



Funding School Safety Grants

2027-29 Biennial Capital Budget Decision Package

Agency: 3500 Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Budget period: 2027-29 Biennial Budget

Budget level: PL

PROJECT SUMMARY

In the 2025-27 Biennial Capital Budget, the legislature created the School Security and Preparedness Infrastructure Grants program and provided \$6 million for the new grant program. The grant's purpose was to increase the physical security of K-12 public school facilities and campuses. This funding request of \$12 million is to continue the grant program into the 2027-29 biennium.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The School Security and Preparedness Infrastructure Grants program, established in the 2025–27 Biennial Capital Budget, provides funding to improve the physical security of K–12 public school facilities and campuses. Public school districts are eligible to apply for grants to support projects such as entrance and door security (including panic buttons), fencing and perimeter security, construction or infrastructure changes that channel public entry through a limited number of access points (for example, the main administrative entrance), and repair or upgrades to existing physical security systems. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has developed an application process and project-evaluation criteria; priority awards are based on demonstrated physical security needs and must result in improved school safety. Currently, each district's award may not exceed \$500,000 per biennium; the proposal would increase that cap to \$600,000 per district per biennium to allow larger-scope projects and to address inflationary cost increases.

What will the request produce or construct? Who or what will be impacted by the budget request and how will they be impacted?

In the 2027–29 biennium, the proposed School Security and Preparedness Infrastructure Grants program would fund projects to create secure entrances, improve door security (including panic buttons), and install fencing and perimeter security infrastructure. Construction and infrastructure work would be designed to channel the public entering school grounds through as few entrances as possible, such as a school's main administrative entrance, and may include repair or upgrades to existing physical security systems. The infrastructure should be designed to assist with or expedite law enforcement response to a threat or emergency on school

grounds. This proposal would fund only the direct costs of eligible projects and would not reimburse grantees for indirect costs associated with project management or administration.

Identify the problem or opportunity addressed by this request. Why is the request a priority? What would be the result of not acting?

The School Security and Preparedness Infrastructure Grants program is a highly sought after grant program, with 173 districts applying for over \$56 million in project funding. Schools across Washington face increasing safety challenges, yet many facilities particularly older buildings, lack modern security infrastructure such as controlled entry points, coordinated communication systems, and rapid emergency response tools. These gaps create real vulnerabilities, including delayed law enforcement response, unsecured access points, and limited situational awareness during critical incidents.

The need is especially pronounced in under-resourced and rural districts, where limited local funding may not target essential safety upgrades and, in some cases, may have extended emergency response times. This results in inequitable safety conditions, where students in higher-needs communities often lack the same baseline protections as those in other areas. Targeted state investment through this grant proposal provides an opportunity to close these gaps and ensure consistent, modern safety measures across all schools.

Funding will support evidence-based improvements, such as secure entrances, perimeter controls, panic buttons, and law enforcement response integration - that strengthen prevention, enable faster response times, and improve coordination during emergencies. In addition to clear public safety benefits, these upgrades reduce operational inefficiencies, mitigate liability risks, and avoid higher future costs associated with reactive infrastructure fixes.

For new funding requests for programs or projects that have received previous appropriations (either a phase of construction or previous grant rounds), how much has been spent or put under contract?

As of May 2026, the entire 2025-27 biennium appropriation of \$6 million for the grant program has been allocated to school districts located mostly in Central and Eastern Washington based on a statewide prioritized by physical security needs. Of the 173 districts applied, 18 school districts had their requests fully or partially funded based on priority needs.

Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source?

The 2025-27 biennium program limited district grant awards to \$500,000. This proposal would increase the per district limitation to \$600,000. The increase will allow projects to have a larger scope and account for inflationary increases.

For major construction projects, describe the viable alternative solutions you considered. Why was this alternative chosen?

This option is the best alternative as the program was created by the legislature in the 2025-27 Biennial Capital Budget. Funding this important program would ensure our students have safe and secured school facilities and campuses.

For major construction projects, what project delivery method has been or will be selected and why?

N/A

Location

- Address: N/A
- Zip Code: N/A
- County: Statewide
- City: Olympia
- Legislative District: 098

Grant recipient organization

Local School Districts.

RCW that establishes grant

28A.525

Application process used

OSPI will continue to utilize the competitive grant application framework established in 2025 to ensure all school districts have an opportunity to apply for grant funds.

Describe the Growth Management Impacts

School districts are responsible for determining whether and how they need to participate in the planning process with the city or county planning authority.

Funding Requested

- 2027-29 \$12,000,000
- 2029-31 \$12,000,000
- 2031-33 \$12,000,000
- 2033-35 \$12,000,000
- 2035-37 \$12,000,000

STRATEGIC AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Provide context on how this request fits into the agency's work. Describe how this project supports the agency's strategic plan or would improve agency performance.

This project supports Superintendent Reykdal's K-12 Education Vision of his goal for Washington's public education system to prepare every student who walks through our school doors for post-secondary aspirations, careers, and life.

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? What are the measurable outcomes that would result from the project?

This proposal advances equity by directing school safety infrastructure investments to communities that have historically faced limited access to capital funding and modern security systems. Across Washington, disparities in local funding capacity have produced uneven safety conditions: newer or better resourced schools often have upgraded access control and emergency systems, while many older facilities, frequently serving higher need student populations, still rely on outdated or inadequate protections. By prioritizing improvements for underfunded districts, the program helps ensure a consistent baseline level of safety for all students and staff, regardless of location or local funding constraints.

OTHER SUPPORTING MATERIALS

If this project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda and/or the Governor's Salmon Strategy, please follow the instructions in Chapter 14 of the operating budget instructions and Chapter 3 of the capital budget instructions.

This project does not impact the Puget Sound Action Agenda or the Governor's Salmon Strategy.

Is there additional information you would like decision makers to know when evaluating this request?

No.