

December 16, 2015



GREEN BAY AREA  
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

All learning. All growing.

Dear Chairman Thiesfeldt and Assembly Education Committee:

Re: Opposition to AB 517

On behalf of the District administration, the Board of Education and the City of Green Bay Police Department, we are writing to express our opposition to Assembly Bill 517. As currently written, there are significant concerns with the bill as outlined below.

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**The language is overly broad.**

The bill requires high schools to collect statistics on specific crimes and safety-related incidents *reported* to a principal, school security, or local law enforcement that occur on school property, on transportation provided by the school, *or* at a school sanctioned event. These statistics are required to be reported whether or not: (1) the basis for the report is accurate or eventually leads to law enforcement action or is handled within the school setting; (2) the crime or incident in question was committed by a District student or staff member; or (3) the crime or incident in question occurred during the course of the instructional day. For example, all of the following crimes or incidents would be required to be reported in a school's report despite the incidents or crimes having no relation to the school or its students:

- A home-based private education school student is a member of the public high school's show choir pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 118.133. While attending a show choir practice at the public high school, the home school student ignites a fire in the bathroom garbage can and is cited for arson.
- During a high school football game, the opposing football team's fans break into the locker room and steal items from the locker room.
- The City's Park and Recreation Program utilizes the high school's gymnasium for its evening men's league basketball program in accordance with Wisconsin's recreational use immunity provisions. Two adult participants get into an altercation during a game, causing them to be cited for disorderly conduct.
- Adults driving near a high school are engaged in a road rage incident, pull into the high school's parking lot and proceed to get into an altercation in the high school's parking lot. The adults are ticketed for disorderly conduct.
- A high school is connected to a city park and shares a parking lot with the park. During the summer months when school is not in session, adults are cited for sexual assault that occurred during the night in a private vehicle in the parking lot.
- A student reports to her principal that she believes her cell phone was stolen out of her locker. Upon further investigating, it is determined that the student simply forgot her cell phone at home and it was not stolen.

**Collecting and maintaining statistics relative to AB 517's requirements is onerous and complex and is not consistent with student confidentiality.**

Given the broad language, collecting and maintaining the statistics responsive to AB 517's reporting requirements will be onerous and complex for school districts and supporting law enforcement agencies. Currently, this information is maintained in many formats depending on whether the incident is school managed or law enforcement managed or both. The information could be maintained in a student's confidential behavioral record, through a law enforcement incident report or recorded in an arrest report or municipal ticket. Schools and law enforcement would be required to develop a central tracking system to ensure that statistics accurately reflect the required reporting. Moreover, a statewide coding system would need to be developed to ensure that what constitutes disorderly conduct in one public high school constitutes disorderly conduct in another high school.

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 118.125 and the Family Education Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA"), the data that is being requested to be collected through AB 517 most likely constitutes confidential pupil records. The District has concerns that the foundational elements of AB 517 are inconsistent with the confidentiality afforded to these records through state and federal law. As such, this new reporting requirement will require support staff to review all data for accuracy and confidentiality prior to being disseminated.

**The bill discourages student reporting and has the potential to create unsafe school environments.**

Within the Green Bay Area Public School District students have been encouraged to report anything that they see or hear that may be suspicious or concerning to them to school officials or to the Resource Officers - School and Community. Because the bill requires all incidents *reported* to principals or law enforcement to be included in a school's report to DPI, school and other officials are concerned that this bill may disincentivize reporting and thus potentially compromise the safety of students.

**Publicly available crime statistics already exist.**

Local police agencies already report out uniform crime reporting statistics to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which include data on violent and property crimes. This information is publicly available and is widely used by realtor websites to provide information regarding crime rates in neighborhoods. It is not necessary to create a system whereby substantially similar information would be reported by school districts.

**The bill is another unfunded mandate.**

In order to implement the bill as written, it will require additional staff time and resources. The District is already working to comply with several unfunded mandates that were included in the 2015-2017 budget bill, including, but not limited to, the civics test graduation requirement and the education options communication. At this time the District is unaware of any families or community organizations that are requesting such information be provided by the District. Any resources that are redirected away from the District's mission to educate all students to graduate college, career and community ready does a great disservice to our families, students and community.

In summary, the ultimate priority for the District, School Board and Police Department is the safety of students, staff and our community. AB 517 does not offer any new constructive measures to work in partnership with schools and law enforcement to foster this safety. We have already been collaborating

with law enforcement for many years, and therefore, this is yet another unfunded mandate that diverts from schools' ability to engage in work for the betterment of its students and communities. We ask that you support our students - they deserve to be our priority – Every Child. Every Day.

Sincerely,



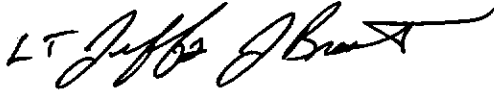
Brenda Warren, Board President



Mike Blecha, Legislative Liaison



Michelle Langenfeld, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools and Learning



Lt. Jeff Brester  
Green Bay Police Department

cc: Senate Education Committee, Senate Education Reform Committee, Senator Lasee, Senator Cowles, Senator Hansen, Representative Steffens and Representative Macco