



OK-2-SAY Program Overview

Introduction

Attorney General Bill Schuette, the Office of the Governor, the Michigan State Police, and the Michigan Department of Education are taking action to improve the safety of Michigan schools for our children. Their new student safety initiative is currently called OK-2-SAY.

Goal

The goal of OK-2-SAY is to create a comprehensive communication system that empowers students, parents, school personnel, and law enforcement officials to share tips that help prevent dangerous behavior and deter escalation.

Rationale

In many schools, a culture of silence is reinforced among students who consider it intrusive or “uncool” to report (“snitch”) threatening behavior for fear of retaliation and stigmatization. Research indicates that in 81% of violent incidents in U.S. schools, someone other than the attacker had knowledge of the attacker’s plan but failed to report it.

Features

OK-2-SAY opens the lines of communication among students and caring, professional adults through:

- **Confidential Reporting:** Reporter confidentiality will be statutorily guaranteed.
- **Comprehensive Technology:** Tip submission mechanisms will include 24/7 telephone, website, e-mail, text, and multimedia options.
- **Coordinated Intervention:** The Michigan State Police will field initial reports and promptly provide the information to appropriate local law enforcement agencies and school districts.
- **Complete Disposition:** To promote accountability, program operators will complete disposition reports detailing the nature of the tip, the action taken in response, the outcome achieved, and suggestions for improvement.

Benefits

Key benefits of the OK-2-SAY program include:

- **Increased Safety:** facilitates responses to harmful behaviors like bullying, substance abuse, weapons possession, and suicide threats.
- **Collaborative Support:** empowers students to dialogue with adult authorities, transforming the culture of silence into a collaborative support system.
- **Timely Response:** encourages prompt responses to submitted reports through police coordination, disposition filings, and 24/7 availability.
- **Improved Academic Performance:** creates a safer learning environment where students can reach their full academic potential.

Proven Success

Other states have successfully implemented similar student safety programs, including:

- **Colorado:** Program has prevented 28 planned school attacks, 890 suicides, 1,636 bullying instances, 442 sexual offenses, and 275 gun / weapon reports.
- **Missouri:** Key successes include tip submission through downloadable mobile app; 1,000+ cases fielded in 2011; and 80% of law enforcement surveyed believe the hotline promotes cooperation between law enforcement agencies and school officials.

Timeline

The target is to establish an operational program by September, 2013, to coincide with the start of the 2013-2014 academic year.



OK-2-SAY Bill Summary

Attorney General Bill Schuette, the Office of the Governor, the Michigan State Police, and the Michigan Department of Education seek to create and sustain safe school environments that allow Michigan students to reach their full learning potential. However, research indicates that student safety is often compromised by a pervasive “code of silence” that deters students from reporting harmful behaviors for fear of retaliation and stigmatization. The goal of OK-2-SAY is to help break this code of silence through passage of the Michigan Student Safety Act.

Purpose

- The legislation seeks to create a student safety program that facilitates confidential reporting of student-related information about unsafe, potentially harmful, dangerous, violent, or criminal activities.

Method

- The key feature of OK-2-SAY is the establishment of a toll-free hotline that students and parents can use to report harmful student-related behavior. For purposes of the program, the term “hotline” is broadly defined to include a statewide, toll-free telephone line, cable, cell phone system, or other means of communication that transmits voice, e-mail, text, and multimedia messages. The Michigan State Police, with the cooperation of the Attorney General and the Michigan Department of Education, is required to establish, operate, and staff the hotline. The program will be staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The bill requires that information submitted to the program by a hotline user must be promptly reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or school district.

Confidentiality

- The program guarantees confidentiality to hotline users, statutorily prohibiting program operators from revealing the identity of a reporting party. A reporting party’s identity will only be disclosed if he or she voluntarily consents to its disclosure. The program requires the establishment of procedures for ensuring that a hotline user’s identity that is inadvertently disclosed is protected from further disclosure.

Disclosure

- The bill grants the Attorney General standing to oppose the disclosure of confidential communications made to the hotline in any action. A “confidential communication” is a communication to the department of state police or the department of the attorney general, or an agent of either department under the act, that identifies the person who provided that communication. Generally, the program is not required to disclose a confidential communication or any information related to such a communication. Additionally, confidential materials obtained through the program and provided to a public body are not considered public records, and thus, are exempt from disclosure under Michigan’s FOIA requirements.
- Two specific evidentiary exceptions to confidentiality exist: (1) An alleged criminal may petition a court for an in camera inspection of confidential communications concerning himself; and (2) A prosecutor may petition a court for an in camera inspection of confidential communications that were allegedly offered for the purpose of providing false or misleading information to the program. In both cases, a court may order production and disclosure of the communications in question if it deems appropriate.

Collaboration (Reporting, Promoting, Contracting)

- Each year before January 31, the Attorney General, in cooperation with the Michigan State Police, must prepare a report that categorizes the number and type of incidents received by the hotline. Also, the Attorney General must develop a plan to promote the hotline in consultation with school officials, law enforcement agencies, and other interested parties. Finally, the Attorney General, the Michigan State Police, and the Michigan Education Department may contract with all necessary third parties to help administer the program.

Funding

- The bill creates the Student Safety and Consumer Protection Enforcement Fund within the Treasury Department. The Attorney General shall administer this Fund. Money shall be spent to carry out the bill’s purpose and will not lapse to the General Fund. The State Treasurer may receive money or other assets from any source for deposit into the Fund. The State Treasurer directs Fund investments and must credit to the Fund any interest or earnings from Fund investments.

Submitted by Attny Gen. Bill Schuette

Organization that Support OK-2-SAY
AFT Michigan
Cadillac Area Public School
Governor's Office
Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police
Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators
Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools
Michigan Association of School Administrators
Michigan Association of School Boards
Michigan Association of School Social Workers
Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals
Michigan Department of Education
Michigan Education Association
Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association
Michigan Parent Teacher Student Association
Michigan Sheriff's Association
Michigan State Police
Middle Cities Education Association
Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan

Organization that Plan to Testify
AFT Michigan
Cadillac Area Public School
Michigan Association of School Administrators
Michigan Association of School Social Workers
Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals
Michigan Department of Education
Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association
Michigan Parent Teacher Student Association
Michigan Sheriff's Association
Michigan State Police
Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan

1001 Centennial Way, Ste 300
Lansing, MI 48917-9279
Telephone 5170327-9260
Fax 517-327-0779
www.gomaisa.org

2012-2013

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William C. Miller
Executive Director

May 22, 2013

Attorney General Bill Schuette

ATT: Executive Division

PO Box 30212

Lansing, MI 48909

On behalf of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, I would like to express support for House Bill 4753 – the “OK-2-SAY” legislation. This legislation will create a comprehensive communication system for students, parents, school personnel, and law enforcement officials to share information that can prevent dangerous behavior. Our association supports initiatives such as this that put the safety of our students at the forefront and make efforts to secure our schools.

Sincerely,



William C. Miller, PhD

Executive Director

May 23, 2013

Dear Members of the Michigan Legislature,

I am writing in support of House Bill 4753 the OK-2-SAY school safety initiative. Michigan has been a leader in school safety yet we seem to be losing the battle in our efforts to protect our children from bullying, assault, gun violence and abuse. The OK-2-SAY hotline will provide a way for students to anonymously report crime or the threat of violence even before it occurs. As you have heard so many times, over 160,000 students refuse to attend school each day in the United States for fear of bullying or violence. The proposed initiative will go a long way to provide an extra measure of security and accountability assuring a safer environment for our students to learn and flourish.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and support of this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Paul Liabenow
Executive Director

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION of SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS



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School Administrators

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1001 Centennial Way, Suite 300
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Phone: 517-327-5910
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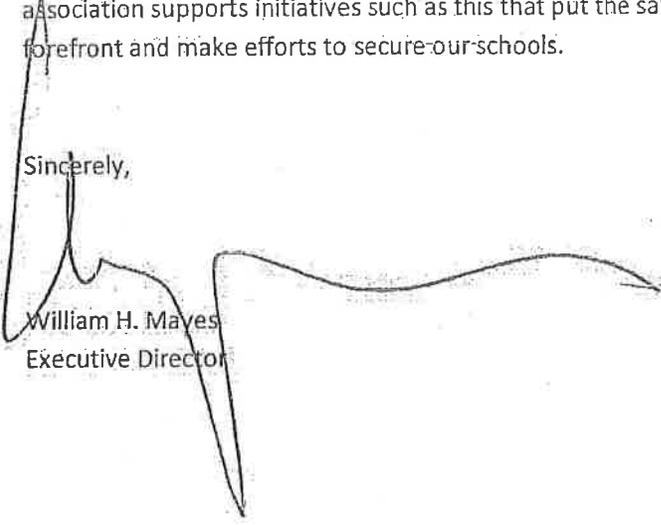
May 22, 2013

Attorney General Bill Schuette
ATT: Executive Division
PO Box 30212
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Attorney General Schuette,

On behalf of the Michigan Association of School Administrators, I would like to express support for House Bill 4753 – the “OK-2-SAY” legislation. This legislation will create a comprehensive communication system for students, parents, school personnel, and law enforcement officials to share information that can prevent dangerous behavior. Our association supports initiatives such as this that put the safety of our students at the forefront and make efforts to secure our schools.

Sincerely,


William H. Mayes
Executive Director

*Michigan PTA mobilizes the forces of school, home, and community in order
to ensure a quality education and nurturing environment for every child.*

May 23, 2013

Attorney General Bill Schuette
ATT: Executive Division
PO Box 30212
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: OK-2-SAY/House Bill 4753

Dear Mr. Schuette,

The Michigan Parent Teacher Association (Michigan PTA) wholly supports House Bill 4753 – the Michigan student safety act – that will facilitate implementation of the OK-2-SAY program.

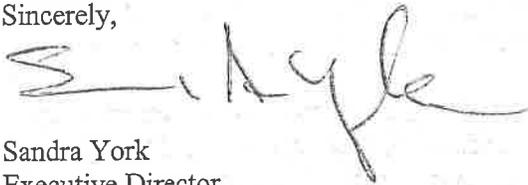
The amount of violence we hear about in schools today is staggering and this violence is both perpetrated on and by children. Evidence shows that in over 80% of violent incidents in schools, someone other than the attacker knew of the attacker's plan yet did not report it. Why does this culture of silence persist? Fear of retaliation? The assumption that nobody will do anything anyway? Concern over being labeled a 'snitch'?

We have the opportunity in front of us to begin changing that culture. OK-2-SAY will empower children with a safe, confidential avenue to share information that has the potential to save lives. The program will be operational all day, every day, accepting tips across a wide range of media, which will promote immediate reporting and help alleviate second thoughts about reporting. The statewide scope of OK-2-SAY allows for swift action that can prevent tragedies rather than leaving us wishing something hadn't happened.

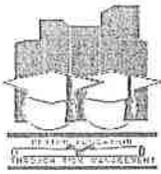
Parents and family members want to ensure their children are safe at home, at school or in the community. Michigan PTA supports and applauds you for your willingness to facilitate implementation of OK-2-SAY in Michigan and we urge the legislature to pass House Bill 4753 as one of the necessary steps to ensure the program will be able to move forward.

If just one child's life is saved – and we believe it will be many more – the program will be a success. No parent should be on the receiving end of that one phone call that will change their family's life forever.

Sincerely,



Sandra York
Executive Director



Middle Cities
Risk Management Trust



Middle Cities
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



Middle Cities
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- Romulus Community Schools
- Saginaw Public Schools
- Southfield Public Schools
- Waterford School District
- Wayne-Westland Community Schools
- Willard Public Library
- Willow Run Community Schools
- Ypsilanti School District

May 24, 2013

Via E-Mail: MIAG@michigan.gov

Attorney General Bill Schuette
ATT: Executive Division
PO Box 30212
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: OK-2-SAY/House Bill 4753

Dear Mr. Schuette:

I am writing in support of the initiative to establish a broad-based communication system to provide a means for parents, students, school personnel, and others to effectively share tips and information with law enforcement to promote school and most importantly, student safety.

It is well established in the vast majority of school violence or dangerous behavior incidents (over 80%) that someone had foreknowledge of the potential harm or damage. A mechanism that provides a common and well-publicized platform that is accessible to the public and provides for prompt and appropriate intervention by law enforcement and /or school officials is beneficial to all of our students and school community and will promote increased safety and security in schools.

I think it is important that the proposed bill provides a state-wide comprehensive approach that will allow anyone at anytime to provide information to the appropriate party to proactively prevent or mitigate dangerous behavior or threats to school security.

As a risk management organization, we constantly strive to find ways to improve the educational climate of schools and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. This proposal supports those goals and I whole-heartedly support the implementation of OK-2-SAY.

Sincerely,

James A. Craig II
Director and Chief Operating Officer
Middle Cities Risk Management Services

cc: Ray Telman, Executive Director, Middle Cities Education Association

826 Municipal Way
Lansing, MI 48917



May 24, 2013

Attorney General Bill Schuette
Attn: Executive Division
PO Box 30212
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Attorney General Schuette:

AFT Michigan is pleased to support HB 4753, the "OK-2-SAY" bill. School safety is one of our members' core concerns and we applaud the effort to improve school culture and protect those who have the courage to speak up.

We encourage all legislators to support this common sense idea to make our schools safe for all students.

Sincerely,

David Hecker
President

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Federation of Teachers,
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MAIN OFFICE
2661 E. Jefferson
Detroit, MI 48207
T: 313/393-2200
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419 S. Washington, Suite 301
Lansing, MI 48933
T: 517/371-4300

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2342-B Industrial Street
P.O. Box 172
Grayling, MI 49738
T: 989/348-4191
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May 23, 2013

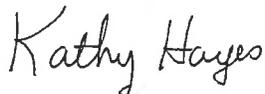
Attorney General Bill Schuette
ATT: Executive Division
PO Box 30212
Lansing, MI 48909

Michigan Association of School Boards strongly supports the OK 2 Say program, the student safety reporting system being developed through the Attorney General's office in coordination with the Michigan State Police. The safety of our students is of utmost importance and any effort that schools and state government can take to keep our students safe is a high priority.

The OK 2 Say 24-hour hotline gives every student and concerned citizen the opportunity to anonymously report potentially violent situations that could conceivably prevent a devastating tragedy that might otherwise occur. Teachers and administrators can only do so much in recognizing warning signs that might lead to student violence. Our best resources for information about imminent danger are our students themselves. Allowing them to provide this information through an anonymous venue will circumvent the stigma students often attach to informing on one another.

This program has been modeled after successful programs in other states and will be fully funded by the State. MASB urges the Legislature to pass House Bill 4753 – the "OK-2-SAY" legislation.

Sincerely,



Kathy Hayes
Executive Director

1001 Centennial Way, Suite 400
Lansing, MI 48917-8249
P: 517.327.5900
F: 517.327.0775
www.masb.org

Drew, Mary (AG)

From: Michigan Attorney General
Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2013 2:21 PM
To: Lollo, Sharon (AG); Lazet, John (AG); Cropsey, Alan (AG); Drew, Mary (AG)
Subject: FW: Support for OK-2-Say Program and HB 4753

Importance: High

From: Deborah Kamm [<mailto:dkamm@m-a-n-s.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2013 12:17 PM
To: Michigan Attorney General
Cc: bbroderick@m-a-n-s.org; asalas@m-a-n-s.org; molly.piecuch@aquinas.edu
Subject: Support for OK-2-Say Program and HB 4753
Importance: High

Dear Attorney General Schuette:

The Michigan Association of Non-public Schools (MANS) supports the OK-2-Say Program and House Bill 4753.

MANS members place a priority on school safety and we believe this program and legislation will provide an excellent and safe forum for students and staff not only in our faith-based schools, but the entire education community.

Allowing students to have the opportunity to voice school safety concerns anonymously will protect the student and the entire school community. Students who worry about being an informant will be put at ease by the anonymous method of reporting. This system will be a critical piece of the effort to reduce school violence and is an important component to providing a safe learning environment.

Sincerely,



Brian Broderick
Executive Director
Michigan Association of Non-public Schools
510 S. Capitol
Lansing, MI 48933
(517) 372-9315
(517) 372-0662 dd
(517) 334-5526 Fax
www.m-a-n-s.org

Drew, Mary (AG)

From: Michigan Attorney General
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2013 1:44 PM
To: Lollo, Sharon (AG); Cropsey, Alan (AG); Drew, Mary (AG)
Subject: FW: House Bill 4753

From: Strachan, Nancy [<mailto:NStrachan@mea.org>]
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2013 11:11 AM
To: Michigan Attorney General
Subject: House Bill 4753

Good Morning Mary,

Here is my letter of support for the House Bill 4753.

HB 4753, OK-2 –SAY, has the full support of the Michigan Education Association. Protecting children is and should remain a top priority in our state. This bill, allowing for anonymity, will encourage more students to come forward to inform a figure of authority who then can take whatever measures necessary to diffuse a possible violent situation.

Respectfully,

Nancy Strachan
Michigan Education Association
Vice President