



Program overview

Introduction

The Office of the Governor, Attorney General Bill Schuette, the Michigan State Police, the Michigan Department of Education, the Michigan Department of Community Health, and the Michigan Department of Human Services are taking action to improve the safety of Michigan schools for our children. Their student safety initiative is called OK2SAY.

Goal

The goal of OK2SAY is to create a comprehensive communication system that empowers students, parents, school personnel, community mental health service programs, and law enforcement officials to share and respond to student safety threats.

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

OK2SAY opens the lines of communication among students and caring, professional adults through:

- **Confidential Reporting:** Reporter confidentiality will be statutorily guaranteed.
- **Comprehensive Technology:** Tips can be submitted by telephone, text message, email, or at the OK2SAY website. A downloadable mobile application is also being developed. Multimedia attachments (photo, video, audio, etc.) and links will be accepted.
- **Coordinated Intervention:** Program operators will field initial reports and promptly provide the information to appropriate local law enforcement agencies, community mental health service programs, and school districts.
- **Complete Disposition:** To promote accountability, school, law enforcement, and/or community mental health service program officials will be asked to complete an outcome report detailing the nature of the tip, the action taken in response, the outcome achieved, and suggestions for improvement.

Benefits

Key benefits of the OK2SAY program include:

- **Increased Safety:** Facilitates responses to harmful behaviors directed toward others or oneself, including bullying, substance abuse, weapons possession, and suicide threats.
- **Crisis Training:** Ensures that program personnel are trained in crisis management, including recognition of mental illness and emotional disturbance, and that psychiatric emergencies are referred to the appropriate community mental health services psychiatric crisis line.
- **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 reports through 24/7 availability, police coordination, and outcome reporting.
- **Improved Academic Performance:** Creates safer learning environments where students can reach their full academic potential.

Success

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

- **Colorado:** Program has documented and resolved 284 planned school attacks, 320 gun/weapon reports, 469 sexual offenses, 1,323 planned suicides, and 2,207 bullying instances.
- **Missouri:** Key successes include tip submission through downloadable mobile app. Program fielded 1,000+ reports in 2011, and 80% of law enforcement surveyed believe the hotline promotes cooperation between law enforcement agencies and school officials.

Timeline

The OK2SAY program will be operational by September 2, 2014. The confidential online tip site is at:

<https://ok2say.state.mi.us/>

Your local district will provide further program contact information when it is released.

Information provided to your local school district by:

