GRACE School System Awarded School Safety Grant of $153,990 from the Wisconsin Department of Justice

GREEN BAY, Wis. — The Green Bay Area Catholic Education (GRACE) school system received a Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) School Safety Initiative Grant, administered by the DOJ’s Office of School Safety, in the amount of $153,990, the full request from the school system. The grant positively impacts safety at all nine GRACE schools and aligns with the system’s continuous focus on safety.

GRACE is using the grant to enhance training and improve building security at all nine schools within the system. Building enhancements are taking place this summer to be implemented for the start of school in late August, per requirements of the grant.

“We are grateful to the Department of Justice and our state for providing support for our schools and systems to continue to enhance and improve safety,” said Kimberly Desotell, GRACE president. “This grant provides us the opportunity to unify the safety efforts within our system, strengthen our relationship with our community leaders and ensure we are vigilant in using the latest and most effective security measures.”

Desotell and her leadership team worked alongside local law enforcement in Brown County, the city of Green Bay, the city of De Pere, the village of Howard and the village of Allouez to apply for the funding.

“The support we receive from our law-enforcement authorities is incredible,” Desotell said. “I am so thankful for their service to our community and our schools. They are amazing advocates of safe and secure environments for our students.”

Grant Provides Multiple School Enhancements
According to the DOJ grant announcement, grant recipients can use their funding toward training, safety-related upgrades to school buildings, equipment and facilities, and any expenditures related to submission of school safety plans and blueprints to local law-enforcement partners of the Office of School Safety.

As a requirement of the grant, every teacher and staff member in the GRACE school system not yet certified will participate in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and Trauma Informed Care/Trauma Sensitive Schools training. This training will further equip the GRACE staff and teachers with the support and resources needed to provide the highest level of care to the students in the system.

Each school within the system will receive funds and apply them toward their unique identified needs. Seven of the schools will get shatter-resistant safety film at the school main entrance. Additional enhancements include: shatter-resistant safety film at secondary entrances, new communication systems, additional security cameras, security systems (new systems or enhancements of current), lock replacements and fence/gate enhancements.
A total of $100 million is available through the School Safety Initiative Grant program to support projects designed to improve K-12 school safety. The funds are administered by DOJ, in consultation with the Department of Public Instruction and other state and local partner agencies.

Safety as First Priority
The safety grant allows for the GRACE school system and its nine schools to enhance processes and systems, such as better building entrance security and improved internal communication and notification systems.

“We have always had safe schools where the needs of our children are first priority,” Desotell said. “Our students learn best in an environment where they are comfortable and confident in their surroundings. The safety enhancements we are making, thanks to the grant, allows us to provide the latest technology and continue to offer a safe space for education.”

About GRACE
GRACE stands for Green Bay Area Catholic Education and is a nine-school system that provides excellence in early childhood through eighth-grade education and serves the 23 Catholic parishes within the Greater Green Bay community. GRACE schools range in offerings and locations, and each has its own distinct history, focus and parish connections. GRACE is among the largest Catholic school systems in the state of Wisconsin. To learn more, visit gracesystem.org.