

2026 SECURED SCHOOL SAFETY BOARD REPORT

SCHOOL SAFETY OVERVIEW

Overview of School Safety in Indiana

In its first year, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security's Office of School Safety (OSS) has built a foundation of statewide support, trust and expertise that reflects both the urgent needs of schools and Indiana's commitment to protecting students. What began as a small team has grown to eight full-time staff members dedicated to strengthening school safety in every corner of the state. With this growth, the OSS was able to become a truly hands-on partner to schools, expanding training access, improving statewide coordination and building systems that will strengthen and protect Indiana schools for years to come.

One of our most significant accomplishments of the year was the completion of school safety site assessments in all 92 counties. This work was not a simple checklist exercise - it required OSS staff to step inside school buildings, meet with leaders face to face, review existing plans and provide practical guidance tailored to each school's environment. By showing up and working directly with schools, the OSS established uniform expectations while still respecting the unique needs of individual communities. These assessments represent hundreds of conversations and collaborative moments, each contributing to a stronger statewide culture of preparedness.

Alongside this statewide effort, the OSS led the development of Indiana's Behavioral and Digital Threat Assessment model, the first model of its kind in the nation. Designed not only to meet legislative requirements but to exceed them, Indiana's approach integrates behavioral indicators with digital information to help schools recognize risk earlier and support students more effectively. To ensure that schools can confidently adopt and sustain this model, the OSS added a dedicated trainer and consultant to support our statewide team and assist schools as they implement new processes and build internal capacity.

Collaboration remained a central theme throughout the year, culminating in the OSS's first Annual School Safety Summit. This event brought nearly 1,000 school safety professionals together, offering meaningful opportunities to learn, connect and strengthen the shared commitment to student safety. The success of this inaugural event affirmed the statewide appetite for unified, consistent training and dialogue.

This year also marked a major modernization of the Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy, long recognized as the national model since its founding in 1999. Under the OSS direction, the entire curriculum was updated to reflect the evolving challenges schools face today - from digital threats to mental and behavioral health needs to the complexities of emergency response. We also hosted the first Basic Academy event under the OSS direction in February, certifying nearly 500 new school safety specialists.

To complement this overhaul, OSS reimagined the Advanced School Safety Specialist Academy as well. Rather than pulling safety professionals out of their buildings for centralized training, OSS now offers regional opportunities that let schools choose what works best for

their schedules and needs. These trainings bring first responders, emergency managers, counselors, SROs and school safety specialists together so they can learn as a team within their own communities. This approach reduces travel time, lowers costs, and encourages genuine local collaboration. To date, OSS has conducted 55 regional trainings across the state, with many more planned.

Strong communication has been another defining pillar of the OSS's first year. The team made a deliberate effort to be visible in schools, accessible to leaders and responsive to families and communities. Biweekly newsletters and statewide school safety meetings helped maintain transparent communication, ensuring that schools consistently had up to date information, clear expectations and an open line of dialogue with the OSS.

Recognizing that long-term sustainability depends on strong systems, the OSS completed a major transition of all school safety specialist training records into ACADIS. This modern platform ensures secure, lasting record integrity for nearly 3,000 certified specialists while simplifying registration and tracking for future trainings. The move to ACADIS represents a forward-looking system that will support school safety training for decades.

In its first year, the IDHS' Office of School Safety has established a statewide standard for visibility, consistency, innovation and collaboration. By building a strong team, modernizing training, strengthening communication and creating first-in-the-nation tools, OSS has laid the groundwork for a safer future for all Indiana students. The momentum of this first year reflects not only substantial milestones, but a continued commitment to supporting every school, every community and every child across the state.

Local involvement in School Safety

P.L. 150-2023 mandated all counties in Indiana to establish a County School Safety Commission by Dec. 31, 2023. The commission shall submit annually to the Secured School Safety Board (SSSB) the following:

- Meeting minutes
- Certain meeting agenda materials
- Summary of its activities and accomplishments

There were 80 county school safety commissions that submitted the required data. Listed below are some of the prominent programs identified for the 2025/2026 school year. While many successful efforts were made by schools to keep staff, students and the community safe, some challenges were also revealed.

Current Programs Reported to Improve School Safety

There are various programs to improve school safety utilized by various school systems across the state. Some of these identified programs include:

- “I Love You Guys” reunification training and this will be the focus of the Office of School Safety Summitt in 2027
- “Hidden in Plain Sight,” an interactive drug education program
- “Catch My Breath” vaping cessation program
- “Impact Teen Drivers”
- “Safe Sport Zone” afterschool event security program
- “Reid technique for interviewing”
- “Identifying and intercepting cyber threats” presented by Rich Wistocki
- ‘Before and After School Safety” presented by Paul Timm
- “Behavior Threat Assessment Management”

There are additional programs and activities that were locally developed and/or accomplished in school systems within the following counties:

- Gibson County - South Gibson schools created a safety patrol
- Knox County - Emergency weather radios were donated
- Vanderburgh - Created a vaping commission
- Perry County - Added the hospital police department to their county commission
- Putnam County - Has Puppet Power plays that address a myriad subjects related to school safety
- Multiple counties conducted full scale exercises addressing school safety issues

Challenges Identified/Areas for Growth

The following issues were identified as increasing or continuing concerns in multiple school systems across the state:

- Vaping – THC – Gummies – Vape detectors going off so often that schools are disabling them
- Bus stop arm violations
- Before/After school events
- Tik Tok trends
- Bullying
- Swatting
- Truancy
- Cell phone ban required by Senate Enrolled Act 78 and storage of student’s cell phones

Secured School Safety Grant

The Secured School Safety Grant (SSSG) program was established in 2013 to increase the safety of Indiana schools. The SSSG provides matching grants to school corporations, accredited non-public

schools, charter schools and coalitions of school corporations. To date, over $240 million in state funding has been dedicated to the matching grant program.

For FY27, the total amount of eligible funding requests exceeded the amount of funding for the program. Due to this, schools were funded at 86% for their top priority items. Applicants to the program ranked the priority of items to help the SSSB better understand the greatest need for school districts.

This fiscal year, the SSSG received 499 applications, including 20 new schools. All but four of the applicants were partially funded at 86% for a total of $26,934,220.86.

Data regarding the SSSG awards from FY2014 to FY2027 are located later in this report. $27 million was allocated to the SSSG for both FY26 and FY27.

Aggregate School Resource Officer Data

In accordance with IC 20-26-18.2-5(d), school corporations and charter schools reported the following information regarding school resource officers (SRO) and law enforcement officers (LEO) from the 2025-2026 school year. A total of 386 reported this year compared to 350 last year and 373 in the 2023-2024 and 345 in the 2022-2023 school year.

*Aggregate SRO Data Reported

	2023	2024	2025	2026
Total number of SROs employed	1,039	1,216	955.5	1,125.5
Number of school corporations employing a SRO	246	285	331	294
Number of charter schools employing a SRO	27	35	37	21
Number of SROs employed by school corporations	498	515	425	411.5
Number of SROs employed by one or more school corporations	17	26	42	18
Number of SROs employed exclusively by a charter school	50	49	48	25
Number of SROs employed by a coalition of charter schools	3	2	2	2
Number of SROs employed by a combination of one or more schools	2	2	2	2

*Aggregate LEO Data Reported

	2023	2024	2025	2026
Total number of LEOs employed	179	222	183.5	242
Number of school corporations employing a LEO	27	32	29	34
Number of charter schools employing a LEO	6	6	5	5
Number of LEOs employed exclusively by school corporations	164	203	160.5	229
Number of LEOs employed by one or more school corporations	3	3	3	17
Number of LEOs employed exclusively by a charter school	0	13	0	10
Number of LEOs employed by a coalition of charter schools	0	0	0	0
Number of LEOs employed by a combination of one or more schools	2	2	2	2

*"SROs and LEOs can also be funded through a contract or MOU with a law enforcement agency as well as a contract or MOU with a private entity or nonprofit organization that employs persons who meet the qualifications of an SRO."

Overview of Funds Used for SROs or LEOs

	2023	2024	2025	2026
Number of schools that reported SSSG as the exclusive source of funds for SROs	62	65	45	54
Number of schools that reported SSSG and another means of funding SROs	228	273	271	188
Number of schools that reported Local Funding as the source of funds for SROs	130	143	142	151
Number of schools that reported State Tuition as the source of funds for SROs	60	65	60	48

Number of schools that reported Local LE as the source of funds for SROs	42	46	34	32
Number of schools that reported Federal dollars as the source of funds for SROs	9	10	4	3
Number of schools that reported Other as the source of funds for SROs	24	45	22	32
Number of schools that reported SSSG as the exclusive source of funds for LEOs	11	5	3	5
Number of schools that reported SSSG and another means of funding LEOs	15	12	12	15
Number of schools that reported Local Funding as the source of funds for LEOs	15	18	17	19
Number of schools that reported State Tuition as the source of funds for LEOs	7	7	5	4
Number of schools that reported Local LE as the source of funds for LEOs	3	4	4	3
Number of schools that reported Federal dollars as the source of funds for LEOs	2	2	0	0
Number of schools that reported Other as the source of funds for LEOs	3	3	6	9

For more information on school safety efforts in Indiana, please visit IDHS' School Safety webpage.

Fiscal Year	SRO/LEO	Equipment Technology Hardware	Student Parent Support Services	Training	Firearms Training for Staff	Active Event Warning System	Site Vulnerability Assessment	Bullying Prevention	Design and Construction	Post-Incident Counseling Services	Total
2027	$19,951,039.07	$5,206,312.81	$1,211,608.10	$0	$21,597.57	$0	$0	$2,150.00	$541,513.31	$0	**$26,934,220.86**
2026	$19,680,873.18	$5,579,308.18	$1,368,668.38	$0	$32,116.00	$87,227.50	$6,475.00	$13,714.98	$263,498.03	$0	**$ 27,031,881.25**
2025	$16,799,158.42	$5,720,446.55	$882,050.11	$0	$47,019.80	$0	$6,050.00	$5,670.00	$746,193.07	$0	**$24,206,587.95**
2024	$19,425,611.83	$8,325,667.02	$1,150,253.41	$160,820.29	$101,979.00	$100,737.50	$20,962.82	$17,000.00	$521,771.80	$0	**$ 29,824,803.67**
2023	$15,567,558.92	$6,468,821.16	$834,873.00	$37,161.37	N/A	$1,800.00	$1,500.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	**$ 22,911,714.45**
2022	$13,440,128.88	$4,926,399.15	$642,369.22	$6,233.33	N/A	$43,678.47	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	**$ 19,058,808.05**
2021	$12,228,339.85	$5,091,836.13	$1,650,215.69	$14,850.00	N/A	$250,270.00	$196,610.87	N/A	N/A	N/A	**$ 19,432,122.54**
2020	$12,173,333.84	$5,480,943.40	$1,189,285.68	$3,300.00	N/A	$89,951.10	$144,656.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	**$ 19,081,470.02**
2019	$7,438,514.68	$6,690,809.12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	$115,400.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	**$ 14,244,723.80**
2018	$4,146,552.94	$3,237,503.75	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	$63,001.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	**$ 7,952,283.06**

2017	$3,574,821.47	$2,750,273.75	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	$7,169.87	N/A	N/A	N/A	**$ 6,332,608.84**
2016	$3,919,338.40	$4,034,805.57	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	**$ 7,958,281.97**
2015	$3,604,205.31	$4,922,719.36	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	$5,756.59	N/A	N/A	N/A	**$ 8,532,681.26**
2014	$2,681,240.85	$5,649,861.65	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	25,878.27	N/A	N/A	N/A	**$ 8,357,377.21**