



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #512

Office of School Safety (Justice -- Law Enforcement Services)

[LFB 2023-25 Budget Summary: Page 372, #5]

CURRENT LAW

The Office of School Safety (OSS), created under 2017 Act 143, established school safety grants, made changes related to school safety plans, and required mandatory reporting of threats of school violence. In conjunction with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the Office was required to create model practices for school boards and private schools to use when developing or reviewing a school safety plan. The Office is be required to consult with the Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators Association and the Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Training and Technical Assistance Center. When requested, the Office is required to assist a school board or the governing body of a private school in developing or reviewing the school safety plans. In addition, the Office is required to offer, or contract with a state agency to offer, training to school teachers, school counselors, and coaches on school safety. Act 143 allows DOJ to collect fees from schools that receive a grant for the training and created an appropriation to receive these fees. Training subjects are required to include trauma informed care.

Act 143 provided the OSS with an unclassified director. The director is appointed by the Attorney General.

Further, Act 143 allocated \$100 million in grant funding to OSS to improve school safety. As of December, 2022, OSS has allocated \$99,982,800 of those funds to nine school safety grant initiatives. No unallocated funds remain.

Act 143 also required schools to submit specified information to the OSS. Every school board, governing body of a private school, and operator of a charter school was required to provide blueprints of each school building and facility to the OSS, and to local law enforcement agencies, by July 1, 2018, and annually thereafter.

Annually (before each January 1), every school board and governing body of a private school is also required to file the following with the Office of School Safety:

- a. copy of its school safety plan;
- b. the date of the required annual safety drill or drills held during the previous year;
- c. certification that the school board or governing body reviewed a required written evaluation of the drill or drills;
- d. the date of the most recent school training on school safety and the number of attendees; and
- e. the most recent date on which the school board or governing body consulted with a local law enforcement agency to conduct required, on-site safety assessments.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. In order to assist with this annual requirement, 2021 Act 58 placed \$2,000,000 GPR in the Joint Committee on Finance GPR supplemental appropriation in 2021-22 for school safety mapping grants for release upon request and approval by the Committee. Subsequent to Act 58, 2021 Act 109 was enacted to allow school boards and the governing bodies of private schools to submit critical incident mapping data, in lieu of blueprints, to the relevant law enforcement agency and the OSS, and similarly requires the OSS to compile such data and maintain its confidentiality, subject to the exception allowing law enforcement access upon request. Further, Act 109 created a grant program to fund school critical incident mapping. Under the Act, DOJ is required to award grants to school boards and the governing bodies of private schools to assist in complying with statutory requirements to submit blueprints or critical incident mapping data for each school building and facility to local law enforcement agencies and OSS. Act 109 required DOJ to submit an annual report providing an account of the awarded grants and the expenditures made with the grant moneys to the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Finance.

2. On May 31, 2022, JFC released the funds for grants to DOJ. The Department allowed school districts and private school governing bodies to apply for up to \$5,000 per school building, totaling up to \$200,000 per school district or private school governing body. According to DOJ, award amount limits were intended to ensure the equitable availability of funding for critical incident mapping. The Department anticipates funding would be sufficient to support the mapping of at least 400 school buildings. As of December, 2022, all monies had been awarded.

3. In addition to state school safety grants, the Office was awarded \$2.2 million in federal grants from the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance over two years to create a Resource Center. The Resource Center is intended to provide the following services: (a) develop and implement a state-run threat reporting system; (b) threat assessment consultation; (c) create a critical incident response team; and (d) general school safety guidance.

4. The Office is currently supported by more than \$1.8 million in American Rescue Plan

Act funding which will end in December of 2023. As of May, 2023, the Office has a total of 16 positions (3.8 GPR and 12.2 FED positions) and utilizes a number of limited-term employee positions. These positions are all currently filled, but 11.0 FED positions were removed as noncontinuing elements by standard budget adjustments beginning in 2023-24.

5. On September 1, 2020, OSS launched Speak Up, Speak Out (SUSO), a 24/7 statewide confidential reporting system free to all Wisconsin schools. The program offers a threat reporting system, threat assessment consultation, critical incident response and general school safety guidance. According to OSS, "SUSO aims to promote the reporting of concerns before violence happens." From May, 2022, to May, 2023, SUSO received 3,871 tips from 63 counties of which bullying and suicide threats were the most reported. The five counties with the most calls to SUSO were Waukesha, Outagamie, Douglas, Winnebago, and Dane.

6. In 2022, OSS established and trained twelve Critical Incident Response Teams (CIRTs) around the state. According to OSS,

"CIRTs are designed to provide all Wisconsin K-12 public, private, charter and tribal schools with access to a regionally based team to support them if a critical incident ever occurs at their school. Each CIRT is made up of volunteers who are part of a multi-disciplinary team. These teams include law enforcement officers, school administrators, counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, teachers, school safety experts, and representatives from other related professions. The mission of the CIRT program is to minimize the psychological impact of a school critical incident; provide resources to help stabilize the school community; work to identify individuals that may require long-term mental health services after a critical incident occurs; and offer support to school administrators and educators. Wisconsin is the first state to implement regionally based CIRTs on a statewide basis."

7. Further, OSS indicates that OSS staff are certified to train a number of courses related to both the logistical and psychological crisis response. The Office offers these free trainings to any Wisconsin school upon request. Trainings may assist school staff in responding to crisis in a way that may promote psychological recovery or establish standardized response and reunification for any school crisis whether natural or manmade. From May, 2022, to May, 2023, the OSS provided presentations and trainings in 62 counties with 5,837 attendees. The Office continues to explore ways to expand the trainings offered.

8. In order to ensure continuation of the services provided to schools by the OSS, the Committee could decide to provide GPR once federal funding has ended as contained in AB 43/SB 70. [Alternative 1] This would provide \$387,800 GPR and 6.0 GPR positions in 2023-24 and \$608,300 GPR, -\$7,300 FED and 7.2 GPR, and -0.2 FED positions in 2024-25 related to the Office. The table below shows the funding associated with the OSS after the removal of non-continuing elements and other standard budget adjustments, the Governor's recommendation, and the resulting total of funding and positions associated with OSS.

	2023-24				2024-25			
	GPR		FED		GPR		FED	
	Funding	Positions	Funding	Positions	Funding	Positions	Funding	Positions
Base and Standard								
Budget Adjustments	\$566,500	3.80	\$306,600	1.20	\$566,500	3.80	\$42,400	0.20
Governor's Recommendations	<u>387,800</u>	<u>6.00</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>608,300</u>	<u>7.20</u>	<u>-7,300</u>	<u>-0.20</u>
Total	\$954,300	9.80	\$306,600	1.20	\$1,174,800	11.00	\$35,100	0.00
Total (All Funds)			\$1,260,900	11.00			\$1,209,900	11.00

9. In order to provide support, but at an amount less than that of the bill, the Committee could provide \$199,800 GPR and 3.0 GPR positions in 2023-24 and \$290,400 GPR, -\$7,300 FED and 3.0 GPR, and -0.2 FED positions in 2024-25 related to OSS. [Alternative 2]

10. If no action is taken, base funding (\$556,500 and 3.8 GPR positions) for the Office would remain. The Office would be required to continue to provide its statutory functions including providing schools training, managing existing grants, and the annual review of information required under s. 118.07 identified at the beginning of this paper. [Alternative 3]

ALTERNATIVES

1. Provide \$387,800 GPR and 6.0 GPR positions in 2023-24 and \$608,300 GPR, -\$7,300 FED and 7.2 GPR, and -0.2 FED positions in 2024-25 related to OSS.

ALT 1	Change to Base	
	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$996,100	7.20
FED	<u>- 7,300</u>	<u>-0.20</u>
Total	\$988,800	7.00

2. Provide \$199,800 GPR and 3.0 GPR positions in 2023-24 and \$290,400 GPR, -\$7,300 FED and 3.0 GPR, and -0.2 FED positions in 2024-25 related to OSS.

ALT 2	Change to Base	
	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$490,200	3.00
FED	<u>- 7,300</u>	<u>-0.20</u>
Total	\$482,900	2.80

3. Take no action.

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