




STATE OF WISCONSIN | Legislative Audit Bureau

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Joe Chrisman
State Auditor

DATE: February 25, 2019

TO: Senator Robert Cowles and
Representative Samantha Kerkman, Co-chairpersons
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

FROM: Joe Chrisman
State Auditor 

SUBJECT: Proposed Audit of School Safety Grants and Plans—Background Information

At your request, we have gathered some background information the Joint Legislative Audit Committee may find useful in considering an audit of school safety grants and plans. 2017 Wisconsin Act 143 created the Office of School Safety in the Department of Justice (DOJ). The Act appropriated \$100 million to DOJ for grants for school safety for eligible school safety expenditures by school districts, private schools, independent charter schools, and tribal schools. These grants were awarded by DOJ in two rounds in 2018. The first round of grants focused on school violence and the second on mental health and physical security improvements.

Act 143 also expanded the requirements for school safety plans and required each school board and the governing body of each private school to file a copy of its school safety plan with the Office of School Safety before January 1, 2019, and requires a copy to be filed before every January 1 thereafter. Along with the school safety plan, Act 143 requires submission of information on school violence drills held during the previous year and the most recent date of school safety training, the school board's or governing body's review and approval of the school safety plan, and consultation of the school board or governing body with a local law enforcement agency to conduct on-site safety assessments.

A school safety plan must be created with active participation of appropriate parties, as specified by the school board or the governing body of a private school. Appropriate parties may include DOJ, local law enforcement officers, fire fighters, school administrators, teachers, pupil services professionals (i.e., school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and nurses), and mental health professionals. In addition, an on-site safety assessment of each school building, site, and facility that is regularly occupied by pupils must be conducted before the safety plan is created or updated. A school safety plan must include all of the following:

- an individualized safety plan for each school building and facility that is regularly occupied by pupils;
- general guidelines specifying procedures for emergency prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery;

- guidelines and procedures to address school violence and attacks, threats of school violence and attacks, bomb threats, fire, weather-related emergencies, intruders, parent-student reunification, and threats to non-classroom events, including recess, concerts and other performances, athletic events, and any other extracurricular activity or event; and
- the process for reviewing the methods for conducting school violence drills.

Each school board and the governing body of each private school must review and approve the school safety plan at least once every three years after the plan goes into effect. Upon the creation and upon each review and approval of a school safety plan, a school board must submit a copy of the most recent blueprints of each school building and facility in the school district to each local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over any portion of the school district and to the Office of School Safety. Each governing body of a private school must submit a copy of the most recent blueprints of the private school and all of its facilities to each local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the private school and the Office of School Safety.

An audit of school safety grants and plans could:

- analyze the process DOJ used to evaluate applications for school safety grants and select award recipients, and determine the intended use and amount of funding for each award;
- evaluate DOJ's oversight of grant funds awarded to ensure they are spent in compliance with the goals of the grant;
- determine the extent to which school boards submitted school safety plans as required by statute;
- assess the extent to which school boards cooperated with DOJ and other entities in developing school safety plans; and
- evaluate whether school safety plans include provisions that best practices would indicate should be included.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any additional questions regarding this proposed audit, please contact me.

JC/ck

cc: Senator Chris Kapenga
 Senator Alberta Darling
 Senator Janet Bewley
 Senator Tim Carpenter

Representative John Macco
 Representative John Nygren
 Representative Melissa Sargent
 Representative Katrina Shankland

Josh Kaul, Attorney General
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