



Students Thrive in Safe and Healthy Schools

# Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

10-26-2018 Edition

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## KISS Initiative Overview

### How will KISS make schools safer?

Students thrive when they are provided a safe and healthy learning environment. The Keep Idaho Students Safe Initiative, KISS for short, helps provide this by taking a comprehensive approach to maximizing statewide assets to equip educators with the knowledge, tools and resources needed to help keep students and staff safe while preserving local autonomy.

Superintendent Ybarra has asked the Idaho Legislature to fully fund this investment in student safety quickly, so implementation can begin early in 2019.

The KISS plan includes five essential components:

- **School Safety Grants** – these one-time grants will enhance the safety and security profile of schools by funding critical local needs identified by a threat assessment.
- **School Safety Course** – this training course will equip school staff with the latest knowledge and best practices pertaining to cultivating protective factors, identifying and addressing potential threats and keeping students safe in emergency situations.
- **School Safety Tip Line** – building on the See Something, Say Something campaign for reporting potentially unsafe situations at schools, this tip line will be available for anyone – students, parents, educators, citizens – to anonymously report dangers, ranging from imminent threats to suicidal behavior, to the proper authorities.
- **Statewide Crisis Prevention Counselor** – this expert resource will be available to every school in the state, serving as a lifeline for school staff in the areas of preventing, preparing for and responding to crisis situations.
- **Existing Safety Resources** – KISS will help leverage resources the state already provides for stopping bullying, preventing suicides, and providing technical assistance and guidance to maximize the effectiveness of tax dollars spent.

### How can I learn more about KISS, stay informed about updates and get involved?

The KISS webpage, available at [www.sde.idaho.gov/KISS](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/KISS), includes detailed information, opportunities for stakeholders and the public to get involved and ways for those interested in school safety and security to sign up for email updates. You may email any questions or send feedback to [schoolsafety@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:schoolsafety@sde.idaho.gov).

### How much will KISS cost and where will the money come from?

Because keeping students safe is critical, the SDE is committed to implementing KISS as soon as possible. That's why Superintendent Ybarra asked the Idaho Legislature to approve a supplemental appropriation in the current fiscal year, 2019. She also requested a smaller ongoing appropriation for Fiscal Year 2020 to continue KISS.

All funding for KISS would come from the State of Idaho’s General Fund, which is predominately funded by revenue generated from Idaho’s sales and income taxes.

It is very important to note that in no way does KISS take away or shift any funding or resources that are already dedicated to meeting Idaho’s education needs.

**KISS Initiative – Components and Costs**

***School Safety Grants***

| Fiscal Year               | Fund         | Funding Type     | Amount Requested |
|---------------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| FY19 Supplemental Request | General Fund | One-Time Funding | \$18,500,000     |

***Statewide Crisis Prevention Counselor***

| Fiscal Year               | Fund         | Funding Type    | Amount Requested |
|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| FY19 Supplemental Request | General Fund | Ongoing Funding | \$38,900         |
| FY20 Budget Request       | General Fund | Ongoing Funding | \$62,400         |

***School Safety Course***

| Fiscal Year               | Fund         | Funding Type    | Amount Requested |
|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| FY19 Supplemental Request | General Fund | Ongoing Funding | \$410,000        |
| FY20 Budget Request       | General Fund | Ongoing Funding | \$990,000        |

***School Safety Tip Line \****

| Fiscal Year               | Fund         | Funding Type    | Amount Requested |
|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| FY19 Supplemental Request | General Fund | Ongoing Funding | \$0              |

\* In its September 2018 budget submission, the SDE originally requested \$200,000 to fund a tip line. Concurrently, the Office of School Safety and Security (IOS3) had applied for grant money to launch a statewide tip line. Since IOS3 was awarded the grant, SDE will withdraw its request for School Safety Tip Line funding and support IOS3’s efforts.

***Existing Safety Resources \*\****

| Fiscal Year         | Fund | Funding Type | Amount Requested |
|---------------------|------|--------------|------------------|
| FY20 Budget Request | N/A  | N/A          | N/A              |

\*\* Existing trainings, resources and activities are supported by programs already in place, therefore no new funds are being requested for this item.

|                                          |                     |                    |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>TOTAL ONGOING ANNUAL COST OF KISS</b> | <b>GENERAL FUND</b> | <b>\$1,501,300</b> |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|

**Why is the SDE seeking a supplemental appropriation for Fiscal Year 2019?**

Superintendent Ybarra feels strongly, and stakeholders agree, that Idaho cannot afford to wait until FY2020 to begin implementing the critically needed safety and security measures included within KISS.

### What if lawmakers decide to fund only part of the initiative?

The KISS initiative is underpinned by five elements, but the effectiveness of each component may be diminished if they are forced to stand alone. The individual threads that comprise KISS are interwoven to create a strong and effective statewide fabric of coordinated effort for enhancing school safety and security. KISS is designed to address Idaho's current partitioned approach and elevate school safety and security into a coordinated statewide partnership between local school districts, the SDE and other stakeholders. KISS establishes the framework for ensuring scarce resources are effectively used and efficiently distributed in an equitable manner.

The largest budgetary component of the KISS initiative is the one-time School Safety Grants, slated to be funded via an \$18,500,000 supplemental request for the Fiscal Year 2019 budget. Without this funding school districts' pressing safety and security needs may not be met. Aside from the one-time School Safety Grant funds requested for Fiscal Year 2019, the annual ongoing cost of KISS is approximately \$1.5 million.

The General Fund appropriations requested for the KISS initiative do not take away or shift any funding or resources that are already dedicated to meeting Idaho's education needs. If the Idaho Legislature funds KISS as requested, the monies dedicated to this project will be in addition to other funds already provided for supporting education.

### Is the KISS plan finalized?

Planning and soliciting input from citizens and stakeholders for the KISS initiative formally started in March of 2018. The budget request for the initiative was submitted to the Idaho Legislature in September of 2018. While the vision and framework for KISS have been established and remain the same, how each component will function continues to be refined based on stakeholder feedback.

With legislative approval, the SDE intends to begin implementing KISS and distributing School Safety Grant funds to school districts and public charter schools near the beginning of calendar year 2019, months before the end of the current state fiscal year.

### Will students have a voice in this? Parents? Will there be opportunity for more feedback?

Most definitely. Since announcing the initiative in March, the SDE has sought feedback and ideas from all stakeholders, including students and families.

The SDE has shared the vision of KISS and collected thousands of comments through surveys, meetings, webinars and conversations throughout the state. Nearly 200 people have volunteered to help shape the initiative and make sure it reflects the needs of Idahoans.

Superintendent Ybarra has also held meetings with groups of students and has personal conversations with many other stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

As additional opportunities for the public to provide feedback are scheduled, details will be posted to the initiative's webpage at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/KISS>.

### How does this initiative help meet the policy objective to keep students safe?

The KISS initiative is anchored by School Safety Grants while the other four elements of the plan build upon each other to increase the school safety and security profile of every district in the state to a higher level. This approach amplifies and focuses the effectiveness of each individual component of the initiative by more closely aligning and targeting school safety and security resources towards the greater state policy objective of keeping Idaho students safe. It also helps the SDE meet its statutory obligations to provide training and materials for school districts and public charter schools.

## School Safety Grants

### How can districts use their School Safety Grants?

Local school districts have the best understanding of what's needed to make their schools safer and more secure given the unique needs of their students, parents and community. That's why the School Safety Grant component of KISS provides latitude for school boards and superintendents to determine the best use of this funding for meeting identified safety and security deficiencies.

The SDE anticipates many districts will use their grant funds for projects like upgrading their communications infrastructure, addressing the physical security of school buildings and other life-safety issues. The SDE seeks to leverage the expertise of the Idaho Office of School Safety and Security (IOS3) as they help schools prioritize safety and security needs, as this agency is statutorily responsible for performing threat and vulnerability assessments at schools.

We believe it is sound public policy to entrust local school boards and administrators with using the expert guidance provided by IOS3 to prioritize the safety and security needs of their own schools.

### How are funding amounts determined?

Because equity among districts is vitally important, the SDE will dispense the one-time School Safety Grants using a formula, ensuring each district is treated fairly and equitably. School

Safety Grant funds will be distributed by the SDE to individual school districts and charter schools much like how technology funding is currently dispensed. The SDE's goal is to ensure smaller, rural districts have sufficient resources to implement meaningful improvements while balancing the significant needs of larger districts.

[Will the State Department of Education mandate how School Safety Grants are spent?](#)

No, however schools applying for the grants will be expected to have completed a comprehensive threat and vulnerability assessment administered by IOS3. This condition helps ensure that School Safety Grant expenditures align with Keep Idaho Students Safe objectives and are data-driven.

[What if my school hasn't completed school safety assessment?](#)

Most schools – two-thirds – have already completed an IOS3 assessment. School districts and public charter schools that have not completed an assessment may apply to receive funds with the assurance that an assessment will be completed. It's very important that all school districts and public charter schools have fair and equitable access to School Safety Grant funds.

## School Safety Course

[How will the School Safety Course help students, teachers and their communities?](#)

This course is designed to help school personnel learn how to identify risk behaviors, cultivate protective factors, enact upstream prevention strategies to address the root causes of risk behaviors, intervene before a crisis occurs and effectively respond if a crisis occurs.

[Do I still need to take this course if I've already attended safety training?](#)

Educators with ample safety education can benefit from ongoing training on new and emerging threats in the ever-changing world of social media, drug and alcohol trends, threats to students and risk behaviors. Together, trained and confident school staff, when equipped with resources like the School Safety Course, the Statewide Crisis Prevention Counselor and the School Safety Tip Line, can provide a statewide early warning system for students who otherwise may be at risk or pose an imminent threat in their school communities.

[Is completing the School Safety Course a requirement for teacher recertification?](#)

No, however, statute requires the SDE to provide training. Credits earned by completing the School Safety Course will apply towards Idaho's six credits in every five years requirement for recertification. Superintendent Ybarra strongly recommends that local school districts include this course in their professional development training offerings for all personnel who have frequent contact with students. The School Safety Training Course's curriculum fulfills current

state requirements related to suicide prevention training and the prevention, intervention and response to bullying and harassment.

[How much will this course cost school personnel?](#)

Nothing. The proposed budget includes funds for the credits, materials, delivery mechanisms and even substitute teachers for instructional staff.

[How will the School Safety Course be offered?](#)

The SDE plans to offer the course in a variety of forms including face to face, online and through a hybrid model via Idaho postsecondary institutions and Idaho Digital Learning.

[What topics will be covered by the School Safety Course?](#)

While the School Safety Course curriculum has yet to be finalized, the following learning standards have been identified. Each of these standards has accompanying learning objectives and lesson plans that are being developed.

- School climate
- School and community collaboration / partnerships for prevention
- Prevention / building protective factors
- Identification of behaviors of concern
- Intervention
- Operational safety
- Law and policy

[Have educators helped shape the design of the School Safety Course?](#)

Yes. Teachers have helped design the course since the beginning, providing crucial insight into curriculum development. In fact, educator feedback was a key factor in the decision not to require completing the School Safety Course as a condition of recertification.

Feedback from educators, law enforcement and other stakeholders will continue to be an important part of the process as the design of the School Safety Course progresses.

[Will first responders be required to attend the School Safety Course?](#)

No, KISS does not provide direction to first responders. However, first responders are encouraged to provide feedback to help refine the course's learning objectives. School districts are also encouraged to allow their school resource officers to participate in the course.



## Statewide Crisis Prevention Counselor

### How can a crisis prevention counselor help prevent tragedies?

While the Idaho public school system must be prepared to respond to tragedies, the goal is to prevent them from happening in the first place. To help meet this goal the Statewide Crisis Prevention Counselor will serve as a primary resource for local school counselors, school psychologists and school social workers to exchange best practices, answer questions, provide training and ensure schools are connected to resources provided by the SDE, partner state agencies and other stakeholders.

After consulting with school system leaders in Florida and Tennessee, Superintendent Ybarra concluded that a Statewide Crisis Prevention Counselor is vital for helping districts and public charter schools throughout Idaho prevent and respond to crisis situations should they occur.

### Will the Statewide Crisis Prevention Counselor help schools with behavioral threat assessments?

Yes. For years, Idaho school counselors have told SDE they need more resources and support for addressing student behaviors of concern. The Statewide Crisis Prevention Counselor will provide assistance ranging from training staff to helping create behavioral threat assessment teams. The counselor will also help connect schools with resources for addressing concerns about school safety issues or behaviors of concern.

### Under KISS, who will be the State Department of Education's central point of contact for responding to crises?

Idaho's Statewide Crisis Prevention Counselor will fill this essential role and will be able to leverage the resources of the SDE and partner organizations to accommodate and support local responses. Investing in this state level expertise and support is essential, according to leaders in states where tragedies have occurred. A single state point of contact allows local schools and communities to get immediate support to respond to a school shooting, student suicide or other crisis.

## School Safety Tip Line

### Who can use the tip line and what can be reported?

Building on the See Something, Say Something campaign, which emphasizes being aware of one's surroundings and reporting suspicious activity, the School Safety Tip Line will provide students, parents, educators, concerned citizens and other stakeholders a quick way to anonymously alert education and law enforcement officials about potentially unsafe situations at schools.

Who will manage the tip line's operations and how will it work?

IOS3 was awarded grant funding to implement and operate a statewide school safety tip line. As incidents are reported through the tip line, they will quickly be relayed to local school officials and / or law enforcement, so intervention can take place.

How is the SDE working with state partners to leverage resources for a School Safety Tip Line?

The SDE fully supports IOS3's work to launch a School Safety Tip Line. The SDE believes a School Safety Tip Line is essential for eliminating what research shows is a major barrier to crisis prevention – failure to report concerns to authorities.

## Existing Safety Resources

How will KISS help provide school districts and public charter schools better access to existing state safety and security resources?

A significant element of the KISS toolkit involves conducting a thorough inventory of all available state resources to help schools meet the safety and security needs of their students, then making sure schools are aware of these resources. One way the SDE intends to share this inventory with schools is through expert advice from the Statewide Crisis Prevention Counselor. The SDE also intends to host new online content that will readily connect educators, parents and students to valuable resources.