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**Office of Open Government Advisory:
School Safety Initiative Grant Announcement and Related Public Records**

MADISON, Wis. – All school districts and other applicants for school safety initiative grants are advised that grant application materials are records subject to disclosure under the Wisconsin Public Records Law. While records are presumed to be open to public inspection and copying, statutes, case law, and the public records law balancing test, which weighs the public interest in disclosure of a record against the public interest in nondisclosure, provide exceptions to disclosure.

The Office of Open Government believes in the importance of government openness and transparency. However, school districts and other applicants should be aware of several public interest considerations in applying the balancing test to school safety initiative grant applications and related records prior to releasing them in response to public records requests.

School safety grant application materials could contain information vital to school district safety and security. If released publicly, such information could negatively impact school safety measures, enable individuals to evade school security, and endanger the safety of students, teachers, and other school employees. To the extent disclosure of school safety grant application materials, or information within them, would reveal a school's security vulnerabilities or otherwise adversely impact school safety measures, such materials or information may be withheld pursuant to the public records balancing test. Additionally, the public interests evidenced by Wis. Stat. § 19.36(9), which prohibits the release of plans or specifications for state-owned or leased facilities, and Wis. Stat. § 19.85(1)(d), which permits closed session meetings, under the open meetings law, when strategy for crime detection or prevention are considered, may also be considered under the balancing test. The public records balancing test must be applied on a case-by-case basis.

If you have questions or concerns regarding public records requests for school safety initiative grant application materials, or any other records, please contact the Office of Open Government at (608) 267-2220.