

February 20, 2018

The Honorable Joe Negron, President
Florida Senate
409 The Capitol
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL

The Honorable Richard Corcoran, Speaker
Florida House of Representatives
420 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL

Dear President Negron and Speaker Corcoran:

RE: PROTECT OUR CHILDREN

Often, it is in moments of crisis like the unspeakable act of violence committed last week at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Broward County that galvanize action. Seventeen lives were tragically lost, and we must all ask ourselves: ***How can we best protect our children?***

As leaders representing Miami-Dade County, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, we seek your support, advocacy, and decisive action on behalf of Miami-Dade County's children. It is a charge we locally hold ourselves accountable to first. Last week, we convened to review and assess both current safety protocols and interagency collaboration, and identified opportunities for further improvement. This review was comprehensive in nature, spanning from school-based operations to communication methods, and from facilities infrastructure and technology to human capital needs.

Our local school district currently receives \$9.5 million from the Safe Schools Appropriation for safety and security measures. As the fourth largest school district in the nation with more than 370 school campuses and over 350,000 students, Miami-Dade County Public Schools' investment on safety and security measures is approximately \$50 million, but that is not enough to ensure that we exhaust all viable measures to make sure not one more child is lost.

We must do all we can to protect the sanctity of schools by safeguarding our children. The solutions we seek are multi-faceted and require both immediate action and long-term commitment. We want to collaborate with our state leaders to realize solutions to the challenges ahead of us. Our community has honed in on unfunded needs that are crucial in further reinforcing school campus security infrastructure and essential supports for the prevention of future tragedies. We also recognize that preventing prohibited persons with mental health or emotional issues from obtaining firearms should be our first line of defense against mass casualty incidents that have become all too common throughout the nation. Identifying those at-risk individuals requires a substantial commitment in qualified human resources, artificial intelligence, and technology-based strategies. To that end, we join to seek your support on the following items:

- \$10 million for an additional 100 school resource officers (SRO) for schools in need of additional SRO presence;
- \$7.8 million to support mental health services for students which will allow our school district to hire 75 additional mental health/social work professionals to focus on prevention/early detection of youth needs, and 4 mental health counselor advocates dedicated to providing counselling services and addressing the unique and long-lasting impact and trauma of violent crime on our children;
- A multi-year request (Year 1 - \$12 million) for school-site infrastructure and inter-agency needs such as:
 - Video surveillance systems and internet protocol monitoring systems for school sites;
 - Evaluation of classroom glass window panes against ballistics, along with the materials needed to implement recommendations;
 - Mechanisms to automatically lock all doors;
 - Digital floor plan and mapping system for countywide response;
 - Enhanced mass communication systems at schools that provide expanded access to school public address systems;
 - Early detection software, social media data-mining software, and enhanced connectivity technology to improve inter-agency information sharing; and
 - Cyber analyst and Assistant State Attorney positions to provide technical guidance in the collection and analysis of social media and other electronic evidence.

We respectfully request your consideration of these priorities for this year's state appropriations. It is our intent to contact your offices and our local delegation to discuss additional ways in which we can work together to protect our children.

Sincerely,



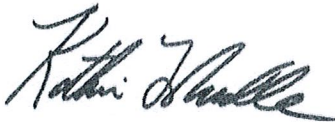
Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor
Miami-Dade County



Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent of Schools
Miami-Dade County Public Schools



Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair
The School Board
Miami-Dade County, Florida



Katherine Fernandez-Rundle
Miami-Dade State Attorney



Esteban L. Bovo, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners
Miami-Dade County

cc: Miami-Dade County Legislative Delegation
Board of County Commissioners
Members of the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida