

June 29, 2018

Attorney General Schimel, Sen. Darling, and Rep. Nygren:

I appreciated the opportunity to consultant on the School Safety Grants recently distributed under 2017 Wisconsin Act 143. I was particularly pleased with the inclusion of training around Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Mental health work is a critical component of a comprehensive approach to school and student safety.

As you consider how best to move forward with the remaining funds, please be aware that several of mental health programs adopted in the recent state budget will be prorated based on strong demands from schools and community partners. Those include:

**Collaborative Community/School Mental Health Grants.** These grants support school and community health providers in expanding mental health services to students.

The department received nearly \$8 million in high-quality grant requests; however, there is only \$3.25 million available to award. Providing an additional \$4.75 million would allow the department to immediately fund these critical projects.

**Aid for School Mental Health Programs.** This successful initiative has resulted in expanded hiring of school social workers across Wisconsin to meet student needs.

While \$3 million was appropriated, there will be an estimated \$14 million in eligible costs, resulting in proration. Providing an additional \$11.2 million would allow the department to fully reimburse school districts for adding frontline mental health staff.

You also has identified additional training opportunities as a priority item for the remaining funds. The state budget appropriated \$420,000 for statewide training in Trauma-Sensitive Schools (TSS); Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA); and Screening, Brief, Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT). Additional funds could be allocated to expand these training opportunities and defray costs for participating schools.

These are opportunities to immediately meet the needs of schools and students and fully fund our shared commitment to student and family mental health. I remain committed to working together in the best interest of our kids.

As such, I am asking you to use your authority under Wisconsin §13.10 to fully fund these critical mental health and school safety programs and expand training opportunities for school and community staff.

Sincerely,

Tony Evers

Delivered by e-mail