

# STATE OF WISCONSIN

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## JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

### MEMORANDUM

To: Members  
Joint Committee on Finance

From: Senator Alberta Darling  
Representative John Nygren

Date: May 21, 2019

Re: DOJ Report to JFC

Attached is a report regarding grants awarded by the Office of School Safety from the Department of Justice, pursuant to s. 165.88(4), Stats.

This report is being provided for your information only. No action by the Committee is required. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Attachments

AD:JN;jm



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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Attorney General

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May 21, 2019

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**Wisconsin Department of Justice  
Office of School Safety  
Annual Report to Joint Finance Committee**

Director Kristen A. Devitt, M.Ed.

**Introduction**

After the Columbine attack almost 20 years ago, many recommendations were made to improve school safety. These recommendations included efforts to encourage the reporting of threats and developing a mechanism for collecting reports. They also included recommendations to develop a threat assessment team and threat assessment protocols. For the past 20 years there has been grant funding for crisis response programs, emergency planning programs, and mental health services. However, there has not been a standardized approach to school-based threat assessment, information sharing and school safety protocols.

The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of School Safety (OSS) was created to provide funding to improve safety infrastructure in schools and to implement school safety best practices. In the past year, OSS has worked with multidisciplinary teams to develop a statewide threat assessment protocol and develop a statewide confidential threat reporting system. OSS has also been working with Wisconsin schools that have needed additional resources during critical incidents.

Because the OSS is within the DOJ, our employees have completed the required background checks to have access to intelligence information from federal, state and local law enforcement. This means that OSS is uniquely positioned to provide

on-site critical incident response, consultation regarding threat assessment, and provide a 24/7 threat reporting service. In the near future, OSS will be implementing a state-wide threat reporting system and have the capability of responding to critical incidents with regionally based crisis response teams.

The OSS has not identified school safety as the responsibility of only educators, only law enforcement or only mental health services. Instead, OSS adopts the stance that school safety requires a collaborative effort from all community stakeholders. These partners have been engaged via the OSS Advisory Committee, project committees, statewide presentations and collaborative training initiatives.

The office's main objectives have been informed by best practices recommended by the US Department of Education, the Columbine Review Commission, the US Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI):

- Advanced planning for emergency management
- Confidential threat reporting applications
- School based threat assessment teams
- Regionally based crisis response teams

The OSS adopted a mission, vision and values to guide the development of its comprehensive framework for school security.

The office's vision is to, "help Wisconsin build the safest schools in the nation".

The office's mission is to;

- Develop School Safety Intervention Teams/School Based Threat Assessment Teams
- Champion evidence-based violence prevention initiatives
- Provide crisis management protocols
- Provide training and technical assistance
- Provide guidance regarding free/low-cost programming

The Office's values are to;

- Engage educators, law enforcement, and behavioral health services to create safe school environments.
- Develop collaborative, multidisciplinary teams to determine Wisconsin best-practices.
- Approach school safety via the child welfare lens of always operating in the best interest of the child.

The following information details the work that the OSS has undertaken to meet these objectives.

## Statutory Authority

On March 22, 2018, 2017 Wisconsin Act 143 created the Office of School Safety as part of the Wisconsin Department of Justice, with the Director appointed by the Attorney General.

Act 143 established the responsibilities of the Office of School Safety (OSS) as follows:

165.28 Office of School Safety. The office of school safety shall do the following;

1. In conjunction with DPI, create model practices for school safety. DPI shall provide any resources or staff requested by the office to create model practices. The office shall also consult with the Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators Association and the Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Training and Technical Assistance Center.
2. Coordinate with Schools and DOA to compile blueprints and geographic information system maps for all schools. The office shall keep all blueprints and maps confidential unless a law enforcement agency requests access to the blueprints or maps.
3. Offer training to school staff on school safety. Topics may include trauma informed care/ACEs.
4. Award \$100,000,000 in school safety grants to school boards, operators of independent charter schools, governing bodies of private schools and tribal schools.
5. OSS shall submit an annual report to the co-chairpersons of the joint committee on finance providing an account of the grants awarded and expenditures made with the grant moneys.

Additional responsibilities as enumerated in 118.07(4)(e);

1. Maintain a copy of a school safety plan submitted to OSS by January 1, 2019, for each building that pupils regularly occupy. Also maintain copies of school safety plans submitted every January thereafter.
2. Maintain information regarding safety drills in each building regularly occupied by pupils to be completed every school year, the first submission due by January 1, 2019. Each drill must be evaluated and approved by the school board.
3. Maintain information regarding on site safety assessments that schools completed in partnership with law enforcement.

2017 Wisconsin Act 143 also created a mandatory reporting law regarding threats of violence. This is outlined in Section 23, 175.32, and requires that any person who is a mandatory child abuse and neglect reporter must report "serious and imminent threats to the health or safety of a student, school employee, or the public." In consultation with OSS, DPI created an online training module regarding this requirement. OSS has also provided a significant amount of guidance regarding this issue via threat assessment training courses and FERPA training courses.

## **Personnel**

Upon the creation of the Office of School Safety, Glenn Rehberg served as Interim Director and applied for and accepted the position of Policy Initiatives Advisor-Executive. Kristen Devitt was appointed as Director. The full-time staff of the Office of School Safety is as follows;

Kristen Devitt, Director  
[devitka@doj.state.wi.us](mailto:devitka@doj.state.wi.us)  
608-267-1300

Glenn Rehberg, Policy Initiatives Advisor – Executive  
[rehbergga@doj.state.wi.us](mailto:rehbergga@doj.state.wi.us)  
608-266-7783

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608-261-7177

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608-261-7992

Stephanie La Haye, Grants Specialist – Advanced (project position)  
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TBA, Program and Policy Analyst (project position)

Jason Kuhn – LTE Program and Policy Analyst  
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John Moe – LTE Grant Specialist  
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Claudia Saavedra Abuchain – LTE Grant Specialist  
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TBA – LTE Grant Specialist

TBA – LTE Grant Specialist

TBA – Office Program Associate (part-time)

Eloise Wesenberg – Intern (full-time)

## Grants

The OSS has leveraged grant funds to encourage schools to implement identified best practices. For example, grant applicants must certify that they lock their doors, have adopted a written visitor protocol, and have consulted with their local law enforcement agencies regarding their grant application and security protocols. By requiring schools to meet these prerequisites, the OSS has extended the impact of the grant funds.

The first round of grants was announced in late May 2018 and awarded by late July 2018. This round of grants had two components. The primary component was designed to bring every Wisconsin school to a basic level of school building safety, including the ability to lock all classroom doors and secure the main entrance against intruders. The advanced component was to allow schools to meet locally-identified security needs, such as staff training, security assessments, facility improvements, etc. There was no limit on primary funding per school. Advanced funding was allocated up to \$20,000 per school.

A list of schools awarded grant funds in round one, including the amount of funding awarded, can be found at:

[https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/school-safety/grant\\_awards\\_1.xlsx](https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/school-safety/grant_awards_1.xlsx).

The second round of grants were announced in late July 2018 and were targeted towards increasing staff training, particularly regarding mental health, and encouraging schools to adopt school safety intervention teams. These grant funds could also be used to improve school climate and culture through social/emotional learning programs or other evidence-based school violence reduction program. Finally, additional facility improvements were also funded through these grants. Grant amounts were calculated using student enrollment on file with the DPI, multiplied by approximately \$55.00 per pupil. However, to ensure each school received enough funds to make meaningful safety improvements it was determined that each award would be no less than \$10,000 and no more than \$2,500,000.

A list of schools awarded grant funds in round two, including the amount of funding awarded, can be found at:

[https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/round2applicants\\_updated\\_2018-10-22.xlsx](https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/round2applicants_updated_2018-10-22.xlsx).

By mid-October grant funds had been allocated, leaving a balance of approximately \$5,000,000 remaining. Approximately \$1,500,000 will be used to pay for Adolescent Mental Health Training. The required content for this training includes adolescent development, adolescent mental health, trauma informed practices, verbal de-escalation, engaging families, law enforcement's role in mental

health services, and accessing community-based resources. This is required training for at least 10% of full-time staff at each school district that was awarded second round grant funds.

The OSS does not have the personnel necessary to extract specific information from every grantee's budget such as, travel, training, equipment, supplies, operating expenses and consultants. Additionally, OSS recognizes that any specific details from the budget or narrative of a grantee's application could potentially cause a safety concern. For example, if a school district were to request funding for door locks, and that information were published in a publicly available document, a security weakness could be exposed. However, OSS would be happy to meet in person to discuss any specific details the committee would be interested in.

In total, 723 schools/districts received grant funding from round one. 652 schools/districts received grant funding from round two.

The remaining \$3.5 million will be used to provide crisis response services to school districts that experience a critical incident and do not have the resources within their own district to respond. This funding has already been provided to the Barron School District in response to the disappearance of Jayme Closs and the murder of her parents. OSS staff gathered a group of school psychologists, crisis response experts, and therapy dogs to assist the Barron School District in response to the trauma experienced by their staff and students. Crisis response training has also been provided to the Barron School District by Safe and Sound Schools and the National Association of School Psychologists.

Grant funding reimbursed thus far has reached \$19,432,821.60, as of the end of March 2019.

## **2017 Wisconsin Act 143 Requirements**

2017 Wisconsin Act 143 required that every school/district in the state submit a school safety plan, document a school safety drill, blueprints of each building, and the date/number of staff last trained in school safety. All of these documents were required to be submitted to the OSS before January 1, 2019. Guidance regarding this process was sent via email to each contact listed for every school/district in the state. This list was provided to the Office of School Safety by the Department of Public Instruction.

There are currently 3,023 school buildings in the state. At this time, approximately 71% of required school blueprints, 63% of safety assessments, 74% of safety plans, 61% of school safety training, and 71% of school violence drills have been submitted. The Office of School Safety has been contacting school districts to bring them into compliance via email, letter mail, and phone. Efforts will continue with the goal of 100% compliance.

To be clear, the submission of these documents is a separate process from applying for grant funding. Grantees that did not submit the required Act 143 documentation were prioritized so that their documents would be uploaded prior to them being reimbursed any additional grant funding. Additionally, any school district that does not comply with Act 143 required document submission will not be eligible for any future grant funding from OSS.

Once all documents have been submitted, OSS will begin auditing the documents for their content. When a document is determined to be inadequate, OSS staff will provide training and technical assistance to the school/district to improve the content.

## Advisory Committee

The OSS has developed a multidisciplinary advisory committee. This committee meets quarterly and includes statutorily required collaborators from DPI, the Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators Association and the Wisconsin Safe and Health Schools Center. The list of current Advisory Committee members are as follows;

- Kristen Devitt, Office of School Safety
- Glenn Rehberg, Office of School Safety
- Erin Armbrust, Office of School Safety
- Representative Rob Hutton, Wisconsin State Legislature
- Chief Sean Marschke, Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association
- Kristen Gillespie, Wisconsin School Psychologists Association
- Travis Pinter, Wisconsin School Psychologists Association
- TBA, M3 Insurance Solutions, Inc.
- David Young, EMC Insurance
- Dr. Steven Bloom, Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators
- Jim Lynch, Association of Wisconsin School Administrators
- Theresa Steinmetz, Department of Human Services
- Barbara Dorff, Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators Association
- Brian O'Keefe, DOJ Division of Criminal Investigation
- Sheriff Nate Dreckman, Badger State Sheriffs' Association
- Sharon Schmeling, Wisconsin Council of Religious & Independent Schools
- Chris DeRemer, DOJ Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center
- Officer Kelly DeJonge, National Association of School Resource Officers
- Barb Buffington, Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services
- Brian Dean, Department of Public Instruction
- Dr. Michelle McGrath, Wisconsin Association of School Councils
- Stacy Eslick, Wisconsin School Counselor Association
- Rebecca Collins, Department of Public Instruction
- Dave Anderson, Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association
- Wade Labecki, Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association
- Tracy Herlitzke, Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Center
- Kim Kaukl, Wisconsin Rural Schools Association
- Michele Gay, Safe and Sound Schools (parent survivor)
- Kristina Anderson, Koshka Foundation (student survivor)
- Ellen Stoddard-Keys, I love U Guys Foundation (parent survivor)
- TBA, Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association
- Connor Hartje (Mauston School District), Student Representative

## **Special Projects**

Prior to the first meeting of the OSS Advisory Committee, three major projects, aside from the grant process, were identified as needing immediate attention:

- Confidential Threat Reporting System
- Wisconsin School Threat Assessment Protocol
- Wisconsin School Security Framework

The OSS developed project-based committees of subject matter experts. These committees will provide reports to the Advisory Committee for feedback regarding their projects. Once the project committee reviews the feedback and makes appropriate changes, the project committees will submit their product to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will then provide information regarding the project and its implementation to their membership.

### **Confidential Threat Reporting System**

Through the fall and spring, the technology committee met to determine the best way to implement a statewide confidential threat reporting system. The determination that this committee made was that the OSS would partner with the Capitol Police to implement a state-run threat reporting system.

The OSS was awarded \$1,200,000 in federal grant funds to pay for this effort. OSS is currently in the process of procuring a technology platform that can manage data collected from the threat reporting system. OSS is also working to develop committees that will assist in developing age appropriate training curriculum in the use of this threat reporting system.

### **Threat Assessment Protocol**

Starting fall 2018 and continuing through spring 2019 the threat assessment project committee met to review threat reporting protocols used by other states and to determine a best practice for Wisconsin. The committee reviewed threat assessment protocols from Virginia, Indiana and Colorado. The committee developed a Wisconsin School Threat Assessment Protocol based on the Virginia model. The Wisconsin Protocol was reviewed by the U.S Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center, and revisions were made based on their recommendations. This protocol was presented for the first time on March 18, 2019, at the Wisconsin School Threat Assessment Conference in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Read the Wisconsin School Threat Assessment Protocol at:

[https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/school-safety/WI\\_School\\_Threat\\_Assessment\\_Protocol.pdf](https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/school-safety/WI_School_Threat_Assessment_Protocol.pdf)

Read the Wisconsin School Threat Assessment Overview at:

[https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/school-safety/WI\\_School\\_Threat\\_Assessment\\_Overview.pdf](https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/school-safety/WI_School_Threat_Assessment_Overview.pdf)

The Wisconsin School Threat Assessment Form can be found at:

[https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/school-safety/WI\\_School\\_Threat\\_Assessment\\_Form.pdf](https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/school-safety/WI_School_Threat_Assessment_Form.pdf)

### **Comprehensive School Security Framework**

On March 18, 2019, the Office of School Safety presented the Wisconsin School Security Framework. The framework provides a comprehensive set of policies, practices, and procedures to help guide local efforts to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from violence. The framework provides best practices for preventing violence through climate and culture, student engagement, school policies and physical structure. The framework also provides guidance on assessing potential violence indicators and diverting identified hazards before violence takes place. When violence occurs, the framework addresses how proper planning, preparation and training can minimize the severity of the incident and help the school recover more quickly.

Read the Wisconsin Comprehensive School Security Framework at:

[https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/school-safety/WI\\_School\\_Safety\\_framework.pdf](https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/school-safety/WI_School_Safety_framework.pdf).

## Training

The OSS has shared its expertise and knowledge of best practices through training and presentations throughout Wisconsin. OSS has delivered presentations to the following organizations;

- 11 out of 12 CESA offices
- Dane County Safety Steering Committee
- Association of Wisconsin School Administrators
- Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators
- League of Women Voters, Dane County
- Badger State Sheriffs' Association
- Wisconsin Association of School Boards
- Department of Homeland Security, School Safety Roundtable
- Wisconsin Juvenile Officer's Association
- Wisconsin Chiefs' of Police Association
- Wisconsin Council of Christian and Religious Schools
- Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators Association
- Dane County Chiefs of Police
- Wisconsin State Information Center Board of Directors Meeting
- Wisconsin Emergency Management Homeland Security Briefing
- Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance
- Wisconsin School Counselor's Association
- Marquette University

The Office has also delivered a significant amount of training around the state. The focus at this time has been on Juvenile/Adolescent Mental Health and the School Violence Threat Assessment.

The Adolescent Mental Health Training is delivered by the National Association of School Resource Officers. This curriculum was developed by the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice with the intention of preventing the criminalization of developmentally appropriate behavior for adolescents and providing the tools to recognize signs that a child is experiencing a mental health crisis or has had a traumatic experience.

School districts who would prefer to deliver another course that addresses adolescent development, adolescent mental health, verbal de-escalation skills, family engagement and accessing local resources may do so with prior approval. The process to obtain grant funds to pay for this training is the same process used in the original grant application.

The School Violence Threat Assessment Team Course was created by OSS Director, Kristen Devitt. It focuses on the reasons why threat assessment teams are important, how to develop a multidisciplinary threat assessment team, how to determine if a child

poses a threat, how to mitigate the threat a child poses, and possible outcomes. The OSS has completed its committee work on developing the Wisconsin School Threat Assessment Protocol and it is now included as a part of this training.

As of April 1, 2019, the OSS has funded or provided the following trainings;

- Adolescent Mental Health Training – approximately 700
  - Green Bay
  - Madison
  - Drummond
  - Racine
  - Mount Pleasant
  - Hortonville (3)
  - Lake Mills
  - West Salem (2)
  - Sun Prairie
  - Lodi
  - Kenosha
- School Violence Threat Assessment Team Course – approximately 1500
  - Madison
  - Beloit
  - Green Bay
  - Wisconsin Dells
  - Drummond
  - Western Technical College
  - Wisconsin Rapids (2)
  - Pewaukee
  - Sun Prairie
  - Eau Claire
- Standard Response Protocol/Standard Reunification Method and FERPA – 250
- Wisconsin School Threat Assessment Conference (Lake Geneva) – 250
- Wisconsin School Threat Assessment Conference (River Falls) - 120

The OSS will deliver a presentation at the National Association of School Resource Officers Annual Conference in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, June 24-28, 2019. The Office of School Safety has also submitted a proposal to deliver a presentation regarding the Wisconsin School Security Framework at the International Association of Chiefs' of Police Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois, on October 26-29, 2019. These presentations will highlight the creation of the office of school safety, the identification of needed services within the state, the collaborative partnerships developed via the Advisory Committee and project committees. Finally, the presentation will cover the training and programs that Office of School Safety

have been implemented around the state to create the security framework.

## **Federal Grants**

The OSS has applied for, and been awarded, \$2,200,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice, in three grant awards.

First, the OSS was awarded \$1,000,000 by the Bureau of Justice Assistance to address mental health issues within the school environment. The intention of the program is to develop policy/procedure to support the school violence threat assessment initiative, provide mentoring/mental health services to children who display concerning behaviors and decrease the number of violent incidents within school districts around the state.

The OSS was also awarded \$1,000,000 by the Office of Justice Programs under the STOP School Violence Threat Assessment and Technology Reporting Program. These funds will be used to assist in developing the statewide confidential threat reporting system. Primarily, these funds will be used to provide training around the state to all members of the school community on what information should be reported, how to report it, and what happens to information that is reported.

Finally, the OSS was awarded \$200,000 under the STOP School Violence Threat Assessment and Technology Reporting Program. These funds will assist in paying for the technology platform that will be used to run the statewide confidential threat reporting system.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristen A. Devitt, M.Ed.  
Director, Office of School Safety  
Wisconsin Department of Justice