miles, 32 campuses, and 25,000 students.
- Oversight over all budgets related to school safety, security, and student support for the district.
- Managed the directors of safety, health services, and student support, and provided guidance and oversight to their teams made up of 15 social workers, 32 nurses, and 20 SROs/security specialist.
- Supported the human resource team with employee investigations, including those employees accused of misconduct, those placed on demonstrative leave, and those who needed mental health supports.
- Served as a member of the Superintendent's Executive Leadership Team and engaged in districtwide strategic planning and progress monitoring; performance management; budgeting; and other issues impacting the district as whole.
- Provided input and support to legislative issues and priorities of the district by working with external legal counsel and testifying in front of legislative committees on safety, security, and student support issues.
- Served on various committees for ESC 20 as an advisor on school safety and student support topics, including the development of services provided by the ESC for the region.
- Coordinated with various first responder agencies and youth-servicing community organizations including mental health providers, juvenile probation, and other program providers to enhance student safety.
- Developed and implemented a comprehensive district wide emergency operations plan that allowed for campuses specific needs to be accounted for and incorporated into emergency response.
- Developed and deployed a comprehensive safety assessment process that allows for a regular and complete review of all areas related to safety and security in the district to track progress towards goals and guide decision making.
- Design and coordinate all district training related to safety and security.
- Developed and manage the districts threat assessment program both at the district level and all 31 campuses.
- Implemented various preparedness and prevention initiatives to support overall district safety.
- Provide regular safety presentations to the community, district stakeholders, leadership staff, and Board of Trustees.

Texas School Safety Center

- Oversight of all center operations related to research, education, training, and technical assistance as it related to school safety in Texas, including all budget and programmatic deliverables.
- Responsible for carrying out all legislative mandates related to school safety in Texas that fell under the center's purview.
- Managed diverse teams of employees, including researchers, subject matter experts, and practitioners in pursuit of programmatic deliverables.
- Developed strong and productive relationships at the local, state, and federal levels with both partners and funders, in the areas of school safety, mental health, violence prevention, juvenile justice, and substance abuse, which were strategically utilized to grow and expand various programs and initiatives.
- Reconceptualized and implemented a new more efficient and sustainable state-wide training model for school safety that included both online and in-person learning and was delivered through the Education Service Centers.
- Developed a sustainable technical assistance model that allowed for a small team of subject matter experts to serve the diversity of districts in Texas on a variety of different issues related to school safety, while using a cadre of SMEs across the state for more specialized and complex issues.
- Reconceptualized and rebranded a statewide school safety conference for educators, law enforcement and school safety professional, which reached capacity for the first time in its first year.
- Collaborated and advised state partners, including the Texas Education Agency and the Governor's Office, on various school safety priorities and issues.
- Lead the development, collection, and reporting of statewide school safety information from over 1,000 school districts.
- Served on the Leadership Team and led the development of the strategic plan for the Center as well as aligned it to Texas State University's Performance Management System.
- Was awarded several research and service delivery grants related to school safety from state and federal funders.

SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

Articles:

Fisher, B., McKenna, J.M., Higgins, E., Maguire, E., & Homer, E., (2022). The alignment between community policing and the work of school resource officers. Police Quarterly. doi:10.1177/10986111211053843

White, S. R., & McKenna, J. M. (2018). Addressing the need for structure and resources in school policing programs. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*.

McKenna, J.M., & White, S. R. (2017). Examining the use of police in schools: How roles may impact responses to student misconduct. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 1-23. doi: 10.1007/s12103-017-9426-2

Elsass, H. J., McKenna, J. M., & Schildkraut, J. (2016). Rethinking crisis communications on campus: An evaluation of faculty and staff perceptions about emergency notification systems. *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*, 1-23. doi: 10.1515/jhsem-2016-0047.

Martinez-Prather, K., McKenna, J. M., & Bowman, S. (2016). The impact of training on discipline outcomes in school-based policing. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 39(3), 478-490.

Martinez-Prather, K., McKenna, J. M., Bowman, S. (2016). The school-to-prison pipeline: How roles of school-based law enforcement officers may impact disciplinary actions. *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice & Criminology*, 4(2), 244-272.

Varano, S., & McKenna, J. M. (2016). Juvenile crime and bullying: The methodological and measurement issues. In S. Bynum, & B. Huebner (Ed.), *The handbook of measurement issues in criminology and criminal justice* (49-68). New York: Wiley & Sons.

Schildkraut, J., McKenna, J. M., & Elsass, H. J. (2015). Understanding crisis communications: Examining students' perceptions about campus notification systems. *Security Journal*, 1-16. doi: 10.1057/sj.2015.9.

McKenna, J. M., & Pollock, J. M. (2014). Law enforcement officers in schools: An analysis of the ethical issues. *Criminal Justice Ethics, 33*(3), 163-184.

McKenna, J. M., Martinez-Prather, K., Bowman, S. (2014). The roles of school-based law enforcement officers and how these roles are established: A qualitative study. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 1-24. doi:10.117/0887403414551001.

Reports:

McKenna, J.M., & & Petrosino, A. (2022). *An examination of school policing programs: Where we have been and where we need to go next*. *NIJ Report to Congress*.

McKenna, J., Russo, S., Sutherland, H., Boal, A., & Petrosino. A. (2022). *States' school safety centers: A brief look into history, characteristics, and activities*. WestEd.

Martinez-Prather, K., McKenna, J. M., & Dede-Bamfo, O. (2017). *District audit report: Findings on safety and security in Texas school districts 2014-2017.* Texas School Safety Center, Texas State University-San Marcos, 1-68.

McKenna, J.M., & Dede-Bamfo, O. (2017). *Texas junior college safety and security needs assessment report: 2016-2017*. Texas School Safety Center, Texas State University. San Marcos, TX, 1-33.

McKenna, J.M., Lentz, T.S., & Gower, K.F. (2016). *Texas school safety practices survey: 2015-2016*. Texas School Safety Center, Texas State University. San Marcos, TX, 1-34.

McKenna, J.M., Lentz, T.S., & Gower, K.F. (2016). *Campus safety and security needs assessment report: 2015-2016*. Texas School Safety Center, Texas State University. San Marcos, TX, 1-29.

McKenna, J. M., Schildkraut, J., & Elsass, H. J. (2016). *Faculty and staff perceptions of the university's emergency notification system: Presented to Texas State University's Office of Emergency Management.* School of Criminal Justice, Texas State University, 1-24.

McKenna, J. M., & Martinez-Prather, K. (2016). *Junior college audit report: Findings on safety and security in Texas junior colleges 2012-2015*. Texas School Safety Center, Texas State University-San Marcos, 1-31.

Martinez-Prather, K., McKenna, J. M., & Calder, V. (2015). *District audit report: Findings on safety and security in Texas school districts 2011-2014.* Texas School Safety Center, Texas State University-San Marcos, 1-60.

McKenna, J., Schildkraut, J., & Elsass, H. J. (2014). *Students' perceptions of the university's emergency notification system: Presented to Texas State University's Office of Emergency Management*. School of Criminal Justice, Texas State University, 1-55.

Martinez-Prather, K., McKenna, J., Calder, V., & Martaindale, H. (2013). *Junior college audit report: Findings on safety and security in Texas junior colleges 2009-2012*. Texas School Safety Center, Texas State University-San Marcos, 1-57.

Martinez-Prather, K., McKenna, J., Calder, V. (2012). *District audit report: Findings on safety and security in Texas school districts*. Texas School Safety Center, Texas State University-San Marcos, 1-60.

Papers Presented at Professional Meetings:

McKenna, J., & Russo, S. (2021). *A Deeper Look at State School Safety Centers: Understanding Their Prevalence, History, and How They are Defined*. Presented at the American Society of Criminology annual meeting, Chicago, IL.

McKenna, J.M. (2018). *A Deeper Understanding of the Environmental Elements that Contribute to Officer Roles in the School Setting*. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences annual meeting New Orleans, LA.

McKenna, J. M. (2017). *A Closer Examination of Officer Encounters in the School Setting*. Presented at the American Society of Criminology annual meeting; Philadelphia, PA.

McKenna, J.M. (2017). *Examining the Connection between Roles and Responses to Misconduct*. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences annual meeting; Kansas City, MO.

Martinez-Prather, K., McKenna, J. M., & Lentz, T. (2016). *An Empirical Test of the "School-to-Prison Pipeline"*. Presented at the American Society of Criminology annual meeting; New Orleans, LA.

McKenna, J.M. (2016). *Examining the Use of Full-Time Police in Schools: How Roles and Training May Impact Responses to Misconduct*. Presented at the American Society of Criminology annual meeting; New Orleans, LA.

Martinez-Prather, K., & McKenna, J. M. (2015). *The Potential for Roles and Training to Impact Discipline Outcomes in School-Based Policing.* Presented at the American Society of Criminology annual meeting; Washington, DC.

McKenna, J., & Marinez, J. (March, 2015). *Students' Perceptions and Attitudes towards School-Based Law Enforcement Officers*. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences annual meeting; Orlando, FL.

Martinez-Prather, K., & McKenna, J. M. (November, 2014). *The Roles of School-Based Law Enforcement Officers and the School-to-Prison Pipeline: A Qualitative Study*. Presented at the American Society of Criminology annual meeting; San Francisco, CA.

McKenna, J., & Martinez-Prather, K (February, 2014). *The Roles of School-Based Law Enforcement Officers and How These Roles Are Established: A Qualitative Study*. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences annual meeting; Philadelphia, PA.

McKenna, J. (November, 2012). *School Disorder and the Current Strategies Utilized: An Analysis of Texas Schools*. American Society of Criminology annual meeting; Chicago, IL.

McKenna, J. (April, 2012). *School Violence and Policy Responses: An Analysis of Massachusetts Schools*. Presented at the 3rd Annual Prairie View A&M University Research Symposium; Prairie View, Texas.

McKenna, J. (March, 2012). *School Violence and Policy Responses: An Analysis of Massachusetts Schools*. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences annual meeting; New York, New York.

McKenna, J., Annino, J., and Hanratty, L. (May, 2011). *The Effects of Eyewitness Confidence and Contradicting Witnesses on Juror Decisions*. Presented at the Association for Psychological Science annual meeting; Washington, D.C.

McKenna, J. (November, 2012). *School Violence and Policy Responses: An Analysis of Massachusetts Schools*. Presented at the American Society of Criminology annual meeting; San Francisco, CA.

Invited Talks, Lectures, and Presentations:

McKenna, J. M. (June, 2018). *Examining the Use of Full-Time Police in Schools: How Roles May Impact Responses to Misconduct*. Center for Evidence Based Crime Policy Annual Symposium, George Mason University.

McKenna, J. M. (June, 2017). *A Closer Examination of Officer Encounters in the School Setting*. Center for Evidence Based Crime Policy Annual Symposium, George Mason University.

McKenna, J. (January, 2013). *FEMA Youth Preparedness Workshop* (Guam). Federal Emergency Management Agency.

McKenna, J. (September, 2012). *FEMA Youth Preparedness Workshop* (Philadelphia, PA). Federal Emergency Management Agency.

McKenna, J. (August, 2012). *Back to School Preparedness Activities for Youth*. Presented as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Preparedness Update Webinar Series.

Grants and Contracts

Creating Threat Assessment Teams in Ulster County NY School Districts (2022). U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance ($207,944). Co-*Principal Investigator*

STOP Grant for Violence Prevention: Enhancement of the Loudoun County Public Schools, VA Behavioral Threat Assessment and Suicide Prevention Processes (2022). U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance ($231,345). Co-*Principal Investigator*

Enhancing an Evidenced-Based Threat Assessment Model in Maine Through the Development and Delivery of Statewide Training and Tools (2022). U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance ($255,269). Co-*Principal Investigator*

SDPC Behavioral Threat Assessment and Suicide Prevention Training and Case Management Project (2022). U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance ($212,792). Co-*Principal Investigator*

Research and Evaluation on School Safety: An Evaluation of State School Safety Centers (2021). U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice ($999,000). *Principal Investigator*

A Randomized Controlled Trial of a Comprehensive, Research-Based Framework for Implementing School-Based Law Enforcement Programs (2016). U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice ($4,315,804). *Project Director*

Measuring the Effectiveness of HB 2684: Training for School-Based Law Enforcement Officers (2015). Texas State University, Research Enhancement Program. ($16,000). *Principal Investigator*

Creating a Secondary School Climate Instrument Focused on Safety and Security (2015). Texas State University, Multi-Disciplinary Internal Research Grant ($25,000). *Principal Investigator*

Assisting Texas School Districts with the Development and Implementation of High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans (2015). U.S. Department of Education (through a contract with the Texas Education Agency) ($1,898,590). *Project Director*

Assessing School Safety Needs: The Perceptions of School Administrators (2013). Roger Williams University, Foundation to Promote Scholarship and Teaching ($6,000). *Principal Investigator*

Specialized Training for Texas School-Based Law Enforcement Officers (annual grant). Texas Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division ($338,975).

Tobacco Enforcement Program (annual contract). Texas Department of State Health Services ($1,000,000).

Food and Drug Administration Tobacco Compliance Program (annual contract). Food and Drug Administration through the Texas Department of State Health Services ($1,285,866).

Annual Synar Survey (annual contract). Texas Department of State Health Services ($269,668).

TEACHING

Courses Taught:

- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Spring 2026
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Ethics in the Criminal Justice System (Graduate level, Executive Track) – Spring 2026
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Fall 2025
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Spring 2025
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Ethics in the Criminal Justice System (Graduate level, Executive Track) – Spring 2025
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Fall 2024
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Spring 2024
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Ethics in the Criminal Justice System (Graduate level, Executive Track) – Spring 2024
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Fall 2023
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Spring 2022
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Ethics in the Criminal Justice System (Graduate level, Executive Track) – Fall 2021
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Special Topics/Capstone – Spring 2021
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Independent Study: An examination of the models, roles, effects of school law enforcement officers (Graduate level) – Summer 2020
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Ethics in the Criminal Justice System (Graduate level) – Spring 2020
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Fall, 2019
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Spring, 2019
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Special Topics/Capstone – Spring, 2018
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Fall, 2017

- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Fall, 2015
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Spring, 2015
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization – Fall, 2014 (co-instructor)

Courses Prepared and Curriculum Development:

- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Ethical Decision-making in Criminal Justice (Graduate level)
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Special topics / Capstone
- Texas State University, School of Criminal Justice: Crime Theory and Victimization

Thesis and Dissertation Committees

- Thesis committee co-chair for Ricky Rauchard – Texas State University, 2020
- Thesis committee member for Samantha Aguirre – Texas State University, 2017

SERVICE, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND HONORS

Criminal Justice:

- Reviewer, Justice Quarterly
- Reviewer, Journal of School Violence
- Reviewer, Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice
- Reviewer, International Journal of Police Strategies & Management
- Reviewer, American Journal of Criminal Justice

University:

- Council for Interdisciplinary Research and Grants, Chair: FY 2015
- Council for Interdisciplinary Research and Grants, Vice-chair: FY 2014
- IRB Reviewer: October, 2013 – 2018

Professional Associations:

- Member of Alpha Chi (Iota chapter)-National College Honor Society (Graduate): 2012 – present
- Member of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences: 2011 – present
- Member of the American Society of Criminology: 2010 – present
- Member of Psi Chi-National Psychology Honor Society: 2010 – present
- Member of Alpha Phi Sigma-National Criminal Justice Honor Society: 2008 – present

Fellowships, Awards, Honors:

- Named the 2016 Outstanding Doctoral Student for the Department of Criminal Justice
- Named the 2016 Outstanding Doctoral Teacher for the Department of Criminal Justice
- Represented Texas State University and the School of Criminal Justice at the inaugural ACJS Doctoral Student Summit – March, 2015
- Invited to be an Initial Affirmer of the *National Strategy for Your Preparedness*

Education: Empowering, Educating and Building Resilience by FEMA, the American Red Cross, and the U.S. Department of Education

- 2013 White House Champion of Change (Individual and Community Preparedness Panel)
- 2013 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award winner (Outstanding Achievement in Youth Preparedness)

- 2013 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award honorable mention (Action to Awareness)
- Nominee for the 2013 College of Applied Arts Outstanding Master's Student Award-Texas State University
- Named the 2013 Outstanding Graduate Student for the Department of Criminal Justice-Texas State University
- First place winner graduate student paper contest- Texas A&M Prairie View College of Juvenile Justice and Psychology – April, 2012
- First place winner undergraduate paper contest-Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences – June, 2011
- Excellence in Psychological Research award from Roger Williams University Feinstein College of Arts and Sciences – May, 2011