



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 16, 2018

Sheriffs and Educators: Use Surplus Dollars to Ensure Safety of Michigan Students

Following Revenue Estimating Conference, Law Enforcement Leaders Ask Lawmakers to Prevent Violence in Michigan schools

Lansing, MI— Following today's budget announcement and the revelation of an estimated \$300 million surplus, a coalition comprised of Michigan's top law enforcement and education groups urged lawmakers to invest in bipartisan plan to prevent violence in the classroom. The coalition supports a recently introduced legislative package, led by State Rep. Aaron Miller (R-Sturgis), and modeled after a proposal announced in late March.

The **Michigan School Safety Reform Plan** is based on clear, actionable strategies that are both effective and immediately achievable.

"Nothing is more important than the safety of Michigan's children," said Paul Bailey, Berrien County Sheriff and President of the Michigan Sheriffs Association. "The budget surplus announced today should be put to use preventing violence in Michigan schools."

The Michigan School Safety Reform Plan calls for a new state grant program for personnel, a grant program for safety infrastructure, and other reforms, including:

- More school resource officers—sheriffs and police—working in school facilities through a new state grant program;
- More school mental health professionals to identify problems early through the same new state grant program;
- Grants to ensure safer buildings for students and teachers; and
- Mandatory reporting of threats and graduated penalties to help prevent violence.

(more)

“Giving schools the resources needed to update security in school buildings or putting more school resource officers on school property will help to keep our children safe and help prevent tragedies before they happen,” said Michael Rochholz, President of the Michigan Association of School Boards. “We also need to increase the ratio of school counselors and social workers to help assist with early intervention.”

Currently, Michigan’s student to school counselor ratio is roughly 750 to 1. The student to school social workers ratio is 1,000 to 1. The student to school psychologist ratio is roughly 4,800 to 1. All ratios are well below recommended levels.

The plan also calls for improved reporting of school safety threats.

“Our schools have experienced a significant increase in the number of school threats,” said Mark Reene, Tuscola County Prosecuting Attorney and Past President of the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan. “Prosecutors are committed to protecting students, teachers, administrators and the communities that support them. There are very serious consequences for making any type of threat. Whether it requires punitive sanctions or mental health services, this new legislation will give the needed tools to help us all address these threats and help keep schools safe.”

The Michigan School Safety Reform Plan is made up of House Bills 5942, 5966, and 5967 is backed by:

- Michigan Sheriffs Association
- Michigan Association of School Administrators
- Michigan Association of School Boards
- Michigan Association of School Psychologists
- Michigan Association of School Social Workers
- Michigan School Counselors Association
- Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police
- Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan

###