

SafeUT & School Safety Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: September 18, 2026

Scheduled Time: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting

Members Present

Erin Wynn, Chair
Matthew Gwynn
Barbara Stallone
Sen. Heidi Balderee
Rep. Steven Eliason
Michael Staley
Joanna Sutherland
Brittnee Bassett, Staff

Members Absent

Shauntelle Cota
Denia-Marie Wright
Cassidy Draganat

Associate Members Present

Rebecca Hyde
Levi Grisenti
Michelle Knight

1. Call to Order, Quorum, and New Commissioner Introduction

Chair Erin Wynn opened the meeting and asked whether a quorum was present. Because a quorum had not yet been established, the Chair stated that the Commission would hold off on official business while proceeding with informational matters in order to respect participants' time.

During the initial non-voting portion of the meeting, Chair Wynn introduced Matthew Gwynn as the newest member of the Commission. Chief Gwynn is filling the law-enforcement position previously held by Ken Wallentine.

Matthew Gwynn introduced himself and reported that he is the Chief of Police in Roy, previously served six years in the Utah House of Representatives, and has approximately 25 years of law-enforcement experience, including approximately 22 years in Roy. He also previously served as a school resource officer. Chief Gwynn described his work with Weber Human Services and his experience addressing psychiatric and mental-health needs at both the local and state levels. He stated that he was interested in continuing policy work and contributing to the Commission.

Chair Wynn welcomed Chief Gwynn and stated that his law-enforcement, school, and mental-health perspective would provide useful context for the populations served by SafeUT.

2. SafeUT Program Updates and Data Report

Rebecca Hyde presented the September 2026 SafeUT updates and data report. She noted that complete September numbers were not yet available. She also reported that the beginning of the school year had been particularly busy on the college side, including numerous suicide attempts, completed suicides, and public self-harming incidents. She further stated that 988 call volumes were up significantly.

Rebecca noted that SafeUT historically experiences higher volumes during August and September as students return to school. The SafeUT data presented for the current period showed an increase in activity associated with the return to school. Life-saving interventions were described as remaining approximately consistent. Total chats and tips were reviewed, with suicidality and bullying continuing to appear among the leading topics. Violence and school threats were also identified as significant categories.

The year-over-year comparison was discussed. Rebecca noted that SafeUT had been trailing earlier in the year but that the current-year data were moving closer to the comparison points as the year progressed. Bullying and suicidality were described as categories that can alternate in relative volume.

The Commission also reviewed SafeUT Frontline utilization. Rebecca identified an internal outreach opportunity: University of Utah Hospitals and Clinics did not currently promote SafeUT Frontline during new-employee orientation, and Huntsman Mental Health Institute likewise did not include the program in orientation. Rebecca stated that she was working to address this gap.

Frontline utilization was discussed by occupational groups. Healthcare users remained a significant portion of the population, while fire and EMS activity had increased. Rebecca stated that next year's Frontline marketing effort should include outreach to firefighting battalions, smoke jumpers, wildland firefighters, and other firefighting units because of the anticipated continued need associated with wildfire response.

The National Guard portion of the report showed more than 19,000 total access. Rebecca explained that use had decreased in part because there had been no active National Guard marketing during the past year due to the absence of funding for that purpose.

3. School Safety Center Update

Michelle Knight reported that the School Safety Center is updating its school safety playbook. The earlier playbook was designed to translate school-safety and security legislation into practical, understandable requirements for schools. The updated version is being finalized, designed, and prepared for ADA compliance before release to the field.

Levi Grisenti reported that another major project is in deployment of wearable panic-alert devices to schools. Local Education Agencies were required to review available contractors, select a contractor, and submit that information by September 25. The School Safety Center will then review the submissions and authorize contractors to begin installations throughout participating LEAs.

4. Subcommittee Reports

Third-Party Vendor Subcommittee: Michelle Knight reported that the subcommittee did not meet during the month because there were no substantive third-party requests requiring review. She did report an increase in spam submissions through the request form, including gambling-related and other inappropriate requests. The form is hosted through the SafeUT/HMHI web presence. Chair Wynn stated that the issue could likely be addressed through simple data-validation or form controls and agreed to coordinate with Dema and Rebecca.

Data Committee: Barbara Stallone reported that the committee had received one data request. Final approval was still pending, but the request was expected to be approved because it consisted of information that would otherwise be available in the annual report, presented in a different format.

Parents Advisory Committee: Rebecca reported that Laura Warburton was not present. The committee's next scheduled meeting on her calendar was October 2, although Rebecca noted that there may have been an earlier September meeting that she had not seen. Chair Wynn stated that she would follow up with Laura and revisit the committee's status in October.

5. Legislative and Funding Updates

Senator Heidi Balderee reported on the request for additional National Guard funding. While completing the request for additional funding, the available agency choices did not include the University of Utah. The choices included the Utah National Guard and several state agencies. After discussion concerning the existing funding structure, Chair Wynn recommended submitting the request through the Utah National Guard. The participant agreed, and the request was submitted.

Senator Balderee subsequently confirmed that the RFA had been submitted.

Representative Steve Eliason stated that he had been presented with an idea that could potentially help parents and students statewide through SafeUT. He indicated that he intended to develop the concept further and potentially bring it to the Commission at the following meeting.

Barbara Stallone asked Representative Eliason for an update on federal legislation being developed with Senator Curtis's office. Representative Eliason reported that he had received a draft, provided comments, and was waiting for another draft. He said that the congressional primary cycle, gridlock in Washington, and a staff member's leave had slowed the process. He stated that nothing was imminent but that he would share a more developed draft when appropriate.

6. Approval of August 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes

After additional members joined the meeting, Chair Wynn confirmed that a quorum was present. The Chair entertained a motion to approve the August 21, 2026 meeting minutes. Barbara Stallone moved to approve the minutes. Matthew Gwynn seconded the motion. The Chair called for the vote. There were no opposed votes, and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Roundtable Discussion – SafeUT White Paper

Chair Wynn reminded Commission members that Dema had distributed the SafeUT white paper and that comments were due that day. Chair Wynn stated that she had reviewed the paper and had comments she intended to discuss with Dema or members of the team. She encouraged other Commission members to review the document.

Chair Wynn described the white paper as containing useful information about the SafeUT application, its history, and best practices for states or organizations considering implementation of a similar service. Members were encouraged to submit comments so that the document could continue toward finalization.

8. Frontline Program – Potential Firefighter Cancer Resources

Chair Wynn raised a potential issue for future consideration involving firefighters diagnosed with cancer. She explained that a trust created in statute the prior year was being used to address a presumptive workers' compensation framework for firefighters diagnosed with cancer, based on occupational exposures. A fund is being developed, and questions remain concerning how the funds should be distributed, including whether they should provide temporary assistance while workers' compensation claims are processed or be used in another manner.

Chair Wynn questioned whether the SafeUT Frontline program should consider resources addressing the longer-term or cumulative effects of firefighter work, rather than focusing only on immediate stressors. She specifically mentioned possible concerns related to PTSD, medical diagnoses, and the complicated emotional effects that can accompany occupational illness.

Rebecca Hyde stated that SafeUT and 988 resources can address ongoing concerns as well as immediate crises and noted that chronic pain and sleeplessness are among significant suicide risk factors. She also suggested that, depending on how the firefighter fund is structured, there may be an opportunity for coordination with Huntsman Cancer Institute. No action was taken on this proposal; Chair Wynn identified it as an issue to consider for a future agenda.

9. New Department of Health and Human Services Commission Member

Joanna Sutherland introduced herself as a representative from the Utah Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Substance Use and Mental Health, Crisis Team. She explained that Jennifer Hebdon-Seljestad had previously served in the role and had left several weeks earlier. Joanna stated that she would be taking over the role representing DHHS.

Chair Wynn explained that roundtable participation generally involves raising questions, policy issues, organizational developments, or other matters that affect the Commission's work. Joanna indicated that she did not have a matter to raise at this meeting but would consider issues for future meetings. Chair Wynn stated that the Commission would work on making Joanna's appointment official.

10. Utah Youth Suicide Research Study

Michael Staley reported that his office had released the Utah Youth Suicide Research Study. He stated that the full report and three executive summaries were available and that a link had been provided in the meeting chat. He also reported that the second generation of the study was being launched and that he would keep the Commission informed of future developments.

11. Law Enforcement, MCOT, 988, and Psychiatric Call Data

Chief Matthew Gwynn provided an update concerning the relationship between law enforcement, Weber Human Services, MCOT, 988, and SafeUT. He stated that Roy has a population of approximately 38,500 to 39,000 and historically responded to approximately 250 to 350 psychiatric calls annually. He explained that police responses can sometimes result in less favorable outcomes and that the department had implemented co-response involving MCOT, 988, and related crisis resources.

Chief Gwynn reported that his department responded to approximately 115 psychiatric calls in the prior year, compared with the historical 250-to-350 annual range. He initially questioned whether the reduction might have resulted from a reporting problem. After obtaining another year of data, he reported approximately 127 psychiatric calls in the current year. He characterized this as a sustained reduction of more than 50 percent compared with the historical level.

Chief Gwynn stated that, based on conversations with Kevin Eastman of Weber Human Services, the available two-year experience appears to indicate that the model is working, although he specifically distinguished correlation from causation and described the interpretation as anecdotal at this stage. He stated that families and clients are being trained to respond to crises without involving law enforcement when possible.

Rebecca Hyde explained that 988 callers can be assessed for MCOT involvement and that Community Crisis Services dispatches MCOT statewide. She also noted ongoing discussions concerning the ability of 911 public-safety answering points to transfer calls directly to 988. Chief Gwynn confirmed that the Weber Dispatch Center is transferring applicable calls directly to 988.

Representative Eliason requested assistance in identifying a method for obtaining comparable statewide law-enforcement psychiatric-call data. He noted that statewide information would help evaluate whether reductions in law-enforcement responses correspond with increased use of 988, MCOT, and crisis receiving centers.

Chief Gwynn explained that the state's currently reported law-enforcement data include NIBRS data and that he was working with his dispatch center on standardizing data submissions to BCI. He suggested that a pilot project could select several agencies and examine historical psychiatric-call data to determine whether the pattern observed in Roy is also present elsewhere in the state.

Joanna Sutherland reported that DHHS maintains public-facing data dashboards through SUMH and tracks MCOT-related information, including perceptions of alternatives to law-enforcement involvement, referrals to higher levels of care, and whether law enforcement responds to MCOT calls. She stated that a separate dashboard tracks youth ages 0 through 20 and offered to walk members through the dashboard.

Rebecca and Chief Gwynn noted a limitation: DHHS data tied to MCOT may not capture situations in which law enforcement responds to a psychiatric incident without contacting MCOT. Chief Gwynn explained that officers may respond directly when there is an imminent threat or danger and may proceed to involuntary commitment without involving MCOT. He stated that some of the department's manually compiled figures likely include such

calls. Joanna acknowledged that the missing category is the space between MCOT involvement and civil commitment.

Chair Wynn stated that the issue could be considered for a future agenda if the Commission determines that additional discussion would support its work.

12. Utah PTA / Parent Advisory Committee Participation

Julie Clough, the current Utah PTA president, introduced herself and explained that she had been asked to participate on the Parent Advisory Committee. She attended the meeting to observe and learn about the Commission's work. She expressed appreciation for SafeUT and described her perspective as a parent familiar with the application's role in the community.

Chair Wynn thanked Julie for participating and welcomed her to the meeting.

13. Meta Settlement and Youth Mental Health Funding

Representative Eliason raised the recent settlement involving Meta and the impact of social media on youth mental health. He stated that significant funds are expected to flow into Utah over the next decade and estimated that the youth-mental-health portion could be approximately \$10 million per year for ten years, subject to the settlement's implementation and state decisions.

Representative Eliason asked Commission members to consider ideas for how youth mental health settlement funds could be used, particularly ideas connected to SafeUT. He described one concept: because SafeUT is a crisis-response service rather than ongoing therapy, some youth who use SafeUT may benefit from additional counseling or therapy after the immediate crisis. He referenced a possible resource that could connect youth and parents to additional online support, with parental permission where appropriate.

Representative Eliason also discussed single-session therapy as another possible model, noting that some individuals may obtain sufficient tools and resources from a single session and may not require ongoing treatment. He invited Commission members to share ideas with him and Senator Baldree or bring them to a future meeting.

Chair Wynn clarified that the state is expected to receive approximately \$212 million over a period of roughly 10 to 12 years and that approximately half is earmarked for youth mental health, including impacts associated with social media. She noted that this could represent roughly \$22 million annually, with approximately \$10 million directed at mental health, while emphasizing uncertainty regarding the precise timing and mechanism of the funding.

Chair Wynn explained that the state could choose to distribute the settlement funds directly or use a trust/endowment-type structure, similar to approaches used with other settlement funds, potentially preserving principal and spending investment earnings. She stated that the timing of available funds remained uncertain and encouraged the Commission to consider how it could advise on appropriate use of the youth-mental-health funding.

Representative Eliason noted that the Attorney General's Office had recently presented information concerning the settlement to the Health and Human Services legislative committee. Chair Wynn offered to help Commission members obtain additional information through the Attorney General's Office, while Representative Eliason and Senator Baldree could be contacted concerning potential uses of the funds.

14. Certified Crisis Worker Staffing Discussion

Rebecca Hyde presented the follow-up discussion concerning the potential transition from master's-level clinicians to bachelor's-level certified crisis workers for certain SafeUT staffing functions. She explained that the Commission had previously discussed this issue and that the current presentation was intended to examine the experience of transitioning to certified crisis workers on the 988 crisis line.

Rebecca explained that the 988 launch was accompanied by projections that call volumes could increase by approximately 400 to 700 percent. In response, the crisis system expanded staffing and incorporated certified crisis workers who did not hold master's-level credentials. Actual call volumes did not increase by the full projected amount, but Rebecca stated that volume had nonetheless increased substantially, including from approximately 519 to 525 or 526 and more than doubling in FY2026.

A major issue for the Commission is whether staffing changes affect service quality. Rebecca reported that quality audits initially averaged approximately 99.3 percent. After creation of a blended team, the audit result decreased to approximately 94.3 percent. The American Association of Suicidology standard identified for the program is 90 percent. Rebecca stated that current audit results, with a team consisting mostly of certified crisis workers, remain around the 90 percent range and continue to meet the identified national standard.

Rebecca further explained that the current quality-assurance sample is larger, with approximately 60 to 75 interactions per counselor compared with approximately 25 interactions in the earlier sample. She stated that the larger sample provides a stronger basis for assessing quality.

Complaints were discussed as another quality indicator. Rebecca cautioned that not all complaints are substantiated or even concern SafeUT; some are directed to other organizations or result in no finding after review. She stated that the complaint rate had remained relatively steady and that the organization was not seeing an increase in complaints attributable to the transition from licensed to non-licensed crisis workers.

Recruitment data were also presented. Rebecca reported that recently filled crisis-worker positions had an average of approximately 24 candidates, while master's-level positions had approximately 13 candidates. She noted that having a therapy license does not necessarily mean that a person is suited to crisis work.

Rebecca described licensing and supervision considerations. Work performed at SafeUT may not qualify as the patient-facing hours required for a CSW to advance to an LCSW. She explained that the LCSW pathway requires approximately 3,000 patient-facing hours and that this creates a recruitment and retention issue for staff who are seeking full licensure. Additional requirements for clinical supervisors also make it difficult to maintain sufficient LCSWs to supervise CSWs.

Cost was identified as the primary operational driver. Rebecca reported that the program ended the prior budget year approximately \$4,000 over budget, which HMHI absorbed. Because salaries constitute the majority of program expenses and employee merit increases are expected, salary costs will continue to rise unless additional legislative funding is obtained. Rebecca stated that reducing salary costs may be necessary to remain within budget.

Rebecca explained that the wage differential could allow the program to employ approximately three certified crisis workers for the cost of approximately two LCSWs, materially affecting staffing capacity. She summarized the current evidence as approximately 90 percent quality-audit performance, easier recruitment, somewhat higher turnover among crisis workers, successful use of a blended team, licensed supervisors, and the ability to meet staffing demands within budget while maintaining identified quality standards.

Barbara Stallone requested additional time to review the data before the Commission makes a decision. She asked for clarification concerning the distinction between Certified Social Workers and Certified Crisis Workers and raised concern about the decline from approximately 99 percent to approximately 90 percent on quality audits. Rebecca clarified that the supervision issue concerned CSWs rather than certified crisis workers.

Rebecca also explained that some historical comparison data came from December 2020, approximately six months into the COVID-19 period. She noted that the workforce structure has changed to a hybrid model and that working remotely can affect some quality measures, although she also stated that hybrid schedules are important for recruitment and staffing. She further observed that lower volumes in 2020 made quality performance easier to maintain than during periods of higher demand.

Chair Wynn requested that Rebecca provide the presentation slides to Brittnee for distribution to Commission members. Members were asked to review the data, identify questions or additional data points they would like to see, and be prepared for a more in-depth discussion at the next meeting. Rebecca invited members to contact her or Dema with questions before the next meeting.

15. Closing Business and Next Meeting

Chair Wynn asked whether members had additional matters for the agenda. Members were reminded to review the crisis-worker data before the next meeting and to provide any remaining comments on the white paper to Dema.

The next Commission meeting was scheduled for October 16, 2026, at 11:30 a.m., as stated by Chair Wynn.

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. Barbara Stallone moved to adjourn. The motion was not subject to debate. The Chair called for the vote, and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes prepared by: Brittnee Bassett, Office of the Utah Attorney General

DRAFT Minutes were APPROVED by the SafeUT & School Safety Commission on October 16, 2026.