



THE OFFICE OF THE SHELBY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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September 4, 2020

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**Official School Board Statement: Addressing the Epidemic of Violence in Memphis**

When our students, families, and employees grieve, we grieve alongside them. To stand beside a family in pain and simply offer condolences is heartbreaking because we cannot take the hurt away. Furthermore, it's unsettling to witness others push personal opinions following incidents like the tragic passing of a Whitehaven High School student-athlete. Connecting an act of gun violence with the District's decision to delay fall sports and prioritize the health and safety of students and staff is absolutely deplorable.

The large number of children affected by gun violence is an issue that impacts our entire city and county. As a Board and District, we work tirelessly to intervene and support students in need. We also partner with local organizations to combat violence in our neighborhoods. While we cannot control everything that happens in our community, we diligently strive to holistically support every child.

Any instance when the life of a precious child is taken, we take it PERSONALLY. With poverty, crime and violence plaguing our communities, we implore every resident to take what is happening PERSONALLY. Now is the time to come together seeking solutions to eradicate violence in Memphis and across the nation. Rather than casting blame, let us stand alongside our families with the determination and power to actualize change.

For our children,

The Shelby County Board of Education