

CO-SPONSORSHIP MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 13, 2018

TO: Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature

**FROM: Rep. Sondy Pope
Rep. David Bowen
Rep. Eric Genrich
Rep. Gary Hebl
Rep. David Considine
Rep. Don Vruwink**

**Sen. Janet Bewley
Sen. Chris Larson
Sen. LaTonya Johnson**

RE: Co-Sponsorship of LRBs 5633/1, 5634/1, 5635/1, 5637/1, 5640/1, 5648/1 & 5655/1 – The Wisconsin Student Safety Package

SHORT DEADLINE: Friday, March 16

It is clear that, now more than ever, lawmakers must take a proactive and preventative approach to school safety. In addition to SB 858/AB 1011, which would allow school districts to raise revenue limits for safety expenditures, we are offering the Wisconsin Student Safety Package. These bills are common sense solutions that will make every school in Wisconsin safer. By giving districts and schools the resources and support they need, we can begin to cultivate safer and healthier learning environments for Wisconsin students.

These bills come at the request of educators, families and students. They focus on supporting and expanding behavioral and mental health staff, changing school climate and culture and developing safety plans and procedures to enhance learning environment safety. Brief descriptions of each bill can be found below:

***LRB-5633** – Increases categorical aid funding from \$3 million to \$20 million to expand and extend aid to allow schools to hire more counselors, school social workers, school psychologists and school nurses.*

***LRB-5634** – Increases grant funding from \$3.25 million to \$10.25 million to support integration and co-location of community mental health services in schools*

***LRB-5635** –Increases funding from \$420,000 to \$1.42 million to provide training to school district staff and instructional staff (and independent charters) on screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment program (SBIRT), trauma sensitive schools and youth mental health first aid.*

***LRB-5637** – Creates new "Violence Prevention and Reduction" grants as a categorical aid (\$24 million annually). Grants will be provided to school districts to develop and implement programs to prevent and reduce violence in schools. DPI will establish by rule, the eligibility criteria for these grants and the school violence reduction activities that may be funded with grant proceeds. Grant funds may not be used to pay school district personnel costs.*

***LRB-5640** – Under current law, school boards must meet in open session. This bill allows a school board to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing, developing, reviewing or approving a school safety plan. School safety plans will be exempt from open records law.*

LRB-5648 – Requires school boards and a governing body of a private school to establish a school safety team and a school safety plan. The bill also requires comprehensive security site assessments. DPI must promulgate rules to establish minimum standards for establishing school safety teams. Site assessments must be done at each building and facility at least once every three years. DPI is also required to promulgate rules to establish minimum standards for site assessments. Finally, the school safety plan must specify one individual employed by the school board or governing body responsible for implementing the school safety plan.

LRB-5655 – WISH Expansion - Expands Wisconsin Safe and Healthy (WISH) Schools Training and Technical Assistance Center. Currently, this center focuses on prevention and intervention programs around alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse, mental health and school safety. LRB-5655/1 provides an expansion of \$1 million to the program to address emergency preparedness and school violence.

These bills are common sense steps that are overwhelmingly supported by the education community. Actions must be taken now to give educators, families and students the resources and tools to prevent tragic school violence and to address mental health. Please join us in supporting these policies that will lay the groundwork for keeping our students safe.

If you are interested in co-sponsoring these bills, please contact my office at 6-3520 or Rep.Pope@legis.wisconsin.gov. Please indicate if there are individual bills that you do not wish to be on. Otherwise we will assume that you are signing on to all of them.

All co-sponsors will be added to both Senate and Assembly companion bills unless otherwise requested.