



**Josh Kaul**  
Wisconsin Attorney General

**P.O. Box 7857**  
**Madison, WI 53707-7857**

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## **NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **School Safety Mental Health and Threat Reporting System Sees Early Success**

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul is reminding schools, students, and families that the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of School Safety (OSS) has a resource for those in the school community that fear someone may harm themselves or others. Launched in September 2021, the SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT (SUSO) Resource Center has already helped save lives.

“DOJ’s free, 24/7 school safety tool has already started making a difference. For anyone concerned that a student might harm themselves or someone else, Speak Up, Speak Out can be a critical resource to assist in getting students the help they need,” said Attorney General Kaul.

Dr. Carl Cartwright, superintendent of Berlin Area School District said, “The Berlin Area School District has been able to use Speak Up Speak Out to develop a systematic response to parent and student reports. The district has used the system to help connect students with the resources and supports they need.”

“Recently, a student shared a concern about another student through the Speak Up, Speak Out Resource Center. The tip allowed us to quickly connect with the student, family, and provide mental health resources. Berlin School District uses this reporting system to keep our community safe and intervene with students that are exhibiting concerning behavior,” said Berlin Middle School Principal Scott Bartol.

The SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT Resource Center is a comprehensive, one-stop place to turn with important school safety concerns, including mental health. It offers a 24/7

threat reporting system, threat assessment consultation, critical incident response, and general school safety guidance.

Wisconsin's threat reporting system has received tips regarding child abuse, cyberbullying, depression, drugs, weapons, and many more safety issues, including 16 threats of suicide. In addition to other action, tips have led to more than 28 welfare checks. (Statistics as of January 31, 2021.)

Students, parents, school staff, or any community members can submit a school safety concern or threat via the [SUSO website](#), mobile phone application, or toll-free number. Resource Center staff work around-the-clock to respond to tips and to deploy a response locally by communicating directly with school administrators, law enforcement, and counselors.

According to a survey of more than 1,000 principals nationwide that have a school safety tipline, 73% of principals said the tipline prevented incidents of self-harm or suicide.<sup>1</sup>

[Watch a video about SUSO and how it works.](#)

SUSO Reports can be made 24/7:

- Online at [speakup.widj.gov](https://speakup.widj.gov)
- 1-800-MY-SUSO-1 (1-800-697-8761)
- Mobile app ([iOS/Android](#))

Learn more about the SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT Resource Center at <https://speakup.widj.gov/>.

If your school or school district would like to see how SUSO can be a part of your school safety plan, contact [schoolsafety@doj.state.wi.us](mailto:schoolsafety@doj.state.wi.us).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rti.org/news/survey-reveals-increasing-availability-and-utility-school-safety-tip-lines-us-public-schools>