



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**State Board of Education  
Resolution on Safer School Environments**

WHEREAS, students, staff, families, and communities have been tremendously affected by shootings that take place in communities across the state, and the mass shootings that took place at Oxford High School on November 30, 2021 and on the campus of Michigan State University on February 13, 2023. The tragedies collectively resulted in the deaths of seven students and the injuring of a teacher and 11 students;

WHEREAS, in 2020, firearm-related injuries surpassed motor vehicle crashes to become the leading cause of death among people ages 1 to 19 years in the United States, and Black youth were four times more likely to be killed with guns than their white peers and Hispanic and Indigenous people more than twice as likely to die by gun violence than whites;

WHEREAS, according to *Everytown*, guns are the 2nd-leading cause of death among children and teens in Michigan. In Michigan, an average of 89 children and teens die by guns every year, and 52% of these deaths are homicides. In the US, 58% of all gun deaths among children and teens are homicides;

WHEREAS, according to *Brady United*, the annual gun violence impacting youth and teens from 1-17 years old is astronomical. Every year, 7,957 children and teens are shot in the United States. Among those 1839 children and teens die from gun violence; 992 are murdered; 6,294 children and teens survive gunshot injuries; 2,788 are intentionally shot by someone else and survive; 693 die from gun suicide; 166 survive an attempted gun suicide; 10 are killed by legal intervention; 101 are shot by legal intervention and survive; 99 are killed unintentionally; 2,893 are shot unintentionally and survive; 38 die but the intent was unknown; 380 are and survive shot but the intent is unknown;

WHEREAS, a statewide poll conducted last fall by EPIC-MRA found that there is substantial agreement among Michiganders on the following commonsense gun safety initiatives:

- Requiring background checks on all gun sales, including sales at gun shows and other private sales.
- Enacting a child access prevention law that would hold gun owners accountable for the safe storage of firearms.

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

PAMELA PUGH – PRESIDENT • ELLEN COGEN LIPTON / TIFFANY D. TILLEY – CO-VICE PRESIDENTS  
JUDITH PRITCHETT – SECRETARY • MARSHALL BULLOCK II – TREASURER  
MITCHELL ROBINSON – NASBE DELEGATE • TOM MCMILLIN • NIKKI SNYDER

- Preventing sales of all firearms to people who have been reported to law enforcement as dangerous to themselves or others.
- Requiring a waiting period of at least 3 days after a gun purchase before the gun can be taken home.
- Imposing criminal penalties or fines for those who buy firearms for another person.
- Requiring a person to be age 21 instead of 18 to be able to purchase an assault-style weapon.
- Establishing a court-issued protection order called an “extreme risk protection order.”

WHEREAS, bullying is often cited as a catalyst to violence by students and should be taken seriously in every school. Reports of students being bullied and feeling that their safety is in jeopardy should be documented and addressed, including when necessary in mediation among students, with parental involvement, and with professionals trained in dispute resolution;

WHEREAS, according to the national Centers for Disease Control, for youth between the ages of 10 and 24, suicide is the third leading cause of death and each day in the United States, there are an average of over 5,400 suicide attempts by young people in grades 7-12; and the recent study in the Journal of the American Medical Association noted that children who are bullied are more than twice as likely to consider suicide;

WHEREAS, Michigan law requires local school districts to have an anti-bullying policy that protects the safety of all students and that has the input of parents, students, teachers and administrators, law enforcement, and other community members;

WHEREAS, Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s FY 24 budget recommendation includes \$30 million for additional direct mental health services for students; \$300 million (over 2 years) for per pupil mental health payments; \$300 million (over 2 years) for per pupil school safety payments to public schools; and \$18 million for per pupil school safety payments to nonpublic schools;

WHEREAS, children’s mental health supports—including Tier 1 social emotional learning, whose five competencies are self-awareness, awareness of others, self-management, relationship to others, and responsible decision-making—are important for local school districts to promote school safety and to develop healthy and productive students;

WHEREAS, Michigan schools should have access to school social workers and/or guidance counselors, as staff or through a partnership with an organization, to be available to detect and address mental health issues that could result in threats that may turn into self-harm or harm to others;

WHEREAS, there are students, bullied or fearful, who act in ways due to the environment or prior threats, with the intention of personal protection. Schools

should have an appropriate plan in place for these instances as well, and should mediate among the students in these circumstances;

WHEREAS, both the Michigan Senate and Michigan House of Representatives are actively considering bills to require background checks for all firearm purchases, safe storage of firearms, and enacting of "red flag" laws;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the State Board of Education expresses appreciation to Governor Gretchen Whitmer and the Michigan State Legislature for greater investments in student mental health services and school safety;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Education appreciates the state legislature holding hearings on commonsense gun safety legislation and absorbing the heartbreaking testimony from families and young people whose lives have been devastated by the use of firearms;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Education strongly urges the state legislature to adopt the governor's budget recommendations for additional funding for children's mental health and school safety and to pass safer gun laws which do not promote the hardening of schools, and which include the aforementioned commonsense gun measures on which Michiganders largely agree to make students and staff safer in Michigan schools.

Adopted on March 14, 2023 on a vote of 6-2