



June 10, 2020

**Letter of Support for the Wyoming Department of Education's Application for the Department of Justice BJA's STOP School Violence Program BJA-2020-17312 Grant Funding**

To Members of the Grant Review Committee,

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) to be included with the application for the BJA STOP School Violence Program grant BJA-2020-17312. It is my understanding that, if awarded, this grant funding will provide valuable and necessary support for statewide comprehensive Threat Assessment and Intervention in our school districts. Research on the topic of Threat Assessment by the National Association of School Psychologists and Dr. Dickey Cornell and Peter Sheras has made clear that a Zero Tolerance approach to school violence is both ineffective and counterproductive and that districts **should:**

- Conduct threat assessment with a multi-disciplinary team of trained professionals, including a school mental health professional, administrators, school resource officer or local law enforcement.
- Act quickly to evaluate and classify the threat and appropriate response and intervene.
- Utilize Threat Assessment as a comprehensive approach maintaining a safe school, which offers a balance between physical and psychological safety.

This grant presents a critical funding opportunity that will allow stakeholders from rural communities to partner with school districts and members of law enforcement to help execute the following initiatives:

- Engage a statewide STOP School Violence Task Force to assist with the implementation of the Comprehensive Targeted Violence Prevention Plan as issued by the Department of Homeland Security's US Secret service National Threat Assessment Center.
- Create regional Threat Assessment Teams to deploy throughout the state to provide in depth training to school staff, local law enforcement, and community organizations to support individual school districts
- Collect data from stakeholder groups and community reporting systems and leverage an adaptive learning management system to respond to those needs with a results driven targeted approach.

The value of Threat Assessment and Intervention in creating positive school climates should not be understated, as it directly impacts the state's most valuable resource, our K-12 students. It is our duty to aggressively and proactively protect the safety and wellbeing of this population, as well as educators, administrators, and law enforcement resources within our school systems in order to ensure safer, stronger, and more vibrant communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Perkins', is written over a white background.

Sarah Perkins, Ed.S. NCSP

President

Wyoming School Psychology Association