

March 6, 2018

Governor Walker, Majority Leader Fitzgerald, Minority Leader Shilling, Speaker Vos, and Minority Leader Hintz,

I respectfully ask you call a special session of the Legislature to consider and adopt the attached school safety proposals, which would have an immediate and positive impact on Wisconsin students and schools. The education community developed these items in response to the troubling trend of gun violence that has come to school doors across Wisconsin and the nation.

Adult inaction has spurred students to lead a national discussion around school safety and gun control. These students, which include my six grandchildren, are the first generation to grow up with the threat of gun violence as part of their consciousness and daily lives in school. Our children deserve to feel safe and supported at school. While our kids can lead the conversation, policymakers must be the ones to enact change. The only way we will break the cycle for future generations is through action.

Outlined in the attached agenda are concrete policy solutions addressing physical school environments; behavioral and mental health; school climate and culture; as well as school policies and procedures. These proposals build on successful efforts and direct resources into needed areas. Most importantly, they provide sustainable, flexible funding for local communities to address school safety as they see fit. We must move beyond the divisive and destructive plan of arming our educators. It is not a real solution.

I stand with the youth of our nation, and the growing majority of people in this country, in asking you to take action today. This proposal is only part of the broader effort that must be undertaken to address gun safety and common sense reform. Our students cannot continue to shoulder the burden our inaction.

Our shared work on mental health demonstrates the power of working together. We can take immediate, decisive steps to address school safety today.

Sincerely,



Tony Evers
State Superintendent

A Comprehensive Approach to Ensuring Safe and Educationally Sound Schools

A proposal to Governor Walker and the 2017-19 State Legislature (March 2018)

Students, parents and educators across Wisconsin have made it clear the arming teachers is not a solution to school safety challenges. Working with school leaders, educators, parents, and students, this proposal lays out proven, bipartisan solutions to address pressing school safety issues.

Physical Safety and Environment (local cost)

(1) Restore the revenue limit adjustment for school safety expenditures. 2009 Wisconsin Act 28 (2009-11 state budget) created a nonrecurring revenue limit adjustment for school safety expenditures; however, this tool was repealed by 2011 Act 32 (2011-13 state budget). This proposal would restore the revenue limit adjustment to help schools implement modern safety features. Based on prior law, the adjustment would be equal to \$100 times the number of pupils enrolled in the district or \$40,000, whichever is greater. To receive the adjustment, a school board has to:

- Adopt a resolution to increase its limit using the adjustment;
- Jointly develop an expenditure plan with a local law enforcement agency that specifies the purposes of the additional revenue and is consistent with the broader school safety plan required of districts; and
- Submit the expenditure plan to the Department of Public Instruction.

District could use funds to purchase school safety equipment, fund the compensation costs of security officers, or fund other expenditures consistent with its school safety plan, including:

- Controlled access
- Visitor management, student, staff, and visitor identification systems
- Secure technologies (cameras, distress buttons, two-way radios, signage, locks, etc.)
- Student Resource Officers (SRO's) and safety personnel
- Comprehensive threat assessment of each school

Behavioral and Mental Health (\$25 million)

- (2) Expand categorical aid funding for school mental health staff. Increase categorical aid funding to **\$20 million and expand and extend aid to include school counselors, psychologists, and nurses.** [Currently \$3 million with only social workers eligible]
- (3) Increase community and school collaborative mental health grants. Increase grant funding to **\$10.25 million to support integration and co-location of community mental health services** in schools. [Currently \$3.25 million]
- (4) Expand statewide training for school staff and community partners around mental health screening and interventions. Increase funding to **\$1.42 million for statewide training in Youth Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Sensitive Schools, and SBIRT** (Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment). [Currently \$420,000]

Climate and Culture (\$25 million)

- (5) Grant program to address school climate and violence. Create a new **\$24 million categorical aid program to implement programs that address school climate and violence**, similar to Pennsylvania's Safe Schools Targeted Grants. A similar proposal was included in the 2015-17 DPI State Budget Proposal (DIN 4006), but no action was taken. Grants would fund prevention activities, including developing or implementing evidence-based:
 - Conflict resolution or dispute management strategies, including restorative justice and student leadership programs
 - Character education, asset building, peer mediation, anti-bullying, and equity programs
 - Suicide risk screening, intervention, and prevention efforts
 - Behavioral systems of support (e.g., Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support or PBIS)
 - Violence prevention curricula
 - Wrap around services for students, community schools, and family engagement
 - School threat or risk assessments
 - Safety, violence prevention, emergency preparedness, and all-hazards school plans
 - Trainings with local community or law enforcement partners
- (6) Expand the Wisconsin Safe & Healthy (WISH) Schools Training & Technical Assistance Center to address emergency preparedness and school violence. Twenty states have

school safety centers that address emergency preparedness and school violence. A similar center was proposed as part of the 2015-17 DPI State Budget Proposal (*DIN* 4005), but no action was taken. The WISH Center currently focuses on prevention and intervention programs around alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse (AODA), mental health, and school safety (most notably the PREPaRE crisis prevention and response training). This proposal provides **\$1 million to expand the WISH Center to address emergency preparedness and school violence.**

Policies and Procedures (no cost)

- (7) Require regular safety/security plan reviews: In addition to the safety planning team review required by Wis. Stat. sec 118.07, require that every three years, **schools conduct a comprehensive endorsed safety/security site assessment** (e.g. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Guide for Developing High Quality School Emergency Operations Plans). Additionally, every school should have:
- A Safety Planning Team (per FEMA recommendation);
 - An Emergency Operation Plan (per Act 309); and
 - One person responsible for the safety plans (per DPI guidance)
- (8) Keep sensitive school safety information confidential: Allow school board and districts to **address school safety plans in closed session to protect sensitive safety and emergency planning information** from potential threats.