

Joan Ballweg: Plans announced for the remaining school safety grants

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This session, the legislature passed 2017 Wisconsin Act 143 which established the Department of Justice Office of School Safety (OSS) and provided \$100 million to improve security in school districts around our state. Since then, over \$48 million of that funding has gone to 723 schools and school districts who applied for the first round of funding. In the 41st Assembly District alone, over \$655,000 have been awarded to eight schools and school districts (Adams-Friendship, Green Lake, Markesan, Montello, Princeton, Ripon, Westfield, and Wisconsin Dells).

The first round of grants were to invest in baseline security upgrades and mental health training. This included mandatory training for all full-time teachers, aides, counselors and administrators with training on Trauma Informed Care/Trauma Informed Schools (TIC/TSS) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Some other highlights of improvements include:

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- Training for all staff on Peaceful Warriors, PREPaRE, Threat Assessment and Active Shooter Response Training (ALICE);
- Securing entry areas, sidelites and interior classroom windows with shatter resistant film and updated doors and locks;
- Installing door monitors, external and internal security cameras;
- Enhancing emergency communications among staff and dispatchers;

- Allowing for the remodeling of entrances and visitor holdings;
- Purchasing the STOPit anonymous reporting system.

With the remaining \$45 million available, the Department of Justice has initiated a second round of school safety grants focused on bolstering the baseline mental health and security improvements from the first round of funding. In addition to more security upgrades, schools will send 10% of full time teachers and counselors to a 12-hour Adolescent Mental Health Training, which could be paid for by grant funds, and establish a mandatory School Safety Intervention Team (SSIT) that is based on a model from the U.S. Secret Service. These improvements will help schools engage in behavior monitoring, threat assessments and intervention.

The second round of funding will be awarded starting in October and all interested schools submitted a letter of "intent to apply" to the OSS by August 13, 2018. Schools who applied in the first round will be eligible for the second round of funding through a simplified grant application process. All other schools must fill the requirements for both the first and second round of funding. The amount awarded to each school will depend on the number and size of schools and school districts who apply. The grant application for the second round of grants opened August 15, 2018.

The Department of Justice consulted with leaders in education, security, law enforcement and mental health to develop the School Safety Grant Initiative. All grant applicants are required to work with law enforcement agencies in order to ensure that the investments they are making are safe, sustainable and provide students with the best learning environment possible. For more information on the Department of Justice Office of School Safety, visit

<https://www.doj.state.wi.us/office-school-safety/office-school-safety>.

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