

SPEAK UP **OUT** WISCONSIN



**HELP IS HERE.
SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT.**

The Office of School Safety 2024-2025 Impact Report

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, OFFICE OF SCHOOL SAFETY



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Our Purpose

The Office of School Safety (OSS) takes a comprehensive and proactive approach to school safety and violence prevention. OSS provides programs, guidance, training, and consultation on school safety best practices, ensuring that all Wisconsin children can learn in safe environments. Our nationally recognized initiatives include the Speak Up, Speak Out Wisconsin (SUSO) tipline; Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) protocols, training, and consultation; Crisis Response and Recovery (CRR) support for schools affected by crisis events; grant support for school communities; and guidance for meaningful compliance with Wis. Stat. § 118.07 school safety requirements. Collectively, these initiatives emphasize prevention, protection, early intervention, harm mitigation, and recovery strategies to promote safer school communities.

SUSO is a free statewide threat reporting tipline available to all Wisconsin schools. Tipline staff provide students with immediate, accessible, and confidential support 24/7/365. SUSO harnesses the power of bystanders, addresses concerns early, and provides opportunities for early intervention and harm prevention.

The BTAM process is designed to identify, assess, manage, and monitor threats to schools and students. The BTAM process identifies students exhibiting threatening or other concerning behavior, gathers information to assess the risk of harm, and determines appropriate interventions to prevent violence and promote successful outcomes. The goal of the threat management process is to intervene at the earliest stage, provide assistance to students, and prevent violence. OSS provides BTAM training, support, consultation, tools, and resources to schools and law enforcement.

When schools are impacted by traumatic events, OSS responds with consultation and support to guide interventions, reduce the trauma impact of the event, and promote recovery. Support is offered to schools throughout the crisis and recovery process. Through **OSS' CRR project, 12 regional Critical Incident Response (CIR) teams have been created and trained across Wisconsin** and are accessible to any school to support their crisis recovery efforts.

Preventing school violence requires a collaborative community commitment. OSS partners with educators, law enforcement, internal DOJ divisions, community organizations, and national school safety leaders to implement effective practices in Wisconsin schools.



EMPOWER



SUPPORT

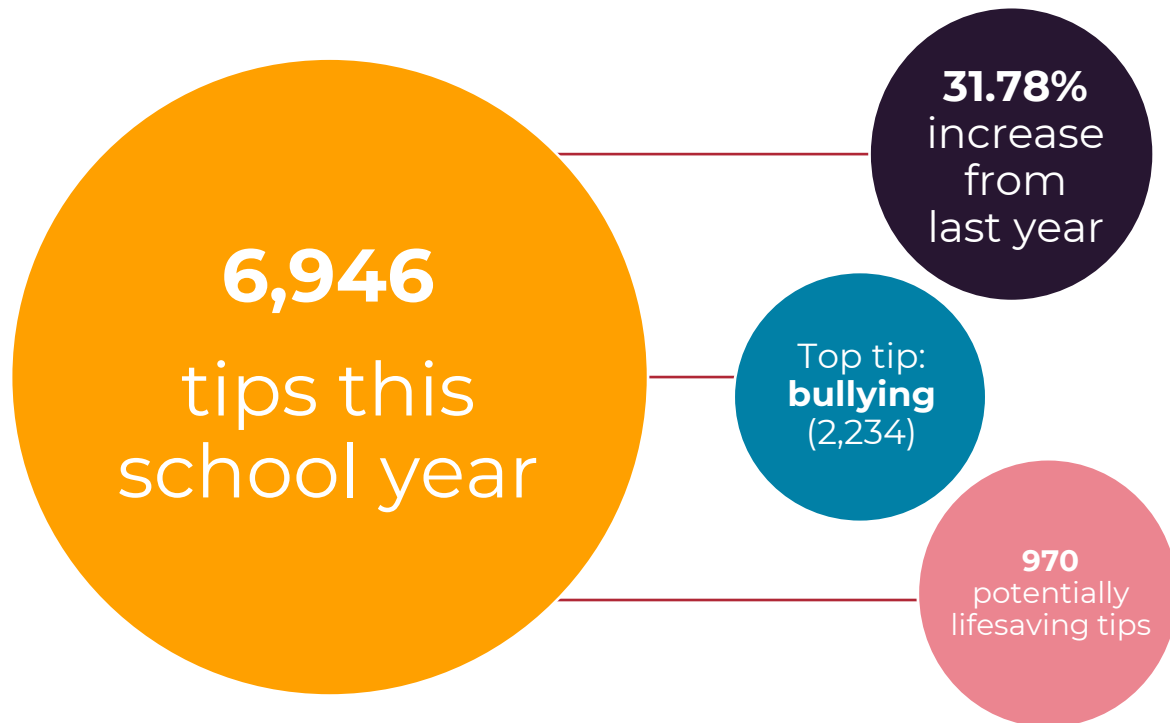


PROTECT



Speak Up, Speak Out (SUSO)

Data below is for the 2024-2025 School Year



SUSO is a free, statewide tipline for K-12 schools in Wisconsin that provides students, staff, and community members with a safe and confidential way to report concerns. Since inception in 2020, SUSO has received over 17,000 tips from Wisconsin schools. Bullying has been the leading type of tip reported to SUSO since inception—a pattern that mirrors national trends. Increased awareness of these incidents enables schools to intervene early, preventing grievances and conflicts from escalating or leading students toward potential acts of violence.

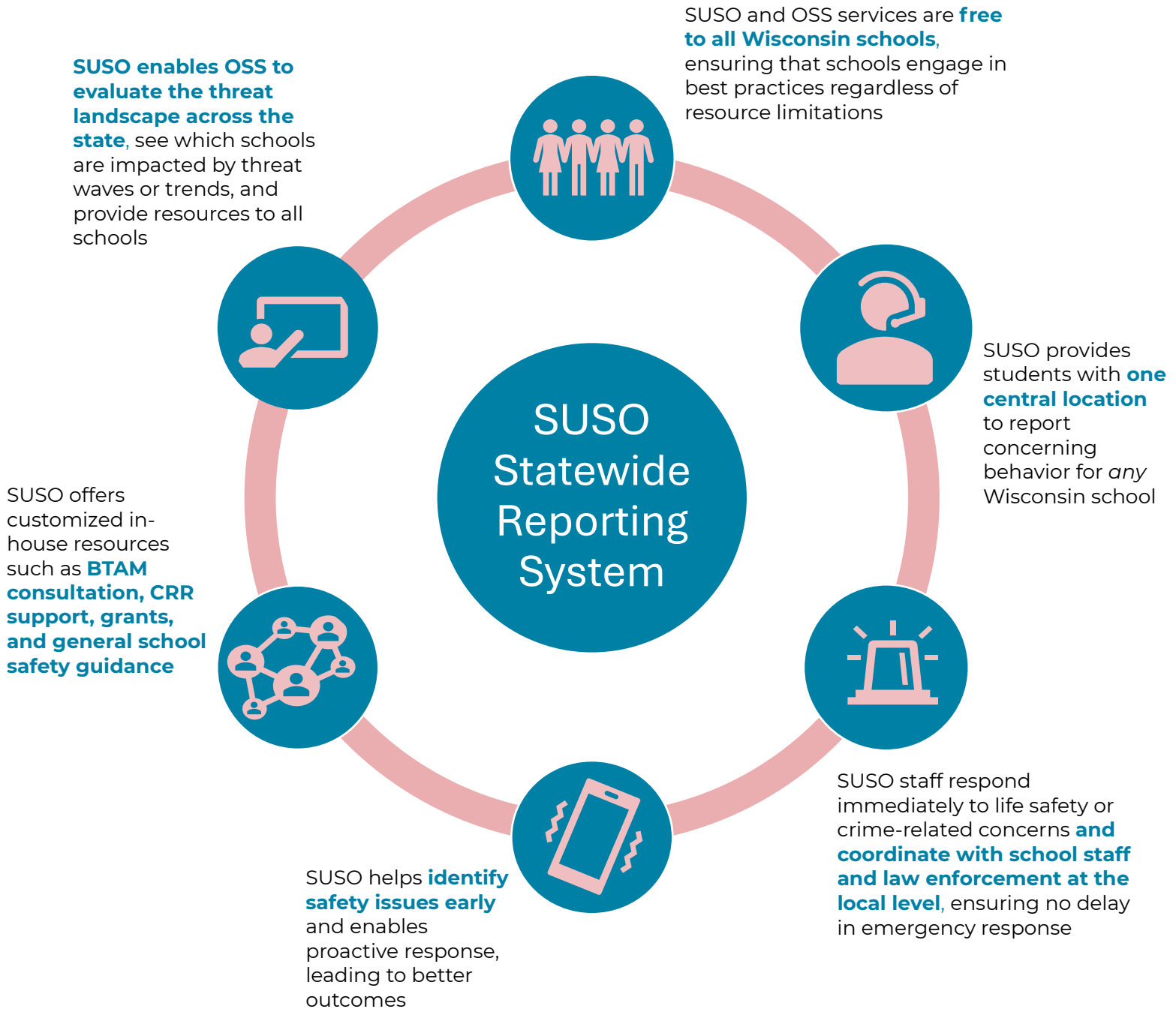
According to a 2020 report, *Tip Lines for School Safety: A National Portrait of Tip Line Use*,¹ **two thirds of school administrators believed their tip lines allowed their schools to respond more effectively to bullying.** Additionally, **77% believed that their schools' tip lines made them more aware of potential safety issues at their schools. Over half of survey respondents said that their schools' tip lines had prevented violent incidents and had allowed the school to respond more effectively to drug use.** Around three-quarters reported that their tip lines had prevented incidents of self-harm or suicide among their schools' students.

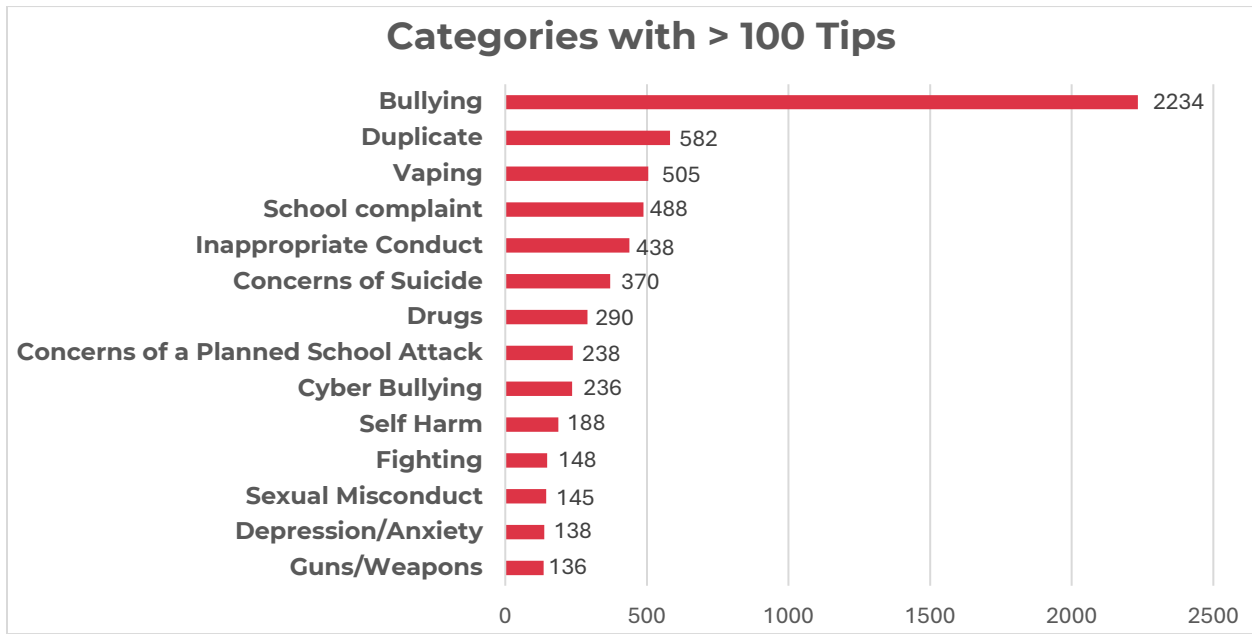
¹ Planty, M., Banks, D., Lindquist, C., Cartwright, J., & Witwer, A. (2020). *Tip Lines for School Safety: A National Portrait of Tip Line Use*. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International.



Benefits of SUSO

Wisconsin's Statewide Centralized Reporting System for K-12 Schools

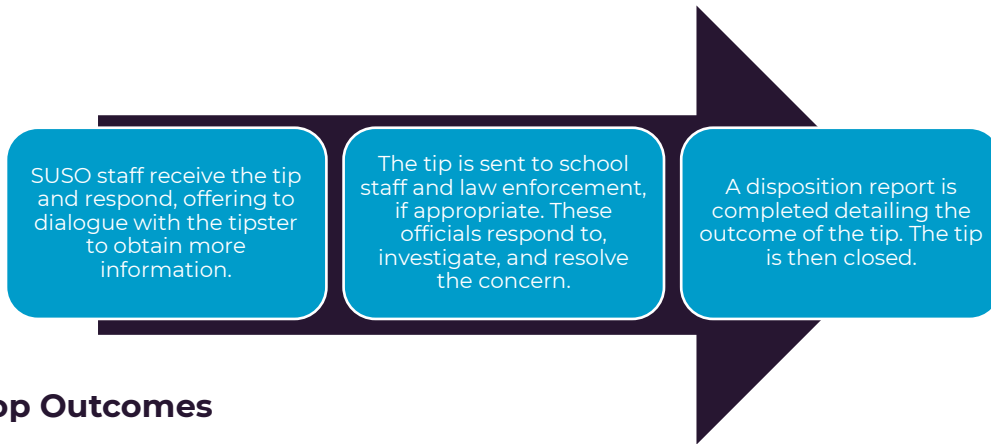




2024-2025 School Year

**Duplicate tips indicate multiple reports for the same incident and are indicative of a healthy reporting culture within a school community.*

What happens when a tip is submitted to SUSO?



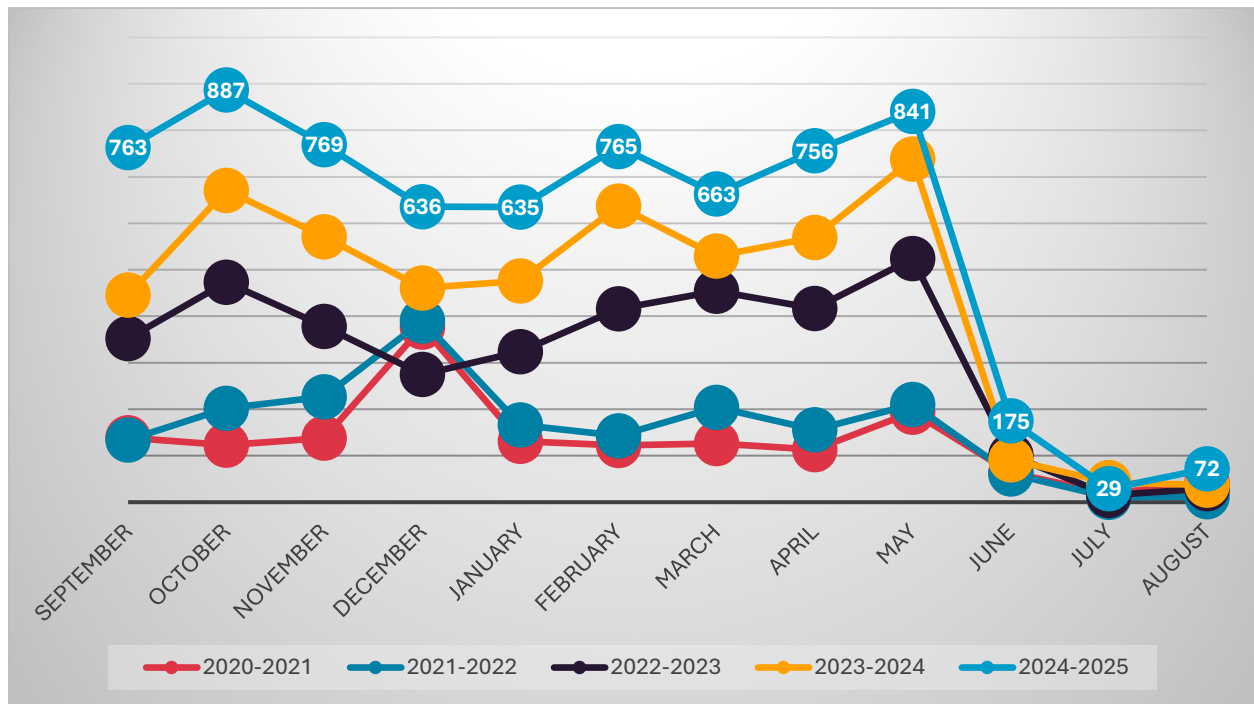
Top Outcomes

- School will monitor (4036)
- Discussion with students (3519)
- Parents notified (1925)

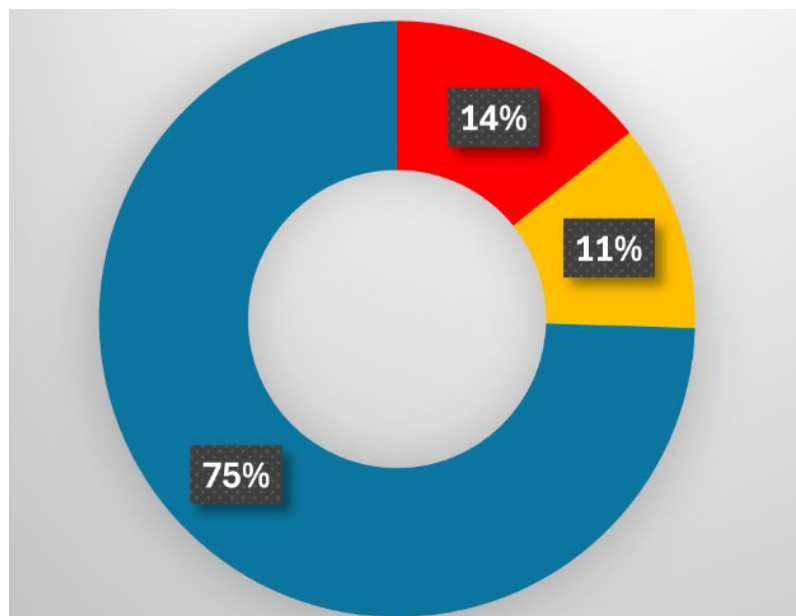
Both schools and law enforcement are asked to complete an outcome report (disposition) after a tip has been investigated. More than one outcome may be appropriate for each tip.



Growth of SUSO Tips



SUSO Tips by Level of Concern



2024-2025 School Year

Imminent Concern: tips that are potentially life-saving such as planned school attack, guns/weapons, concerns of suicide, etc.

Heightened Concern: tips that concern violence, criminal activity, or self-harm that has recently occurred or is highly likely to occur

Concern: tips such as bullying, rule violations, peer-to-peer interactions, etc.



Example Tips

Cyberbullying: A tipster reported a social media “school drama” page posting false information and intensifying conflict between students. The account owner attempted to pressure the tipster into engaging in inappropriate behavior. School administrators identified the students involved and worked to have the account taken down.

Drugs: A tipster reported a student using high risk substances and expressing suicidal thoughts online. Administrators met with the student, notified parents, and provided counseling and additional community resources.

Concerns of Suicide: A student self-reported experiencing depression and suicidal thoughts but was unsure who to turn to for help. Analysts provided real time support and connected the student with school administrators and counselors, who provided care and assisted in notifying the student’s parents.

Guns/Weapons: A tipster reported that a student had posted photos of themselves with a gun on social media, along with additional images of firearms. Analysts alerted local law enforcement, who seized a firearm and prevented the student from coming to school, ultimately resulting in an arrest.

Sextortion: A distressed tipster reported being extorted for money after sharing photos with someone using a fake identity on social media. Analysts de-escalated the situation, advised the tipster not to send money, and encouraged them to inform their parents. The student was connected to local law enforcement and national resources for victims of sextortion.

Concerns of a Planned School Attack: A parent reported their child’s friend had made threats in a gaming group chat. The tip included screenshots of messages threatening to bring a knife to school. SUSO staff coordinated with law enforcement and school administrators, who worked to address the threat and ensure the safety of the school.



Building a Healthy Reporting Culture

Safe schools are a shared responsibility, and it starts with the culture we create together. SUSO aligns with the [U.S. Department of Homeland Security's](#) threat reporting recommendations and follows national best practices for preventing violence by encouraging safe and effective confidential reporting. By proactively harnessing the power of bystanders and fostering a culture of help-seeking, SUSO provides opportunities for early intervention and harm prevention.

“In 81% of violent incidents in U.S. schools, at least one person knew about the attacker’s plan in advance but did not report it.”

[U.S. Secret Service](#)

“Students are more likely to report warning signs of potentially threatening behavior if a confidential reporting system is available to them.”

[Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center](#)

When students feel supported and have a confidential place to report concerns, they are more likely to speak up. Some may hesitate out of fear of retaliation or social isolation, while others may distance themselves from peers exhibiting concerning behaviors. By reframing reporting as a form of help-seeking, schools can reduce the stigma around student struggles—students who are hurting deserve support. **Empowering students as active participants in school safety creates opportunities for them to be part of the solution.**

HELP IS HERE. SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT.



SUSO Instructional Materials

Awareness equips students and community members with knowledge and encourages them to take an active part in promoting school safety.

With proper instruction and implementation, SUSO offers a safe and confidential way to break the code of silence and report safety concerns. To build awareness of SUSO and create a culture of help seeking, schools can purchase SUSO Student Instructional Materials through the [SUSO Store](#), which offers a wide variety of branded items such as notebooks, floor mats, stickers, pens, posters, and more.



SUSO works best when it is visible, accessible, and actively integrated into school life. OSS provides free resources to educate and engage students, staff, parents, and community members with SUSO. On the [SUSO website](#), schools now have access to tipline best practices, tip management resources, and [downloadable materials](#). Materials are available in printable and digital formats, suitable for placement around school, in social media posts, on school websites, in newsletters, and more. For additional materials and best practice guidance, schools can reach out to schoolsafety@wisdoj.gov.



Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM)

School violence is preventable. School-based threat assessment teams are an effective intervention practice and one of the key components to comprehensive school safety. BTAM is a fact-based, systematic process designed to identify, assess, and manage potentially dangerous or violent situations (NASP, 2021). Research and collective experience of experts in the field provide knowledge and best practice guidelines for conducting threat assessments in various settings, including the school environment.



Threat assessment and management are intertwined; one without the other will only be partially effective. **Threat assessment is defined as the process of evaluating behavior, and the circumstances surrounding the behavior, to uncover any facts or evidence that someone poses a threat to themselves or others.** Often, the focus can erroneously be put on whether a student *made* a threat rather than whether the student *poses* a threat.

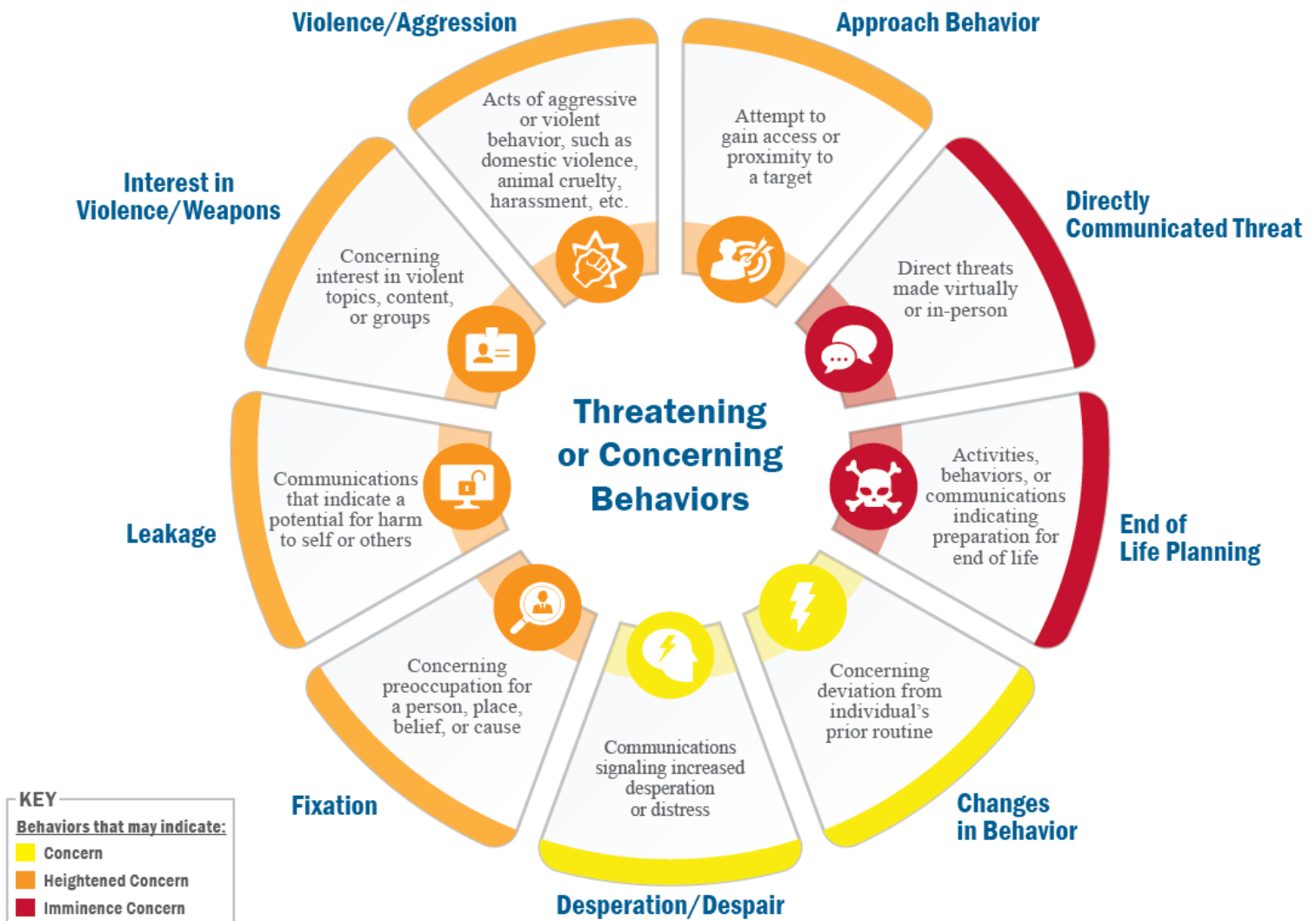
The process of assessing risks to a particular target, individual, or group of individuals, and designing and implementing intervention and management strategies to reduce the risk or threat is the definition of threat management. **BTAM in schools is often referred to as a problem-solving approach to violence prevention.** This involves assessment of students who have demonstrated a concern for violence and focuses on helping the student solve the problem with interventions and supports (Cornell, 2023).



Multi-disciplinary Teams and Training

OSS provides full day, no cost BTAM training to multidisciplinary teams of school administrators, school mental health professionals, security personnel, and law enforcement staff. The training empowers teams to determine if someone poses a threat to the school community and intervene effectively to prevent violence and provide interventions for struggling youth. From September 1, 2024 through August 31, 2025, **OSS conducted 18 BTAM trainings for 1,463 stakeholders.** OSS staff continue to find host districts across the state and are working to develop an online training module.

From September 2024 through August 2025, OSS staff trained **1,463 partners** in BTAM. Attendees **represented 217 schools, 70 law enforcement agencies, and 20 additional organizations** such as fire, emergency response, and higher education institutions.



Established Assessment Procedures

Effective BTAM teams proactively establish processes and procedures to guide their assessment and implement the process consistently. Team members gather data from multiple sources and analyze the information to gain an accurate understanding of the situation, context, student's thinking, behavior, and any developmental and disability factors. Ultimately, this assessment helps the team determine the level of concern the student poses and identify interventions to mitigate risk and support the student. Standardization of this process increases the consistent implementation and fidelity of the process, while also decreasing the potential harmful effects of bias.

OSS has resources available based on the scientific body of knowledge of BTAM. **The Wisconsin School Threat Assessment and Management Protocol-Revised 24 (WSTAMP-R24)** is an early intervention tool to assist BTAM trained staff in determining appropriate intervention steps when students exhibit concerning behaviors. The BTAM process continuum includes **Triage, Inquiry, Assessment and Case Management**. The [Wisconsin School Threat Assessment and Management Protocol \(WSTAMP\) Process Flowchart](#) specifies each step in the process.

OSS has released an [updated BTAM Guide](#) to accompany the newly revised *Wisconsin School Threat Assessment and Management Protocol (WSTAMP-R24)*. Revisions have been made to the Flowchart, Triage, Inquiry, Interviews and Additional Sources of Information forms. Additionally, new forms have been created and include Assessment, Interviews (for younger students of concern and target), Restorative Contract, Plan to Protect a Targeted Person, and an Intervention and Support Plan. The revised forms and guide have replaced the previous version on the website.

BTAM Case Consultation & Support

OSS employs several team members that have completed the Master Trainer certification from the *National Threat Evaluation and Reporting (NTER)* program of the *Department of Homeland Security (DHS)*. In addition, Director Trish Kilpin has completed the rigorous task of becoming a Certified Threat Manager (CTM) through the *Association of Threat Assessment Professionals*. OSS team members offer case consultation as requested and offer support through SUSO when reports of concerning behaviors arise.

In some cases, the need for additional input may lead to scaling up to include external partners (i.e., *WI DOJ, WI Statewide Intelligence Center, FBI*). **Consultation with the OSS team results in rich discussion, collaborative problem solving, and resource sharing, leading to ongoing relationships with school and law enforcement teams.**



Crisis Response and Recovery (CRR)

OSS has resources available to assist Wisconsin schools during all phases of crisis response and recovery. While there is no one-sized solution to crisis intervention, OSS can help guide school and district crisis teams as they plan and implement trauma informed interventions—during immediate response and throughout recovery—that promote healing and resilience for everyone within the school community. The immediate and ongoing response to crises in a school community can have a direct impact on short and long-term recovery. Working through the steps of response and assessing unique variables of a crisis can present challenges, especially when those leading a school crisis response may also be impacted by the crisis incident. OSS can support schools in crisis response and recovery efforts.

OSS has 12 trained regional **Critical Incident Response (CIR) Teams** throughout Wisconsin. These teams are prepared to respond to school crises and can be deployed to provide assistance to school communities.

"We experienced multiple tragedies as a learning community during this past school year. **The Office of School Safety was an essential part of our response, recovery, and ongoing support for our students, families, and staff.** They sent team members to our district to provide direct care for our students, parents, and staff and linked us to resources at the local, state, and national level that benefitted all within our learning community. When you are walking through multiple tragedies in a single school year with your colleagues and families, the level of hurt and pain begins to show on those who are providing the care needed for others in our learning community. **The Office of School Safety not only gave our teachers, student services providers, and administrative team members extra help to our students and families, but they connected our staff with trauma experts to ensure that we were monitoring our own responses and health through these difficult times. Their thoughtful and caring response has had a significant impact throughout our learning community that continues to be felt as we enter a new school year.**"

— A District Administrator



**CRISIS
RESPONSE
& RECOVERY**



From September 1, 2024, to August 31, 2025, OSS staff trained **1,018 school staff** at 22 events statewide in topics of PREPaRE 2, Psychological First Aid, Compassion Fatigue, and other CRR topics.

OSS staff can respond to various school crises throughout the state, providing a variety of evidence-based recovery interventions and support to impacted school communities. Examples of varied CRR support:

- Direct consultation with school leaders and crisis teams to plan recovery steps
- Initial and ongoing crisis team coaching
- Staff training and empowerment through caregiver training in Psychological First Aid, Vicarious Trauma, and School Safety
- Resources and information for parents and caregivers to support their children after trauma exposure
- Resources and consultation from national partners
- Ongoing support and therapeutic interventions to administrative teams leading recovery efforts
- Guidance on reaffirming safety after a school threat, lockdown, evacuation, or reunification
- Support to schools and districts impacted by a student or staff death
- Assistance in carefully designing interventions after a suicide to decrease contagion
- Aid in planning and implementing social support activities that promote recovery through the power of community cohesion
- Provision of social support toolkit materials to implement effective social support experiences
- Deployment of regional trained and vetted multidisciplinary team members
- Guidance for effective small group and individualized interventions that facilitate adaptive coping
- Restorative discussion scripts and activities to build or reaffirm psychological safety and engage youth voice



Grant Support for School Communities

The OSS Grants Team administers several grant opportunities for Wisconsin schools: **Act 109-Digital Mapping of School Buildings, Critical Incident Stabilization, and SUSO Instructional Materials**. See the OSS [website](#) for updates on grant opportunities.

[Digital Mapping of School Buildings](#)

Recipients of Digital Mapping funds worked on production of digital maps of school facilities and buildings. Maps created as part of this opportunity are distributed to local law enforcement and first responders to expedite response in the event of an incident on school grounds. To date, **389 grantees** have been awarded more than **\$6 million** in support of mapping initiatives. Applications continue to be accepted, with new awards subject to availability of turnback funding.

[SUSO Student Instructional Materials](#)

The SUSO Student Instructional Materials grant has supported schools in implementing SUSO. Funding provided schools with access to instructional materials related to SUSO and assisted schools in introducing and encouraging use of the tipline. Though the grant has closed, schools are still able to purchase materials through the [SUSO Store](#).

[Critical Incident Stabilization](#)

Funding awarded under this grant is used to support schools, students, and staff that experience an unusually traumatic school-related event. Events may vary but include acts of violence or criminal conduct that cause significant trauma to a school community. If a situation occurs, financial assistance is provided to support emergency response, mental health counseling, post-crisis consulting, and other support services.

“Service and therapy dog visits at our school were identified as one of the **main reasons many students were willing to come back to school** and remain in school for the remainder of 2024, as well as the following school years. We owe a sincere debt of **gratitude to our colleagues at the Office of School Safety.**”

Mount Horeb Area School District staff on the impact of their service dog, Crumble



Wisconsin Statute §118.07 Submissions

Ensuring schools are prepared for emergencies is a key aspect of violence prevention and harm mitigation. **Wisconsin Statute § 118.07** requires public and private schools to submit five school safety documents to OSS each year. OSS serves as the statewide repository for these required documents and has developed a **streamlined submission process** to simplify compliance. OSS School Safety Consultants (SSCs) provide free consultation and technical assistance related to *Wis. Stat. § 118.07*, offering valuable insight into **evidence-based strategies** for developing **comprehensive school safety measures**. OSS is dedicated to supporting all Wisconsin schools as they enhance local safety practices to ensure that every school is a safe environment in which to learn.

For the due date of January 1, 2025, there were **16,352 school safety documents submitted to OSS by Wisconsin schools**. These required school safety documents are:

Blueprints & Maps

4,664

Safety Assessments

2,350

Safety Plans

3,271

Safety Trainings

2,897

Violence Drills

3,170

“It’s a great feeling knowing that our school is now better prepared in the event of an emergency. **Your support has made a meaningful difference in helping us enhance the safety and security of our students, staff, and community.**”

Amelia Petersen, Principal, Shepherd of the Hills Catholic School

“Only another public safety professional can appreciate the energy that was needed to implement this type of change. **It was not easy but I am confident we are in a much better place moving forward when it comes to emergency preparedness and response.** I can’t thank you and your DOJ team enough for your guidance and patience as our team continues to strengthen our EOP.”

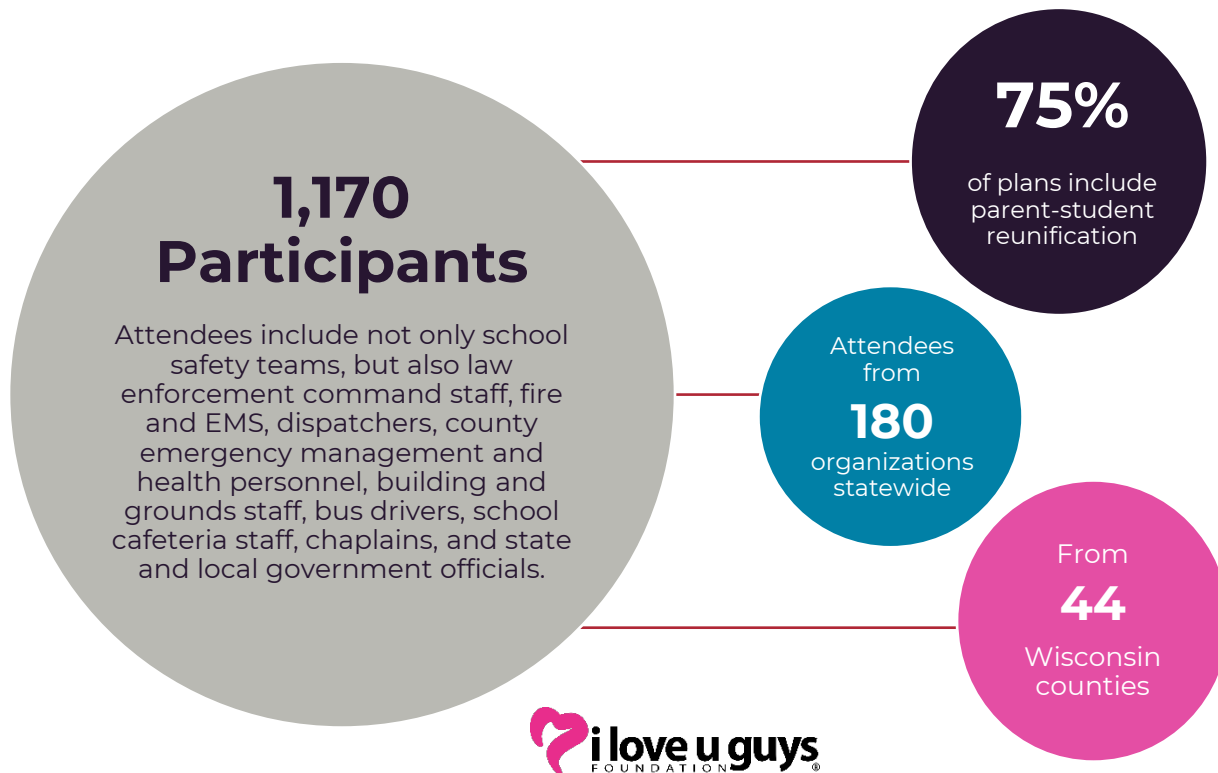
Kevin Hafemann, Emergency Operations Manager, Milwaukee Public Schools



Standard Response Protocol & Standard Reunification Method

Training on **school safety plans**—required under *Wis. Stat. § 118.07*—is a cornerstone of preparedness. OSS provides statewide instruction on the **I Love U Guys Foundation's Standard Response Protocol (SRP)** and **Standard Reunification Method (SRM)**, recognized nationwide as best practices for crisis response and reunification.

A 2023 analysis of *Wis. Stat. § 118.07* submissions showed parent-student reunification plans appeared in only **25%** of submissions. In response, SRP and SRM trainings were expanded, resulting in nearly **75%** of plans including reunification by 2025. From September 2024 through August 2025, 1,170 individuals from 123 school districts and private schools, 41 law enforcement agencies, and 16 other organizations across 44 Wisconsin counties attended SRP & SRM trainings. Through these efforts and community partnerships, OSS continues to strengthen school preparedness, enhance student and staff safety, and ensure that schools statewide are equipped to respond effectively to emergencies.



"I cannot express how helpful last week's training was. I sat down with my principals for 3 hours yesterday to talk about our safety plan. While we have some work to do, I feel like we're **definitely moving in the right direction."**

- Wisconsin District Superintendent, 2025



Additional Opportunities

“Targeted school violence is preventable when communities facilitate bystander reporting and promote climates of safety and trust.”

- *US Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC)*

The [Foundations of Targeted Violence Prevention eLearning](#) is a one-hour online training developed by the *Department of Homeland Security, National Threat Evaluation and Reporting Program Office* in partnership with OSS and the *WI Department of Public Instruction*. The training empowers staff, parents, and community members to understand what behaviors may be displayed by a person who is on a pathway to violence.

As of 2025, the module has reached over 2,800 Wisconsinites and more than 19,000 viewers nationwide.

Scan the QR code or click the [Course Link](#) to access.



Gratitude for Our School Safety Partners

OSS extends sincere thanks to our school safety partners for their ongoing collaborative efforts in keeping Wisconsin communities safe.

To stay informed on the latest school safety initiatives, [subscribe to OSS newsletter announcements](#) for email updates and resources.

Scan the QR code to add OSS to your contacts.



Reflections on OSS' Impact

"It is fantastic support that the DOJ provides to school districts. **I don't know what we would do without it.** Our ability to be aware of and address things in a more timely manner have been greatly strengthened as a result of Speak Up, Speak Out."

WI Superintendent, 2024

"**I really appreciate your support** and I was **really impressed** that whomever was working was able to keep him dialoguing!"

WI Principal regarding a Concerns of Suicide Tip, 2025

The time of travel [OSS] saved for countless districts and [that they] made it possible for many law enforcement and EMS staff to come is **invaluable**. Besides the obvious benefits, **it also sent a message of how much you care about our students and staff.**"

WI District Admin, 2024, after training event in northern WI

"**Super glad our student made this report!**"

WI School Admin regarding a Concerns of a Planned School Attack Tip, 2024

"If I think of anything else, I will let you know. Thank you so much, I never knew this website could help this much."

Student Tipster, 2024

"A girl in my class was **pleased that they said something** [because] her friends had been crying about things that were being posted about her."

Student Tipster, 2025

"**Thank you for helping me** with this situation."

Student Tipster, 2024

"When we receive reports, the process of the DOJ, the local authorities, and the school authorities **collaborating works amazingly**. I am so thankful to have the technology in place and the ability to quickly communicate with each other and share information."

WI Principal, 2025

