



February 11, 2022

Dear Legislators,

As Superintendent of Traverse City Area Public Schools, Sheriff of Grand Traverse County, and Chief of Police for the City of Traverse City, we strongly recommend the establishment of a state budget sponsored School Resource Officer (SRO) program. Our recommendation is based on the specific needs with Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS).

TCAPS serves 9,000 students and employs over 1,000 teachers and staff. As with all schools, we have the critical responsibility to ensure the safety and security of all who enter our buildings. In many ways, TCAPS aligns in similarity to Oxford Public Schools. While the events at Oxford High School on November 20, 2021 were of the utmost tragedy, having a SRO on staff to immediately engage the threat prevented additional students and staff from being injured or killed.

Establishing a fully-funded SRO component to the Michigan 2022-23 fiscal year budget for secondary schools would promote a safer school environment for students and staff across the state. The SRO would network with students and families, aiming to reduce criminal activity, substance abuse, and violent acts in and around our school buildings and greater community. Officers would also work within the elementary buildings to establish relationships that would pay dividends well into the future.

As community leaders, we respectfully request non-competitive funding be established for Michigan high schools and middle schools. With consistent state funding, district leaders could focus efforts across local social agencies to further enhance Michigan's public schools as safe and secure places for teaching and learning.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of John R. VanWagoner II in black ink.

John R. VanWagoner II, Ph.D.  
Superintendent  
TCAPS

Handwritten signature of Thomas J. Bensley in blue ink.

Thomas J. Bensley  
Sheriff  
Grand Traverse County

Handwritten signature of Jeffrey O'Brien in blue ink.

Jeffrey O'Brien  
Chief of Police  
City of Traverse City