



HOUSE BIPARTISAN SCHOOL SAFETY TASK FORCE

Task Force Report – December 2022

BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

Every child has a fundamental right to a safe and respectful learning environment. After the horrific shooting at Oxford High School in 2021, the Michigan House of Representatives formed a bipartisan task force to address the serious issues of student safety and school security.

Violence is not limited to gun violence, nor is it limited to schools. It is a multifaceted problem and will require multifaceted solutions. Even before the tragedy at Oxford High School, our country has faced unyielding grief in the wake of tragedies in places like Sandy Hook, Uvalde, Parkland, and Columbine. This Task Force focuses on finding and implementing best practices to mitigate and prevent violence overall, as well as ensuring schools are able to address and recover from violence should it arise.

Every child and every district has varying needs. Some schools still do not have some very basic school hardening features such as double entrance ways or sufficient surveillance cameras. Others have recently passed bonds and are implementing some of the newest technology to screen visitors and communicate with first responders. There are areas of the state where the nearest police station is 45 minutes away from a school and these districts will need unique approaches to school safety.

The needs of rural areas are frequently different from those of urban and suburban communities. With the varying needs of Michigan's school districts, it is impossible to find a "one-size-fits-all" approach to ensuring the mental and physical safety of Michigan's children. The goals of the House School Safety Task Force are to outline the best practices for schools, and propose funding so schools can determine what best suits their needs and how to meet these goals.

In a few respects, a uniform approach may be necessary to ensure all schools are complying and meeting the same standards to ensure student safety. Examples of this would include using the same vernacular for drills or ensuring that all school safety plans are provided to first responders in the same format. However, all efforts will be used to ensure any state-mandated practices or protocols will be appropriately funded by the state to ensure that every school is able to fulfill these requirements.

In 2018, a school safety commission formed within the Michigan State Police (MSP). Numerous recommendations were made and implemented. In conjunction with MSP, this Task Force reviewed and discussed the commission's work done to date and took action to implement and fund the remaining measures which are further detailed in this report.

With special gratitude, the Task Force would like to thank the students, parents and educators with Oxford Schools. With the tragedy at Oxford still so fresh, the advocacy and evolving needs of the community can be difficult to assess and articulate.

The Task Force would also like to thank Max Schachter and Nicole Hockley. Max Schachter lost his son, fourteen-year-old Alex, in the 2018 shooting in Parkland, Florida. Nicole Hockley also lost her son, six-year-old Dylan, in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. They have since dedicated their lives to mitigating school violence, so no other parents experience the anguish they face. The advice and guidance they have provided is invaluable.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS & OBJECTIVES

The Task Force consists of four Republican and four Democratic legislators in the Michigan House of Representatives. Republicans include Reps. Scott VanSingel (R-Grant), Luke Meerman (R-Coopersville), Pamela Hornberger (R-Chesterfield Township), and Gary Eisen (R-St. Clair Township). Democrats include Reps. Kelly Breen (D-Novi), Ranjeev Puri (D-Canton), Sara Cambensy (D-Marquette), and Terry Sabo (D-Muskegon). The Task Force is co-chaired by Reps. VanSingel and Meerman with Rep. Breen serving as the Democratic lead.

The Task Force was tasked with studying school safety procedures and identifying best practices to best address the mental health needs of students. The goal was to find solutions that keep students, educators, and school personnel safe while addressing upstream concerns with students. Task Force members worked to ensure the Legislature appropriates the funding necessary for schools to make the improvements they deem best suited for their communities.

The Task Force focused on establishing consensus and identifying policy areas that could receive broad bipartisan support. This report reflects the consensus recommendations identified by the House School Safety Task Force.

Through collaboration and discussion, six policy areas emerged as the primary focus of the Task Force's work. Addressing these policy areas will go a long way to support Michigan schools and students.

- **Mental Health** – This includes affordability, accessibility, and what can be ostensibly delivered broadly to students and identifying students that need more targeted assistance. Task Force members further discussed the need to ensure that educators across the board have the support and services they require as well.
- **School Hardening** – This includes structural and security improvements such as double entranceways, sufficient door locking devices, surveillance systems, and other physical defenses.
- **Data, Processes and Procedures** – This would include the methods and sharing of data from schools, and standardizing protocols, threat assessments and safety procedures.
- **Staffing/Personnel** – Retention, recruitment and training of educators and staff.
- **Firearms/Criminal Justice** – In addition to firearms, disciplinary issues and restorative justice protocols are essential to address.
- **Education & Public Service Information** – Integration of programs such as OK2Say, Know the Signs, social emotional learning methods and other behavioral awareness and violence prevention programs can have a critical impact on violence reduction and improving mental health.

MEETING FORMAT

The Task Force met as a group and individually with many different people with various areas of expertise. Meetings included conversations with and presentations from the following:

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| ■ Michigan State Police (MSP) and MSP Office of School Safety | ■ Giffords Law |
| ■ Okay2Say | ■ K-12 Alliance |
| ■ Michigan Department of Education | ■ Oakland County Superintendents |
| ■ Michigan Association of School Psychologists | ■ Michigan Sheriffs Association |
| ■ Michigan School Counselor Association | ■ Elementary and Middle School Principals Association |
| ■ Community Mental Health Association of Michigan | ■ Michigan Legislative Black Caucus |
| ■ Oxford Public Schools | ■ Sandy Hook Promise and Nicole Hockley |
| ■ Safe Schools for Alex and Max Schachter | ■ Cass County Prosecutor |
| ■ SIGMA Threat Management | ■ Public Input |

In addition to meeting as a group, Task Force members held individual discussions with constituents, local school officials, and various experts in the areas of school safety and student mental health. The Task Force created a successful web portal so that anyone in Michigan can share their thoughts on school safety, recommend solutions, and provide relevant information.



MEETING INPUT

Because this issue is directly impacting students and their families, the Task Force wanted to ensure that parents had the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings on how to address school safety in the Legislature. Through the public web portal, the Task Force received responses from concerned parents and citizens from over 45 different cities across Michigan.

The most frequent suggestion received from parents throughout Michigan was to increase security in schools. Different security measures that were suggested included everything from automatic locking doors, night locks, and an increased presence of school resource officers in schools.

There were also numerous suggestions that cited the very real need for additional mental health resources for students and their families. Moreover, ensuring that these resources are easily and readily accessible to all families and students became a priority for the Task Force. Many parents suggested that schools begin implementing mental health assessments so parents can determine if their student is struggling with their mental health and could pose a risk to themselves or others. Additionally, parents supported the idea that they could notify their student's school if they have concerns about their student's mental health and well-being. Parents believed that increasing the number of qualified counselors in schools would greatly benefit the efforts to serve students and address mental health concerns.

From the input received, common themes from experts, organizations and the general public centered on three categories: prevention, mitigation and accountability. Social emotional learning, threat assessments and increased personnel were some of the most frequently discussed topics with educational and mental health experts.

PREVENTION

The Task Force directed attention toward identifying methods to recognize and prevent someone from entering the state of mind in which they would consider committing acts of violence against themselves and others. Many of the recommendations centered on increasing the number of mental health professionals in schools, giving more attention to anti-bullying programs, and supporting social emotional learning measures.

Through discussion, it became overwhelmingly evident that mental health must be addressed in a continuous manner, not just in response to violence, but to constantly provide students with the resources they need so their thoughts never turn towards harm. When children are not physically or mentally secure, they cannot thrive academically. The growing mental health crisis among children cannot be ignored.

Recruiting and retaining trained educators and support staff in schools is critical. School counselors, psychologists, and social workers are tasked with extensive duties to serve students. They are charged with promoting positive behavior, boosting mental health wellness and wellness amongst students. These school professionals work on the ground to support the diverse needs of students, whether that be working with teachers to modify curriculum and instruction for students with IEPs, or meeting with students to discuss their concerns at home. The critical role these school professionals have cannot be understated as they are the ones who communicate with parents about the challenges students face at school.

In the last few years, there has been a much higher than anticipated rate of retirement. Additionally, there has been a decrease in the number of professionals entering the fields of education, school, counseling, social work and psychology. Fixing the talent pipeline is essential to preventing violence and ensuring students have the support they need.

Recommended Prevention Measures:

► **Integrating Social and Emotional Learning:** Every educational and mental health expert stressed the need to incorporate social emotional learning (SEL) into curriculum and student life. SEL teaches students the tools needed to better manage emotions, work on problem solving, strengthen social skills, and to build self-control and self-awareness. This has been shown to have numerous long term positive impacts on children's development including, improved socialization, helping them develop long term and meaningful friendships, and reducing the number of students who are involved in acts of physically aggressive behavior. This is not a new curriculum, but with greater focus, allows teachers to continuously help foster healthy social and emotional behaviors.

► **Threat Assessments:** Every district and school should establish a threat assessment team. Assessing when a student is experiencing a mental health crisis that may lead them to hurt themselves or others is essential to preventing violence in schools.

Historically, identifying troubling behavior in students has not been an issue, rather it is having a mode of operation when a student is deemed to be at risk or a potential threat. Having a clear system in place when a student is demonstrating concerning behavior will not only allow schools to help the student, but also prevent a potential act of violence. Moreover, it allows schools and communities to offer resources to those who are struggling with their mental health before it escalates.

It should be emphasized that conducting a threat assessment is an intervention process, not a disciplinary action. A threat assessment defines what constitutes concerning behavior, creates a reporting system, and forms an intervention team to communicate with parents and establish a course of action to address the situation and work with a student and their parents.

If a student is deemed to be a risk to themselves or others, having a system in place will ensure the student receives the resources they need and support from a qualified mental health professional to address the concerning behavior.

► **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support:** Educational and mental health experts agreed on the use of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). These provide a framework to help educators deliver academic and behavioral assistance to students with various needs. These are implemented in two different fashions - as a general and holistic method for the entire school at all times, and in response to a critical incident.

- › **Tier 1: Universal/primary** – All or nearly all students would receive this level of support. This includes reinforcing a positive school climate and sense of belonging, and bullying prevention.
- › **Tier 2: Secondary crisis interventions** – This would be applicable to moderately to severely traumatized students. It would involve individual crisis interventions, group crisis intervention, assessments, strategies for parents and teachers and at-risk students. This is approximately 10-25% of student populations.
- › **Tier 3: Severely traumatized** – Less than 10% of students require this level of support. It includes psychotherapy/psych recovery, intensive school supports, community support, IEPs, behavior plans, progress monitoring, and other individual interventions.



MITIGATION

Mitigation is another essential part to ensure the safety and well-being of schools. This includes prevention by identifying warning signs, making schools less accessible targets, and preparing students with an action plan, as well as a plan to address the emotional impact if an attack should occur. These recommendations included: providing funding for school resource officers, trauma training for school personnel, implementing and enforcing zero tolerance policies, requiring that the police be present if school administrators are having a meeting with a student or their parents about a potential threat, increasing the use of Okay2Say and other systems such as “Know the Signs” program from The Sandy Hook Promise, and threat assessment teams for schools.

Many public comments supported creating an accountability structure for the owner of the firearm used in the attack if they did not take reasonable precautions to prevent the weapon from falling into the hands of the minor who used it in the attack.

Trauma and mental health experts made multiple recommendations to mitigate violence. One suggested method is the PREPARE Model: Prevent and prepare for crises; Reaffirm physical health and perceptions of safety and security, Evaluate psychological trauma risk; Provide crisis interventions and Respond to mental health needs; Examine the effectiveness of crisis preparedness.

Michigan schools utilize an anonymous reporting system, Okay2Say. After speaking with Michigan State Police and education experts, several ways to improve this system were suggested:

- Equity of access can be an issue, not every child has access to smart technology that would allow them to easily report an issue.
- Training and school presentations must be done annually, and MSP does not always have enough available staff on-hand to do that. School personnel or Intermediate School Districts could receive the training from MSP and then deliver it to individual schools on a yearly basis.
- Children must also be taught to recognize signs and signals of peers that are at risk of harming themselves or others. Ongoing activities throughout the year would help keep this fresh in their minds.
- Okay2Say reports are routed through MSP and there are delays in getting information to local police and schools. It must be ensured that concerns and threats are quickly relayed to local people who are familiar with the involved parties.
- Okay2Say must be staffed 24/7/365 and with multilingual individuals.

Michigan schools are obligated to report certain incidents that occur at school to Michigan State Police. At school means in a classroom, elsewhere on school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises. These incidents include but are not limited to:

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| 1. Physical assault or other crime involving physical violence | 7. Arson |
| 2. Criminal sexual conduct | 8. Larceny (theft) |
| 3. Illegal possession of controlled substances or alcohol | 9. Armed robbery |
| 4. Violations of the youth tobacco act | 10. Unarmed robbery |
| 5. Trespassing | 11. Extortion |
| 6. Vandalism | 12. Gang-related activity |
| | 13. Other crimes |

Accurate reporting is essential to ensure that resources are allocated or surged to areas that need extra help. However, schools do not always report incidents, nor is the aggregate data available to the public in a format that is easily accessible or understood. Other states have built “dashboards” that do precisely this, and this is something to be considered here in Michigan.

RESPONSE

The primary goal is to stop violence before it walks through the door. However, it is imperative that schools and communities be given the resources to respond and react to threats. People that eventually commit acts of violence like shootings typically begin with ideation, then planning, then they prepare/acquire, then they implement. This is why threat assessment teams are critical and training is provided to educators and peers on “knowing the signs” of violence.

Pursuant to PA 436 of 2018, schools are required to develop an ‘Emergency Operations Procedure’ and review it with a local law enforcement agency. However, schools are continuously making building improvements. Security experts recommend that uniform critical incident mapping technology be utilized so that any first responders are looking at the satellite imaging and/or real-life depiction of a building and surrounding area with a grid placed over it. This allows first responders, whether it be to a violent incident, fire, or other serious event, to accurately identify and respond to incidents.

The investigation into the horrific shooting in Parkland, Texas, has produced additional recommendations. These include ensuring that all schools:

- Perform vulnerability assessments,
- Continuously staff open gates,
- School rooms have “safer” or “hard” corners,” which means there are areas that are not visible from the hallway, windows or doors,
- Law enforcement has access to school cameras,
- Opaque coverings of classroom door windows,
- School safety specialists for each school district,
- Active assailant policies,
- Silent panic alert systems link directly to first responders and law enforcement agencies (known as Alyssa’s Law, named after Alyssa Alhadeff, one of the Parkland victims)
- It is critical to have support available to communities that have experienced any violent or traumatic event. This would ensure that all those directly impacted by a violent and or traumatic event have the necessary resources to cope with their trauma and emotions, and make sure that the community has programs set up to help mitigate the ongoing trauma that a violent and traumatic event can have on students and their families.

TASK FORCE ACTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force set out to identify the best practices for prevention and secure funding to implement policy recommendations. This work also included addressing the immediate needs for the Oxford community and other schools recovering from violent incidents.

OXFORD NEEDS

The Task Force produced legislation to address the immediate needs of Oxford. HB 6012 was introduced on April 13 and on May 19, and the bill unanimously passed the House. Highlights of this bill include:

- ▶ **\$3.5 Million** over two years for a psychologist, family school liaison, mental health director, school resources officer, safety and security assessments, public relations consulting, private security, summer school, insurance copays, and legal fees
- ▶ **\$2.3 Million** for building repairs, a notification system, third party review, supplies replacement and security cameras
- ▶ **\$1 Million** for lost days of instruction

Additionally, the bill includes intent language indicating that 2021-22 school year assessments for Oxford Public Schools will not be used for evaluating teachers, future employment decisions, or other high-stakes decisions. The Michigan Department of Education is instructed to work with Oxford Public Schools on these issues. Similar language and funding were also included in the original House-passed budget that was sent to the Senate on May 5.

RECOMMENDED BUDGET ITEMS

Multiple recommendations for 2022/2023 budget items were made prior to the issuance of this report, and the budget was finalized prior to the release of this report. Many of the recommendations were included in this final budget, and negotiations continue for supplemental funding for additional priorities prior to the end of this year. The following funding recommendations were split into two major categories: mental health and building security.

\$213.7 Million was recommended for increased mental health services. It is broken into the following line items:

- **\$30 Million** for mental health wrap-around services. Wrap-around services entail individually designed approaches to help meet the needs of children and their families. These could include clinicians, child welfare workers, juvenile courts, or other community agencies.
- **\$20 Million** for School Apprenticeships building off bipartisan legislation, HB 6020 and SB 1012. This helps to address the pipeline issues and significant decrease in the number of people entering the fields of school counseling, school psychology and school social work. These would establish the Student Mental Health Apprenticeship for Retention and Training, or SMART program. This program will provide tuition assistance in exchange for commitments to remain within the district the students are serving.
- **\$52.3 Million** for Child & Adolescent Health Centers funding for at least 100 new school-based health centers plus more flexible funding for existing school-based health centers \$52.3 Million in total funding of which \$30 Million is new. These facilities are physically located on school property and provide primary, preventative and mental health services on site. Physical and mental health providers in these clinics can treat acute illnesses and help manage chronic problems in conjunction with a child's other health clinicians.
- **\$40 Million** for Intermediate School Districts (ISD) mental health support services. This funding is intended to ensure that students have access to a behavior health care provider. \$5 Million for mental health personnel capacity building. This will provide funding for partnerships between child and adolescent health centers and schools to provide mental health services to students.
- **\$10 Million** for mental health digital screening tools. This funding will go directly to school districts to improve student mental health services including conducting mental health screenings, managing referrals and consent for mental health care, care management and coordination with internal and external mental health professionals, virtual visits and reporting.
- **\$8.4 Million** for ISD mental health and security coordinators. This funding is intended to help ISDs hire a mental health and emergency safety coordinator.
- **\$2 Million** for the establishment and operations of the School Safety and Mental Health Commission.
- **\$16 Million** for school risk assessments. This funding will cover the costs from school districts to have risk assessments done regarding physical security, policy and procedure, and to provide safety best practices to schools.
- **\$15 Million** for flexible school health solutions. This funding is for nurses to be placed in schools, prioritizing those in rural districts or others that do not have access to a school-based health center.
- **\$15 Million** for community benefit organizations.
- **\$227 Million** was recommended for building hardening. This funding will be distributed in the form of grants as has been done in the past. However, to qualify for the funding, the schools will need to complete risk assessments with a third party expert, which have been funded in the budget. These experts will help school personnel determine which building hardening items are most needed. They will simultaneously train the new ISD level coordinator during this assessment process for future evaluations. The Task Force recommends funding be weighted towards schools with the greatest need.
- **\$50 Million** is recommended for school resource officers (SROs).

The total of almost half a billion dollars in funding for personnel, mental health and school safety and security upgrades is unprecedented in Michigan. The goal is to spend the one-time elements of this funding as efficiently as possible to derive the maximum long-term benefit. Where needed, these funding increases are recommended to be ongoing by the task force.

The Task Force also recommended a base level of fund for Transforming Research into Action to Improve the Lives of Students (TRAILS) in a future budget. This program helps students manage stress, build healthy relationships, and learn to manage their own mental health.

NEW POLICY BILLS

The following bills have been drafted by Task Force members and other colleagues in the House of Representatives.

- **House Bill 6319 (Sabo):** Adds more active shooter drills and ensures at least one includes local law enforcement involvement as well as one conducted between classes.
- **House Bill 6320 (Hornberger):** Requires schools to review and update their safety plans every three years in consultation with their ISD level safety coordinator.
- **House Bill 6321 (Eisen):** Addresses required training for school resource officers and other staff.
- **House Bill 6322 (Cambensy):** Focuses on training for school resource officers and staff with specific guidelines on threat assessment teams and police authority within the school environment.
- **House Bill 6323 (Breen):** Creates two new ISD positions dedicated to school safety and mental health. Each ISD will receive funding to hire one safety and security coordinator and one mental health coordinator. These new positions will serve as the point person for school safety plans, grant opportunities, as well as mental health and security strategies. They will maintain communication between the state and school districts within the ISD, while also facilitating communication between other school districts in their region.
- **House Bill 6324 (Puri):** Creates uniform definitions statewide for school safety terms, such as lockdowns, to foster better communication during crisis events.
- **House Bill 6325 (Young):** Addresses implementation of uniform definitions.
- **House Bill 6326 (Meerman):** Creates the School Safety and Mental Health Commission. The Commission will identify best practices for schools to address behavioral, physical, and mental health needs. Work will center on supporting at-risk students and reducing youth suicides by establishing a comprehensive statewide approach.
- **House Bill 6327 (Brann):** Adds the OK2Say contact information to school ID cards.
- **House Bill 6328 (Weiss):** Expands on reporting definitions and standards for OK2Say.
- **House Bill 6329 (O'Malley):** Requires that reporting and tips the OK2Say Program receives are passed on to the ISD coordinators as well as local law enforcement/public safety.
- **House Bill 6330 (Neeley):** Requires compiling of tips and information received to be provided on a quarterly basis to the School Safety and Mental Health Commission.
- **House Bill 6331 (Lightner):** Provides guidance on modern security measures when constructing new school buildings.
- **House Bill 6332 (VanSingel):** Encourages more school resource officers in schools to work with students and provides for certain liability concern.

ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION

During the course of this legislative term, additional bills have been introduced by House members and progressed through the legislative process. Task Force members unanimously agree that each of these policies will substantially contribute towards the goal of improving school safety and student mental health.

- **House Bill 6020 (Kahle):** Establishes the Student Mental Health Apprenticeship Retention and Training (SMART) internship grant program and prescribes the conditions for administering the internship grant program. This bill passed the House on June 9, 2022, but still requires funding.
- **House Bill 6042 (Mueller):** Requires critical incident mapping in school safety plans to ensure first responders have the best information possible to respond to threats and incidents. The bill passed the House on June 7, 2022, and is pending in the Senate and requires funding.
- **House Bill 5701 (VanSingel):** Now Public Act 42 of 2022, allows for the use of temporary door barricades during emergencies.

CONSENSUS RECOMMENDATIONS

These are recommendations for local schools to consider. The Task Force recognizes that not all recommendations will fit the needs of every Michigan school.

- Schools should have lockdown kits that include supplies for potentially extended lockdowns.
- Schools should have window ladders for rooms on upper levels.
- All doors should have the ability to lock.
- Cameras in classrooms as needed.
- Reduce barriers for entry for new school counselors and look at ways to get more professionals into the mental health field or add to the scope of practice for existing professionals like Physicians Assistants.
- Recommend the new commission provide guidance on the types of staff experience required for the incident risk assessment team.

NON-CONSENSUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list represents ideas that had support from more than one Task Force member but not unanimous or a majority of members in support.

- Amending education and practice requirements for school social workers, psychologists and counselors to increase workforce.
- **Responsible (or Safe) Gun Storage.** According to Everytown for Gun Safety, research shows gun owners can make their homes and communities safer by keeping their guns locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition. Doing so may prevent unintentional shootings and gun suicides. While an estimated 54 percent of gun owners don't lock all of their guns securely, statistics show that in incidents of gunfire on school grounds, up to 80 percent of shooters under the age of 18 got the gun from their home or the homes of friends or relatives¹.
- **Letter to Parents.** Schools working with parents to encourage safe storage of guns. The idea would be to have the schools send home a letter recommending safe storage of guns.
- **Gun Free Zones.** Eliminate gun free zones for schools, so those with concealed carry licenses can carry in schools.
- **The Guardian Program.** Allow highly trained individuals, aside from SROs to have access to firearms in school buildings.
- **Extreme Risk Protection Orders.** These orders create a process to allow families, household members and others to petition the court for an order temporarily restricting a person's access to guns, without abridging their Second Amendment rights, if they are found to present a significant risk of harming themselves or others.

APPROACH TO FIREARMS

Violence is not limited to gun violence, and it's not limited to schools. The non-consensus items are all on the topic of guns. Task Force members extensively discussed, debated, and disagreed on how to effectively, and sensibly, address gun violence. These discussions centered on three policy areas: improving and implementing full background checks, safe storage, and extreme risk protection orders.

Some believe that the solution is training and credentialing citizens to intervene with deadly force when a shooting happens. The goal in this instance would be to limit casualties as much as possible. Others believe this state needs to strengthen gun laws so firearms cannot be easily accessible, particularly for minors and individuals who pose immediate threats to themselves or others. However, as with the 2018 tragedy at Fitzgerald High School, in which a student fatally stabbed a classmate, someone seeking to harm others will find a way to do so.

This debate will no doubt continue in this state and in this country. The Task Force was unable to devise a solution that all members could support. Continuing to work to find an agreement on this sensitive and divisive topic will be a priority for the task force as they continue to look at ways to address school safety.

¹Everytown Research & Policy – <https://everytownresearch.org/stat/in-incidents-of-gunfire-on-school-grounds-78-percent-of-shooters-under-the-age-of-18-got-the-gun-from-their-home-or-the-homes-of-friends-or-relatives/>

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Task Force members have worked very hard to find bipartisan solutions that will hopefully prevent and lessen the impact of future school shootings. All members understood the task of remaining focused on issues that can actually be addressed by state and local government policies, officials, and funding. However, parents will always remain the biggest difference-makers and most important figures in the lives of their children.

It would be impossible to issue a report on the topic of school safety or education without acknowledging the important role parents play. Looking at the specific case of Oxford, it is beyond dispute that the out-of-school lifestyle of the suspect and the suspect's parents played an enormous role in the events that took place. This is true in all school shootings.

As government officials, there is only so much that can be done with the power and authority granted by voters. Government officials cannot and should not be the complete or driving force behind a student's upbringing. That role will always be reserved for family members, guardians, and interested members of the community a child lives in. It would be a mistake to continually expect schools, or the government, to be the solution to all the problems in a child's life. Conversely, it would also be a mistake to place all the blame on schools or the government for the sequence of failures and negative events that lead to a person choosing to shoot their classmates and teachers.

It is the position of the Task Force that none of the solutions or strategies put forward in this report will be successful without the help of parents. Education and school safety is a partnership between schools, parents and families, and the local community, with transparency, accountability, and open communication paramount.

Parents need to know what is going on in the lives of their children outside and inside their home. They need to use common sense when it comes to issues like gun storage and the presence of weapons in their home. They need to work with school personnel and community members who express concern about their child's behavior, mental health, or truancy during the early stages of warning signs. Waiting or hoping things will get better without taking action will never be a wise strategy.



CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

All Task Force members wish to thank everyone who helped during the meeting phase of this process.

It is the opinion of the Task Force that these reforms will make an immediate and long-term difference for school safety. They should also lead to a more positive learning environment for everyone involved with Michigan schools. Returning members and future legislators will also continue to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the proposed legislation/funding once it becomes law.

The Legislature as always remains committed to continually improving school safety and security and finding consensus solutions to address violence in Michigan schools and communities. Task Force members will continue conversations with the Oxford community and other stakeholders to ensure that not only the changes recommended by the Task Force achieve their goals, but also that members continue to stay informed about changes and improvements needed in the future.

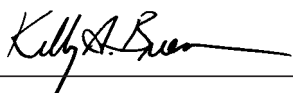
House Bipartisan School Safety Task Force Members



State Rep. Luke Meerman, Co-Chair
88th District



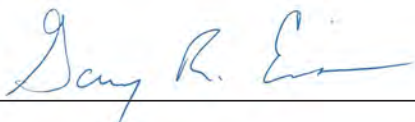
State Rep. Scott VanSingel, Co-Chair
100th District




State Rep. Kelly Breen, Democratic-Lead
38th District



State Rep. Sara Cambensy
109th District



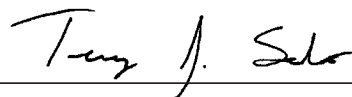
State Rep. Gary Eisen
81st District



State Rep. Pamela Hornberger
32nd District



State Rep. Ranjeev Puri
21st District



State Rep. Terry Sabo
92nd District



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