

# Wisconsin Department of Justice and Office of School Safety: Work to deploy therapists, resource officers, and comfort dogs to Barron School District

Posted on Thursday, Oct 18, 2018

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*BARRON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of School Safety (OSS) is working with Wausau Police Department and the Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Center to deploy trained therapists, school resources officers, and comfort dogs to Barron School District, in the aftermath of the disappearance of 13 year-old Jayme Closs.*

If you have information that can help find Jayme Closs, contact the tip line at 1-855-744-3879.

“An entire state has been racked with Jayme’s disappearance, and the death of her parents,” said Attorney General Brad Schimel. “Obviously, this violent event has been deeply upsetting amongst Jayme’s peers and teachers. These trained therapists, school resource officers and therapy dogs are going to provide the schoolchildren and staff in Barron the support they need to get through the next few days. Then, critical training will ensure they all have the support they need in the coming weeks and months.”

A therapist and school resource officer with a therapy dog and trauma-informed care training from Wausau Police Department will be responding to Barron School District on Thursday, to assist students and staff in managing trauma and mental health needs. The OSS is also developing resources to assist the school, including

offering a team of counselors to respond to the school by the end of the week.

“There comes a time in every community when help is needed; we have certainly experienced that need for help,” said Wausau Police Chief Ben Bliven. “We are proud to offer support in the form of our outstanding employees for those in Barron County struggling with the trauma of recent events. Our thoughts and prayers are extended to the Barron County community and we pray for the safe return of Jayme Closs.”

Additionally, the Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools (WISH) Training & Technical Assistance Center will be providing emergency training to Barron School District staff and counselors on trauma-informed practices and PREPaRE training. PREPaRE training focuses on how school-based professionals can provide mental health support to students and staff following a crisis. These trainings will ensure that staff are able to provide other staff and students needed mental health support in the future.

All of these services will be funded through an emergency grant from DOJ. This emergency grant is available through an emergency fund created within the \$100 million allocated to DOJ for school safety, under [2017 Wisconsin Act 143](#).

In addition, DOJ Division of Criminal Investigation, Child Abduction Response Team, Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory, and Victim Services Crisis Response Team are also assisting local and federal law enforcement in the investigation. DOJ Victim Services Crisis Response Team are providing support to family and close friends of the family.

**MEDIA AVAILABILITY:** In the early afternoon on Thursday, October 18, the Wisconsin DOJ Office of School Safety Director Kristen Devitt, who is coordinating resources to the school, and the Wausau Police Department School Resource Officer and therapy dog will be available for media interviews. This media availability will occur at the Barron County Justice Center parking lot, 1420 State Hwy 25 North, Barron, WI 54812.

If you have any questions about this media availability, contact Wisconsin DOJ at [dojcommunciations@doj.state.wi.us](mailto:dojcommunciations@doj.state.wi.us).

**Do not** contact the Barron School District for media interviews.

**Do not** contact the Barron County Sheriff's Office regarding this media availability.

<https://www.doj.state.wi.us/news-releases/wisconsin-doj-office-school-safety-deploy-s-emergency-resources-assist-barron-county>