

Evers, AG Kaul Recognize Safe Schools Week

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<http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/schoolyard-greenfield-s5.jpg>



School safety is a top priority, says the Governor, and that means doing everything we can to keep our schools, our streets, and our communities safe.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers and Attorney General Josh Kaul today recognized October 16-22, 2022, as Safe Schools Week in Wisconsin and highlighted efforts to promote school safety across the state through new school and community safety investments as well as the ongoing work of the Office of School Safety (OSS). Gov. Evers also signed a proclamation recognizing Safe Schools Week in Wisconsin, which is available [here](#).



“Whether it’s investing in public safety initiatives or student mental health, we know what’s best for our kids is what’s best for our state, and that means doing everything we can to keep our schools, our streets, and our communities safe,” said Gov. Evers. “School safety has to be a top priority for us as a state, and that starts by ensuring we’re supporting our kids and our schools with the investments and resources they need to be safe and successful.”

“DOJ’s Office of School Safety has been working to make schools across the state safer since

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it launched in 2018, and it's made a difference," said Attorney General Kaul. "We must continue this critical work keeping our kids safe, and I'm calling on the Legislature to provide long-term funding for the Office of School Safety."

Efforts to promote school safety through the OSS build on the governor's significant investments to promote public safety and support Wisconsin's public schools. Over the past year, Gov. Evers has invested more than \$100 million in violence prevention and community safety statewide. These investments not only address communities' immediate public safety needs but they are also targeted to address and stop cycles of violence in communities, including investments in local law enforcement, youth mentorship, and community-based violence interruption services. Earlier this month, Gov. Evers also [announced](#) his next biennial budget proposal will include \$91.4 million to increase shared revenue and provide local governments with the long-term, ongoing resources needed to support public safety and community priorities, as well as a new \$10 million shared revenue public safety supplement to help specifically address EMS, police, and fire costs.



Additionally, on top of his historic biennial budget investments in Wisconsin schools, Gov. Evers has also invested more than \$200 million in federal pandemic relief funding, much of which schools could use for whatever they needed most, including to increase their investments in students, staff, and safety. These investments include \$30 million for the governor's "Get Kids Ahead" initiative to provide critical mental health services in K-12 schools across Wisconsin. [Research shows](#) that improving student mental health also improves student health, learning, attendance, and engagement while reducing bullying, risky behaviors, violence, involvement in the juvenile justice system, and substance use, all of which promote safer schools across the state.

OSS has a four-pronged approach to improve school safety which includes threat reporting, threat assessment consultation, critical incident response, and general school safety guidance. OSS launched Speak Up, Speak Out (SUSO) in September 2020. SUSO is a statewide confidential reporting system designed to be a safe place for students, school staff, and community members to share information concerning potential school violence. Since SUSO's inception, the tip line has received more than 4,000 tips. Additional information and data on SUSO can be found in the [2021-2022 SUSO Annual Report](#).

Additionally, this year, OSS [launched](#) a Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) program around the state. CIRTs are designed to provide all Wisconsin K-12 public, private, charter, and Tribal schools with access to a regionally based team to support them if a critical incident ever occurs at their school. The mission of the CIRT program is to minimize the psychological impact of a critical school incident, provide resources to help stabilize the school community, work to identify individuals that may require long-term mental health services after a critical incident occurs, and offer support to school administrators and educators. Wisconsin is the first state to implement regionally based CIRTs on a statewide basis.

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OSS also launched a \$2 million critical incident mapping data [grant program](#) in July of this year. The grant program offers reimbursement to school boards and governing bodies of private schools for critical incident mapping data. Critical incident mapping provides a digital blueprint of a school that can be easily accessed by law enforcement on cell phones or other devices during a critical incident. It provides a clear layout of a school for law enforcement when a quick response is necessary. Additional information about the grant program is available [here](#).

OSS was initially supported by more than \$2 million in federal grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance. OSS is currently supported by more than \$1.8 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding, which will end in December 2023.