

Gov. Walker: No Child Should Ever Feel Unsafe in School: Walker Calls \$100 million Special Session on School Safety

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MADISON—Governor Scott Walker today called for a special session of the Wisconsin State Legislature to pass his comprehensive School Safety Plan.

“No child, parent, or teacher should ever have to feel unsafe in school,” said Governor Walker. “This package of bills focuses on ways we can help schools be safe, just like we did at the federal level ensuring that every airport and airplane were safe after 9/11. The same thing needs to be true for our schools all across the State of Wisconsin. We are putting \$100 million behind this plan.”

Governor Walker’s school safety plan was created with input from both the State Senate and State Assembly. Governor Walker’s plan includes seven components:

Establishing the Office of School Safety under the Wisconsin Department of Justice
Creating an \$100 million School Safety Grant Program under the Office of School Safety

Requiring Mandatory Reporting for any threats of school violence

Amending bullying statute to include prompt parental notification

Incorporating Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) into training programs

Strengthening school safety plan requirements

Encouraging cooperation with local law enforcement

Wisconsin Attorney General Brad Schimel voiced his support for the proposals.

“We owe our children and communities the promise of safe school environments, and I believe DOJ can provide the public safety leadership needed to keep students and faculty safe,” said Attorney General Schimel. “I’m proud of the ideas DOJ’s public safety experts have put forward to help craft this legislation, and I look forward to making DOJ a cornerstone of school safety planning and training through the Office of School Safety.”

Special Session on School Safety Plan

Office of School Safety:

Create an Office of School Safety within the Wisconsin Department of Justice. The Office would work with law enforcement and schools to establish best practices for school safety plans; provide training opportunities and other relevant resources to schools. The Office would consist of two permanent positions (a director and program and planning analyst) and two project positions.

The Office would be responsible for requiring schools to upload their blueprints to GIS mapping and ensure that schools also provide those blueprints to local law enforcement.

School Safety Grant Program:

The Office of School Safety would be charged with implementing a new grant program of \$100 million GPR. The grant program would be available to all schools for security improvements to school buildings, training opportunities, and school resource officers.

Mandatory Reporting:

The school safety package includes a provision that makes all current mandatory reporters for suspected child abuse to also be mandatory reporters for any threats of school violence. Mandatory reporters include medical professionals, mental health professionals, teachers, and guidance counselors. Additionally, an exemption to confidentiality laws is created for mental health professionals when a patient threatens school violence.

Parental Responsibility:

Amend the current bullying notification statutes to require the parent or guardian to be notified within 48 hours of a bullying incident involving their child. Current law requires notification of the parent or guardian but does not include a specific time requirement.

Trauma-Informed Care:

Require Trauma-Informed Care and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) be included in any training that is offered by the Office of School Safety. Training could include Trauma Sensitive Schools and Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment, which is currently used in a number schools.

School Safety Plans:

Strengthen school safety plan requirements, originally adopted under 2009 Act 309. The additional requirements would include emergency prevention and mitigation and security plans for after school activities, among several other requirements.

Pupil Privacy:

Ensure live video streams of schools can be shared with local law enforcement without violating pupil privacy law.

All of this is in addition to the historic investment of \$11.5 billion into K-12 education Governor Walker included in the current state budget – which includes a \$6.65 million new investment for mental health services within the schools.

A copy of Governor Walker's executive order calling a special session of the Wisconsin State Legislature is attached. A copy of Governor Walker's executive order calling a special session of the Wisconsin State Legislature is attached. Governor Walker also signed an executive order today directing the State of Wisconsin to further assist school districts by facilitating use of existing state contracts and creating new state contracts that includes safety and security equipment, supplies and services at competitively-bid prices and advantageous terms. A copy of this executive order is also attached.