

D R A F T

(Date)

The Honorable Eleanor Sobel
2600 Hollywood Boulevard, 1st Floor
Hollywood, Florida 33020
(Sent Via Email)

Dear Senator Sobel:

The School Board Members and I want to assure the members of our Legislative Delegation and our community that The School Board of Broward County, Florida (the "School Board") places school safety and security as its highest priority. The day-to-day safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance to us and is essential to providing a successful learning and working environment.

The horrific event at the Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Connecticut, has reaffirmed our commitment to student and staff safety. Toward that end, the School Board has taken additional steps to bolster school security.

The School Board has:

- Requested our municipal and county law enforcement to increase their presence at our schools.
- Required each school to review its school safety plan. This review is in addition to the annual review that schools already are required to perform.
- Initiated a survey of each school site to determine the needs and costs to provide further hardening (e.g., retrofitting windows, doors, installing different locks).
- Assigned our limited corps of School District Police Officers to maintain an increased presence at schools that do not have full-time, dedicated School Resource Officers (SRO's.)
- Instructed all of our schools to engage in mock emergency drills and practice lockdowns.
- Instituted additional training for our School Security Specialists and Campus Security Monitors.

The School Board intends to expand its SRO Program to provide an SRO at each school. We are currently exploring options for how this can be accomplished in the immediate future.

There is proposed legislation that would allow Broward County voters to establish a special taxing district to fund security, safety and mental health needs. While we very much appreciate this effort on behalf of our school district, we have concerns with this proposal. A special taxing district, if approved by the voters would not generate revenue until 2015. Although more funding is always welcome, the School Board cannot wait, and is not waiting, that long to address its safety concerns.

Additionally, the legislation, called the "School Safety Act of Broward County," would require establishment of a governing body separate from the School Board and would be charged with overseeing the SRO Program. This is in conflict with current law that clearly stipulates it is the School Board that is charged with the responsibility of making provisions for the security and safety of its staff and students. Moreover, should the State make such funding available, the

Senator Eleanor Sobel
(Date)
Page 2

School Board has the appropriate structure and processes to readily administer additional financial resources for school safety and security.

Several school superintendents from throughout the State recently testified before the Senate in Tallahassee expressing the need for additional state funding to be used for a variety of school safety and security measures. We join in with their voices in asking you to lend your strong support to the critical need for the 2013 Legislature to create a sustainable funding source that will enable all of Florida's school districts to insure the safety and security of their students and staffs.

We thank the members of the Broward County Legislative Delegation for their continued support and commitment to Broward County Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Runcie

RWR:vh

c: Senator Oscar Braynon, II
Senator Jeremy Ring
Senator Maria Lorts Sachs
Senator Christopher Smith
Representative Gwendolyn Clark-Reed
Representative Manny Diaz, Jr.
Representative Katie Edwards
Representative Joseph A. Gibbons
Representative Shevrin Jones
Representative George R. Moraitis, Jr.
Representative Jared E. Moskowitz
Representative Sharon Pritchett
Representative Hazelle P. Rogers
Representative Elaine J. Schwartz
Representative Richard Stark
Representative Perry E. Thurston
Representative Carlos Trujillo
Representative James W. Waldman
School Board Members
Senior Leadership Team
David Golt, Chief of Police, SBBC