

WisGOP: Brad Schimel's school safety grants win praise from educators

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[Madison, WI]— After leading the way on \$100 million of school safety funding, Brad Schimel's efforts are delivering results. Educators appreciate Schimel's work to fund school security improvements and mental health initiatives.

See the full op-ed from the *Kenosha News* [here](#) or find excerpts below.

Facing our children's mental health needs head-on

Kenosha News

Kristi Koschkee

October 18, 2018

As a professional educator, second only to the mothers and fathers out there, I probably spend more time with our beautiful Wisconsin students than just about anyone.

As an AP English teacher, I see the strain and anxiety students carry on their shoulders as I support and guide them to be the best possible student as they can be. I've also witnessed first-hand how the care we show for their mental well-being pays dividends over their educational — and personal — journeys.

Troubled children, whether as a result of turbulent home lives or misdiagnosed afflictions, grow into troubled adolescents, teens and, finally, adults. The key to dealing with this sad, difficult problem is intervention, which is why the Wisconsin school community cannot be more thrilled with Attorney General Brad Schimel's recent announcement that the second round of school safety grants will focus on mental health.

However, like the attorney general, I deal with solutions. Because frankly, though we face a tough situation, it is not an impossible one, and teachers can do a lot.

Recognizing our position, AG Schimel's second round of school safety grant funding to Wisconsin public schools — approximately \$48 million — will offer “advanced training for teachers on mental health issues,” and create “local teams of educators, counselors, and law enforcement (called school safety intervention teams, or ‘SSIT’). These intervention teams will assess threats and identify students in need of support.”

To qualify, schools need only to agree to send 10 percent of full-time teachers and counselors to Wisconsin Department of Justice-approved mental health training and establish and SSIT based on a model provided by the federal Secret Service. Moreover, building on the first round of grant funding, money is set aside to beefing up security infrastructure.

Put into practice, this training, I suspect, will work wonders. Teachers will feel supported, and, thanks to their newfound skill-set, support other educators in kind. As this intervention and prevention knowledge grows, we will find our school community more prepared and confident in their ability to deal with all sorts of mental health issues.

Finally, while emotions run hot in our current political environment, I still think it is important to sound some public support for AG Schimel's initiative.

What is being offered only contributes to the benefit and safety of our school community and, most importantly, our children. To sit back and do nothing, waiting for another attack, does not align with who I am or should even be an option.

We Wisconsinites are a proactive, can-do people. We have been given a wonderful opportunity to tackle our children's mental health issues head-on — let's take it. So,

thank you Brad Schimel for your leadership and commitment to our children!

See the full story from the *Kenosha News* [here](#).