

For Immediate Release

Thursday, June 28, 2018

Contact: Mary Whitrock, Superintendent

WhitrockM@ripon.k12.wi.us

(920) 748-4600

Ripon Area School District Public School Receives Safety Grant

Ripon, WI – The Ripon Area School District will receive \$161,447 through the Wisconsin Department of Justice School Safety Grant program, administered by DOJ's Office of School Safety to be spent on building safety improvements, as well as training for faculty and staff. Attorney General Brad Schimel announced the additional safety grants on July 28, 2018.

Grant dollars are divided into two categories: the Primary School Safety Grant with no dollar limit focus on baseline improvements to schools, including door locks and hardening school entryways and Advanced School Safety Grant, awarded at \$20,000 per school, are prioritized to award grants on a competitive basis to schools that have met minimum security thresholds. Ripon's 1,643 students reside in four traditional school and four charter school making the district eligible for \$160,000 in advance grant funding.

In 2013 and in 2017, the District Safety Team with local law enforcement completed site safety reviews to identify physical and procedural safety improvements. In 2013, items such as secure entrance sequences, AEDs, ID badges, analog phones, intruder drills, an emergency notification system and cameras were added. In 2015, a facilities referendum combined the middle and high school adding additional safety features.

The 2017 Site Safety Review relieved the Ripon Area School District had completed the primary school safety grant items, so the district's School Safety Grant application focused on advanced items. One of

the School Safety Grant prerequisites is providing all full-time teachers, aides, counselors, and administrators with a minimum of three hours combined training in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and Trauma Informed Care/Trauma Sensitive Schools (TIC/TSS) before the end of the 2018-2019 school year; or demonstrating that staff has already received such training. Ripon staff completed at the training at the beginning of of the 2017-18 school year.

With the grant dollars, items remaining from Ripon's 2017 Site Safety Review, conducted in collaboration with our local law enforcement agency, could be implemented prior to the start of the 2018-19 school year including: additional elementary and exterior cameras, shatterproof window film, district wide radios, an early response system and a security fence on Barlow Park/Journey Elementary School playground.

At the time of Ripon's 2017 Site Safety Review, the City of Ripon Police Department Chief of Police Dave Lukoski noted, "Please find attached the School Safety Committee's recommendations on Safety and Security that we were asked to conduct. AP/AD Bill Kinzinger, Maintenance Manager Brian Pepler and Director of Facilities and Grounds Brian Appleman accompanied SRO Lindsey Michels and me on the tour of the schools in the district. The school district has done a good job over the last four years of implementing many of the suggested Safety and Security suggestions that were recommended in the spring of 2013. Safety and security has been enhanced as a result of the investment made in this regard."

"Keep in mind that our recommendations gave no consideration to the cost associated with changes we would like to see. We understand that cost is a major consideration when considering changes but in

many cases we had no idea what type of cost would be associated to some of our recommendations. Our only focus was to improve safety and security at the various sites within the district.”

Superintendent Mary Whitrock noted, “Since August 2017 following our 2017 Site Safety Review, the District Safety Team which includes local law enforcement, cooperated with members of Fond du Lac County Emergency Government to conduct a district-wide table top exercise training with local government, law enforcement, fire department, and EMS; all staff participated in a trauma informed care training; some staff were trained in Mental Health First Aid; and the Ripon Board of Education approved a 0.5 certified Mindfulness coach on staff.”

“The District Safety Team completed a site safety review in August of 2017 focusing on improving safety through physical feature upgrades and improvements to processes and procedures. Since that time the process and procedural recommendations from the review have been implemented along with some of the physical feature upgrades. Due to budget reductions, several physical features had yet to be implemented.”

Grant applicants are required to partner with law enforcement agencies to ensure that proposed expenditures, visitor protocols, and school safety plans will be effective and provide students with the safest learning environment possible. Superintendent Whitrock shared, “The Ripon Area School District and the City of Ripon Police Department have a solid partnership. With the grant dollars, security items recommended by our safety team could be implemented prior to the start of the 2018-19 school year.”

“The safety of students and staff is our number one priority. Through these ongoing efforts we are continually assessing our properties to assure security measures are in place. We have processes in place outlined in the RASD Violent Risk Assessment Procedure document which also outlines the

proactive work school administrators and staff engage in to create a safe school climate,” stated Superintendent, Dr. Mary Whitrock. “Most importantly, staff and students practice their responses for emergency and risk situations. It is our hope to never have to put our practices in place, but we will continue to review our safety measures and our response protocols to be as prepared as possible.”

Please contact Superintendent, Dr. Mary Whitrock, at whitrockm@ripon.k12.wi.us with any questions.

###