

BOARD MEMO – INFORMATION ITEM



PUTNAM COUNTY COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #535

*Providing Foundations Together,
Cultivating Individual Growth*

To: Board of Education

From: Cody Martzluf, Superintendent

Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026

RE: School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP) Grant

Background:

- I would like to inform the Board of Education that the district intends to apply for the FY2026 School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP) Grant. This federal grant program provides school districts with funding to improve school security through evidence-based safety and security enhancements designed to prevent violence and improve emergency preparedness.
- The SVPP is administered through the U.S. Department of Justice and is intended to support schools in implementing technologies, equipment, and infrastructure that enhance the safety of students, staff, and visitors. The grant is competitive with award amounts up to \$500,000 with a 25% local match.
- Based on a recent review of district safety needs, we intend to pursue funding for a comprehensive package of security enhancements, including:
 - Replacement of the district's outdated camera systems with a unified, district-wide video surveillance system.
 - Replacement of the district-wide telephone system with a modern communications platform.
 - Installation of a district-wide public address (PA) system that integrates with the telephone system, allowing emergency announcements, including lockdowns, evacuations, shelter-in-place, and other emergency notifications, to be broadcast simultaneously to every building and classroom.
 - Replacement of classroom door locks with locks that can be secured from inside the classroom, improving the ability of staff to respond quickly during an emergency.
 - Purchase of district-wide two-way radios to improve communication among administrators, office staff, maintenance personnel, and other staff.
 - Implementation of a visitor management system to strengthen visitor screening, badge printing, and building access procedures.
 - Enhancements to the district's electronic keyless access control system to improve building security, access management, and emergency lockdown capabilities.
 - Installation of police Knox Boxes at each school building to provide first responders with rapid, secure access during emergencies while minimizing delays.
- Collectively, these projects represent a comprehensive approach to modernizing the district's safety and security infrastructure. Many of our current systems have reached the end of their useful life, operate independently of one another, or lack the capabilities expected of modern school security systems. The proposed improvements would significantly enhance communication, emergency response, access control, and situational awareness across all district facilities.
- Should the district be awarded funding, administration will return to the Board with detailed project recommendations, procurement plans, and any required local match considerations before implementation. This grant represents a significant opportunity to make meaningful investments in school safety while minimizing the financial impact on local taxpayers.
- I would like to convene the school safety board committee at some point this fall to review school safety initiatives.