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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of School Safety Releases 2023-2024 Annual Speak Up, Speak Out Report

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Justice Office of School Safety (OSS) today released the 2023-2024 annual report for Speak Up, Speak Out (SUSO). SUSO is a free statewide threat reporting tipline available to all Wisconsin schools. SUSO also serves as the hub that connects all OSS initiatives and the entry point where schools can access comprehensive services offered by OSS as well as local, state, and national partners.

“Kids in our schools should be able to focus on what they’re learning in class without having to worry about their safety,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “Speak Up, Speak Out has been a remarkable success, assisting an increasing number of students and helping many schools that are working to take a comprehensive approach to school safety.”

SUSO received 5,270 tips during the 2023-2024 school year, a more than 40 percent increase from the previous school year. Since the inception of SUSO in 2020, bullying has consistently been the number one tip. It is also common nationally for bullying to be the most reported tip. Awareness of these incidents helps schools intervene early, before grievances and upsets can lead children down a pathway to violence.

Numerous students across Wisconsin have contacted SUSO each year since its inception, reporting concerns, resulting in safer school communities. The significant increase in tips and the rich dialogue that many students have with SUSO staff indicate that SUSO has earned a reputation amongst youth as a safe, accessible, and credible place to report concerns.

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The 2023-2024 annual report reflects OSS' comprehensive approach to prioritizing preventing violence in our schools and when crisis events do arise, responding appropriately to mitigate trauma and get students back to learning more quickly. OSS assisted several schools with crisis response and recovery during the 2023-2024 school year.

OSS also offers a variety of free trainings concerning violence prevention, protection, mitigation, crisis response, and recovery. These include trainings for Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM), Standard Response Protocol (SRP), and the Standard Reunification Method (SRM). From September 1, 2023, to August 31, 2024, OSS provided SRP and SRM training to 838 people from 98 public school districts, private schools and tribal schools, 55 law enforcement agencies, and 28 other agencies such as Emergency Management, EMS, Fire, City Admin, bus companies and other community agencies.

About Office of School Safety Funding

Earlier this year, Gov. Tony Evers signed Assembly Bill 1050 into law, which authorized the use of funds to bridge funding for the Office of School Safety to continue its school safety initiatives in Wisconsin through September 2025. This bridge funding will allow the state to potentially provide stable funding for the OSS as part of the 2025-2027 biennial budget. While this bridge funding has allowed OSS to continue its success in keeping students and teachers safe, long-term funding is still needed.