



KEN SKOWRONSKI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 82nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 266-8590
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0082
Rep.Skowronski@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

Dear Chairman Theisfeldt and Members of the Assembly Education Committee,

I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak today. It is with a great deal of hope that I address you today about the proposal put forth by Senator Lazich and I, Assembly Bill 773. This bill gives us legislators a great opportunity to make our schools a better place for both students and teachers for years to come.

It is not uncommon for public school teachers to be threatened or physically attacked while performing their job. Unfortunately Wisconsin lacks the necessary data to fully track and confront this problem. Current state statutes do not require the Department of Public Instruction to collect information about school crime and safety incidents. Therefore, local school districts have little to no incentive to report incidents in a comprehensive manner.

Assembly Bill 773 creates a pilot program for tracking crime and student safety incidents within public school districts. DPI will develop and operate the program during the 2016-17 school year in three school districts of varying size that are representative of the diverse communities in Wisconsin. As this is a new undertaking it is our belief that creating a pilot program is an integral first step.

It is important that we as legislators acknowledge that we cannot foresee every eventuality of the decisions we make and programs we implement. Through the use of this pilot program we will be able to evaluate successes of the program and make any necessary changes after reviewing the results of a one year pilot program. We are truly looking to make positive changes in our schools and after much discussion and research it is our firm belief that creating this pilot program is the best course of action.

Assembly Bill 773 will allow us as legislators, as well as parents, teachers, and administrators, to address the issue of crime in our schools earnestly. This program will give us the information we need to make constructive changes in our schools so that teachers and students alike are in a safer learning environment.

Thank you for your time today,

State Representative

Ken Skowronski

82nd Assembly District.

**Assembly Committee on Education
February 10, 2016**

**Department of Public Instruction Testimony
Assembly Bill 773**

I want to thank Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify before you today on Assembly Bill 773 (AB 773). My name is Jennifer Kammerud, Policy Advisor for the Department of Public Instruction, and with me today is Steve Fernan, Assistant Director on the Student Services/Prevention, and Wellness Team.

Student safety has always been a top priority for our schools. We know that children who do not feel safe at school can suffer academically. Providing those safe learning environments within our schools so that our teachers can focus on closing achievement gaps and increasing opportunities is of paramount importance to the department and schools across the state.

Student Safety Incident Tracking Program

Under this bill, the Department is required to operate a one-year pilot program to track student safety incidents in three school districts. Those districts are described in the bill by membership size to include:

1. A school district with less than 3,000 pupils.
2. A school district with 3,000 to 6,999 pupils.
3. A school district with 7,000 or more pupils.

This bill directs the Department to establish procedures for school districts to apply to participate in the pilot program. School district participation in the pilot program is voluntary.

Maintaining a Record of Incidents

AB 773 requires the pilot school districts to maintain a record of incidents that occur on property owned or leased by the school district, on transportation provided by the school district, or at a school district sanctioned event. Incidents to be reported include:

- A crime.
- A violation of state or federal criminal law that results in a referral for a proceeding under subchapter V of chapter 938 of the statutes.
- A violation of an ordinance enacted by a city, village, town, or county.
- An incidence of any of the following that involves a pupil:
 - Harassment, as defined in section 813.125 (1) of the statutes.
 - Bullying, as defined in the policy the school district has adopted under section 118.46 (2) of the statutes.

The record maintained by a school district participating in the pilot program must include details related to each incident to the extent known by the school district, including the time, date, location, and nature of

the incident, the age and identity of each individual involved in the incident, any referrals to or involvement of other state or local agencies, and the result of any proceeding related to the incident. Any of the incidents described above may be reported anonymously to the school district.

Reporting Requirements

A school district that participates in the pilot program under this subsection is required to submit two reports to the Department of Public Instruction that include aggregate data derived from the record maintained by the school district. The school district shall submit its first report to the Department no later than January 31, 2017, and must include in the report aggregate data for incidents that occur from July 1, 2016, to December 31, 2016.

The school district must submit its second report to the Department no later than July 31, 2017, and include in the report aggregate data for incidents that occur from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017.

The Department must then report no later than February 15, 2017, to the legislature aggregate data compiled from participating school districts' first reports. By no later than August 15, 2017, the Department is required to report to the legislature aggregate data compiled from participating school districts' second reports.

Implementation Considerations: A new data collection of this magnitude will require significant work on the part of the Department and local school districts to implement and would likely be unavailable until at least 2017-18.

In order to provide greater certainty and uniformity in implementation the Department would recommend clarification on the following topics:

- It is unclear if the use of “a crime” in section 3 refers to whether an individual was charged or convicted of a crime. Further, data related to juvenile court actions are not readily available and cannot be shared without a consent for release of that information being provided by the parents. While aggregate data might be shared on law enforcement agency actions, the dispositions of such cases may or may not result in a conviction or a finding of delinquency, which could prove difficult if not impossible to track. Therefore, a report of a “crime” being committed may end up being unfounded and would make such data inaccurate.
- The term “extent known by the school district” may be problematic for school officials since details may not be known except by other parties such as law enforcement. Using “made known to the school district” in its place would provide greater clarity.
- Allowing anonymous reporting without verification does not provide school districts the opportunity to ensure the reported events or incidents are factual. Without verification there is a risk that false accusations may be included in the record thereby diminishing the accuracy and usefulness of the data.
- Collection of easily obtainable, and well defined data, would make this pilot easier to conduct and would result in more accurate data that could then be used to improve school safety and to focus efforts where they could be most effective. Requiring ongoing tracking of data that may be unreliable, difficult to gather, and subject to change (from report to arrest to disposition), may not be as helpful as we would all hope.

The department is committed to ensuring that all of our students attend a school that is safe, welcoming, and nurturing. Thank you for being our partner in that conversation. We are happy to answer any questions.



February 10, 2016

Wisconsin State Assembly
Committee on Education
State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Chairman Thiesfeldt, Vice Chairman Kitchens and members of the Assembly Committee on Education:

Please accept this letter of support for Assembly Bill 773 on behalf of Competitive Edge Software.

Competitive Edge Software was established in 1995 by a former Oak Creek police officer in order to help keep people safe. He knew that better information about the conditions under which crime occurs could assist police officers in crime prevention. After 20 years of business, demand for our software has spread from law enforcement to a variety of other industries where safety and security are important, especially education. Today, over 700 universities and K-12 schools use Report Exec, our incident reporting software, to efficiently gather and analyze safety data.

Schools are facing unique safety challenges right now. School shootings have shaken the nation and required schools to prepare for the worst—but knowing how to proceed with school safety plans and how to implement security upgrades is difficult. More and more, schools are also facing lawsuits from parents and families surrounding violence and bullying, and more and more—they're found liable. Additionally, the lack of uniform safety standards and data collection at a higher level make it difficult for administrators to ascertain how their schools compare with others with regard to safety.

Our experience working with universities and K-12 school districts across the country has demonstrated that better reporting and data analytics have a huge impact on campus safety. The first step toward improving a school's safety is correctly evaluating the scope of the problem. With accurate information about where, when, and how incidents occur, school administrators can make more informed decisions to improve safety and prevent violence, bullying, and more. Thorough reporting and data analysis also allow schools to increase transparency and communication with parents on matters of school safety,



effectively closing communication gaps and expanding the network of school safety stakeholders.

Keeping students safe at school is paramount to the success of a community. So often, school violence prevention efforts are focused on a small fraction of the incidents that plague schools and thus can overlook some crucial elements to school safety. Based on our experience, we recommend including a wider scope of reporting requirements in mandatory school safety reporting in order to effectively identify relationships between circumstances, incident types, and trends in school safety incidents.

We fully support the statewide reporting mandate for school safety, and look forward to Wisconsin becoming a leader in school safety initiatives.

Sincerely,

Jodi Hogerton
Marketing Manager
Competitive Edge Software, Inc.
9850 S. 54th St.
Franklin, WI 53132



WISCONSIN
ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL BOARDS

122 W. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703
Phone: 608-257-2622 · Fax: 608-257-8386

John H. Ashley, Executive Director

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Education
FROM: Dan Rossmiller & Chris Kulow, WASB Government Relations
RE: Assembly Bill 773, creating a student safety incident tracking pilot program for schools
DATE: February 10, 2016

On behalf of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB), and the 423 school boards across the state that we represent, thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns about Assembly Bill 773. We provide this information for information only.

School board members, parents, students, teachers, administrators, and members of the general public all have a shared interest in ensuring student safety. We take student safety and security seriously. That is why all public school districts have internal procedures to address student behavior issues, including suspension and expulsion policies, and why we work closely with law enforcement agencies in our communities.

Assembly Bill 773 would create a voluntary one-year pilot program in the 2016-17 school year under which three school districts who participate in the pilot program voluntarily would have to maintain records of crimes and other incidents, such as bullying and violations of local ordinances, that occur on school district property, on transportation provided by the school district, or at a school district sanctioned event.

We appreciate that this bill provides an appropriation from which the pilot program would be funded; however, we are concerned that it appears the bill provides no new or additional funding to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for this pilot program, but simply reallocates money currently allocated to the DPI for other purposes.

We also appreciate the participation in this pilot program by school districts would be entirely voluntary. No district would be required to participate in the pilot program or be required to maintain records of crimes and other incidents as required of pilot program participants under the bill.

We note that under current law each school district defines "bullying" in its own bullying policy. While districts are required to adopt a bullying policy, they do not have to adopt the DPI's model bullying policy or a uniform definition of bullying. While this situation is acceptable for the purposes of establishing a voluntary pilot program, we are concerned that if the intent of the pilot program is ultimately to facilitate the creation of a statewide incident tracking program, this lack of uniformity could make comparisons between districts inaccurate or misleading.

Under the bill schools that agree to participate in the pilot program would be required in many instances to report on information they do not have and would have to obtain. Frequently, this information will be in the hands of law enforcement agencies, the courts or the Department of Justice. There will be costs associated with gathering this information, which is not limited to incidents involving or directly affecting students but would also include adults not enrolled in the district. Because school districts often cross multiple municipal boundaries and even county boundaries getting this information may require schools to check with multiple law enforcement agencies.

In addition, we note that in many cases, the information Assembly Bill 773 would require to be collected and reported will likely involve confidential pupil records. School staff will be required to review all information for accuracy and confidentiality, including redacting all personally identifiable information, prior to it being reported to the DPI. This will be an additional expense for school districts.

While this situation described in the two preceding paragraphs is acceptable for the purposes of establishing a voluntary pilot program in which participating school districts' costs are covered in whole or in part, we are concerned that if the intent of the pilot program is ultimately to facilitate the creation of a statewide incident tracking program, unless additional funding is provided, such a statewide incident tracking program could operate as an unfunded mandate on school districts.

We thank you for the opportunity to bring these concerns to your attention.



Mary Lazich

President
Wisconsin State Senate

Assembly Committee on Education
Assembly Bill 773
February 10, 2016

Thank you Chair Thiesfeldt for scheduling Assembly Bill 773 (AB 773) a public hearing, and thank you committee members for attention to AB 773. AB 773 creates a pilot program for tracking crime and student safety incidents within public school districts.

According to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Systems, Wisconsin public school teachers are threatened or physically attacked more than their peers across the nation. During 2011-2012, 11.3% of Wisconsin teachers reported they were physically attacked by their students, and 13.7% of teachers reported they were threatened with injury by their students.

Unfortunately, the reports are largely anecdotal because Wisconsin lacks data to fully track and confront the problem. Local school districts collect data about suspensions, expulsions, graduation rates, test scores, and other variables. However, current state statutes do not require the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to collect information about school crime and safety incidents, resulting in not having information about safety.

AB 773 creates a pilot program to ensure comprehensive, methodical reporting of crime and safety incidents within our schools. The program will inform parents about school culture, and provide information and tools for administrators to proactively address the problem of violence within schools.

During the 2016-17 school year, DPI will develop and operate the program in three school districts, all of varying size. The pilot program mirrors the federal reporting requirements for colleges and universities under the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act. School districts will submit two reports to DPI that include anonymous, aggregate data about student safety incidents that occur on school district property, on transportation provided by the school district, and at a school district sanctioned event.

Parents, teachers, administrators and policy makers are entitled to public safety information to facilitate informed decision making. This program provides DPI and local school districts information to study methods for reporting and analyzing the data prior to expanding the program statewide. Understanding trends in location, timing, and the actors involved assists school districts to develop safety plans to mitigate issues.

I ask the committee approve AB 773. Thank you for your attention.