



Attorney General Shapiro Announces Strong Start for Safe2Say School Safety Reporting Program

More than 600 Tips Made to Statewide Anonymous Reporting System in Program's First Week in Operation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — January 23, 2019

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HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro released information today on the first-week results for the Safe2Say Something Anonymous Reporting System, a statewide program enabling students, teachers, school administrators and others to detect and report potential threats of violence and other problems before they happen.

In the program's initial week, the reporting system has received 615 tips and calls from across Pennsylvania. Crisis center analysts have processed every tip and referred more than several hundred to local law enforcement and school officials to follow up and interact with students.

Established and funded by the Pennsylvania legislature and signed into law by Gov. Wolf last year, the Safe2Say Reporting System is based on strict principles of anonymity and confidentiality to encourage reporting of problems, potential threats of violence, self-harm or other incidents.

Safe2Say already includes 3,774 public and private schools across the Commonwealth in its network. Last week, the program's staff trained 178,283 students in how to use the reporting system. This week, plans are to complete trainings for an additional 166,883 students.

"Pennsylvania students deserve a safe place to learn, free from the threat of violence from classmates or other individuals," Attorney General Shapiro said in announcing the program's first week of activity and results. "I'm proud my office was entrusted by the legislature to run this new program focused on school safety. Working together with local law enforcement and school officials, we can make Pennsylvania safer for families, teachers and, most importantly, our students."

Students, school officials and others can go to www.safe2saypa.org to learn more about this new school safety initiative. They can also call 1-844-Saf2Say (844-723-2729) to report information.

The Office of Attorney General Shapiro is working closely with the Sandy Hook Promise on education and outreach on how to use this reporting system. Sandy Hook Promise is a national non-profit organization based in Newtown, Conn., formed after the school shooting in Sandy Hook in December, 2012. Its founders and directors include parents and others whose loved ones were killed in that tragedy.

While Sandy Hook Promise has trained 3.5 million students and teachers in 50 states in best practices to detect and report signs of potential violence, Pennsylvania is the first location where Sandy Hook Promise is working across an entire state – with Attorney General Shapiro's office.

Officials involved with Pennsylvania schools and school boards said they are pleased with the early results of Safe2Say, and glad to be participating in the new initiative.

"We trained staff yesterday on Safe2Say, and we trained students this morning," Dr. Kenneth Williams, Director of Maintenance, Transportation and Technology for the Mount Pleasant School District, and also its Safe and Secure Schools Coordinator, reported recently to Safe2Say staff. "Within 10 minutes following the training, we received our first life safety tip. All of what was reported to us worked well. We have intervened and helped some students who may not have been identified. Thanks for the support and making it *safe to say something* for kids."

"The Safe2Say Something program introduced by the Office of the Attorney General is another tool school districts can use to gather information and respond to the safety considerations of students and the community," said David Hutchinson, President of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association and a board director of the State College Area School District.

"Key benefits for school districts include the anonymity afforded their students and community members through the reporting system, training for students, and mechanisms for notification of immediate safety threats, as well as issues affecting student behavioral health and wellness," Hutchinson said.

"There is nothing more important than making our schools as safe as possible for students, staff, and visitors," said Rich Askey, President of the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) and a Harrisburg teacher. "Safe2Say Something provides our schools and communities with new tools to detect the early warning signs of trouble and act on them. I appreciate the hard work of the Attorney General's Office to partner with our schools and communities to make Safe2Say a success."

"School district leaders know that the safety and security of their students, faculty and staff is their highest priority," said Dr. Michael Snell, Superintendent of Central York School District. "We also know that creating a safe and secure learning environment for all is not possible unless we are working collaboratively with law enforcement officials and the community to proactively improve school safety. With its focus on education, prevention and coordinated response, we believe Safe2Say will enhance our ability to safeguard our schools and deliver a comprehensive effort to improve the overall safety and well-being of our students, faculty, staff and community."

Attorney General Shapiro praised the Pennsylvania legislature and Governor Wolf for supporting and funding the school safety program, and specifically commended Sens. Patrick Browne, R-

Lehigh, and Vincent Hughes, D-Philadelphia, for their co-sponsorship of the legislation that created Safe2Say. “We’re working together every day on this 24/7 program to make students and schools safer, and we appreciate our partners in the legislature and the governor’s office for all their support,” Shapiro concluded.

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