

May 26, 2021

Mrs. Susan Horn, Chair
Knox County Board of Education
912 S. Gay Street
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902

RE: School Security Conversation

Dear Chairwoman Horn,

Please let this letter serve as official notification that I strongly oppose using taxpayer dollars to pay an outside consulting firm to tell the district what every parent in Knox County already knows: armed law enforcement officers are a necessity in schools.

I agree that school-based interventions, threat assessment programs, comprehensive counseling, and student support programs can be effective tools in addressing violence in schools. With this in mind, my office committed \$3.1 million to fund additional positions focused on social and emotional needs in the 2021-2022 budget.

Nevertheless, I simply cannot ignore that physical security is absolutely critical in keeping our students safe at school. I am deeply disturbed that any governmental body would even consider removing law enforcement from any of our schools.

Knox County is a large, diverse community that may very well need individualized school security programs across the District. I agree that conversations about these campus-specific school arrangements should include public participation, but paying an outside consulting firm to do this work is a waste of taxpayer dollars.

The voters elected each of the board members to represent one of our nine school districts. As such, the most reasonable course of action is for constituents to share their concerns and ideas with school board members so that the board can engage in thoughtful discussion and make well-informed policy decisions; not pass that responsibility to a third party at taxpayer expense.

Sincerely,

Glenn Jacobs
Knox County Mayor

cc: Knox County Board of Education Members
Knox County Schools Superintendent Bob Thomas
Knox County Commission Chairman Larsen Jay
Knox County Law Director David Buuck
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