



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

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

WHEREAS, students, staff, families, and communities have been tremendously affected by the mass shooting that took place at Oxford High School on November 30, 2021. The tragedy resulted in the deaths of four students and the injuring of a teacher and six other 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 are more than twice as likely to die by gun violence than white people;

WHEREAS, gun safety must be a priority in every Michigan home. Gun owners should lock up their guns and store them safely. Gun owners should supervise any children that they may have in gun use and teach children about proper gun usage and potentially deadly consequences associated with gun usage;

WHEREAS, a recent statewide poll conducted by EPIC-MRA found that there is substantial agreement among Michiganders on the following eight 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.
- 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."
- Requiring a person to be age 21 instead of 18 to be able to purchase any firearm.

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;

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

WHEREAS, Governor Gretchen Whitmer and the state legislature negotiated a generational, bipartisan state budget this year that included additional state funding for student mental health services of \$245 million and for school safety of \$210 million;

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 any mental health illnesses that could result in threats that may turn into self-harm or harm to others. Their actions should increase awareness with educators, support staff, and administration through internal communications and trainings and should help mitigate situations that may have the potential to erupt;

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, there has been a demonstrated pattern at some schools that leadership has not always acted in an immediate nature when there is a behavioral threat to a student themselves, or others, with or without the advice of school counselors; it is imperative that all threats are taken seriously;

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that local and intermediate school districts should use these resources to assure that every student feels safe, supported, accepted, and protected in school.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Education strongly urges the state legislature to pass safer gun laws to include the eight aforementioned commonsense gun measures on which Michiganders largely agree to make students and staff safer in Michigan schools.

Adopted October 11, 2022