Dear Chairman Henry Dean and County Administrator Mike Wanchick,

As you are aware, the Florida Legislature with the approval of Governor Rick Scott passed the" Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act" in response to the recent school active shooter incident in Broward County, Florida. The purpose of this letter is to share with you our compliance efforts to date regarding this legislation.

In collaboration with our local school board, we recently formed the, "Ad Hoc School Safety Working Group" with a purpose that is twofold. The first purpose is to focus on areas alluded to in the legislation, including active shooter drills, site hardening, and the use of threat assessment teams. Additionally, the working group is examining our current policies regarding how we respond to school bomb threats to ensure we are using best practices in light of the many social/cultural changes that are effecting our communities and schools (i.e. social media). The second purpose of the "Ad Hoc School Safety Working Group" is to examine the legislative direction to have a sworn law enforcement deputy assigned to every school in our county. The three methodologies provided to accomplish this include (1) the School Board creating their own police department; (2) the implementation of the "Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program" and; (3) the assignment of fully-certified deputy sheriffs to serve as Youth Resource Deputies or School Resource Officers in each school. The Superintendent of Schools has rejected the first option, and neither I nor the Superintendent support the implementation of the second option. As a result, we are moving forward with implementing the third option of staffing each school with a sworn law enforcement deputy.

As Sheriff, it is my official position that the funding provided by the State of Florida be utilized to phase in the placement of a sworn deputy in each of our schools to the extent that the funding amount allows. It should be noted that from our perspective, achieving this goal will take far longer than most of the expectations being discussed. Currently, fifteen (15) deputies are assigned to our existing thirty-eight (38) schools. At the beginning of the next school year there will be forty (40) schools in our county. After subtracting the fifteen deputies already assigned to the schools it would require a baseline of an additional twenty-five (25) deputies (includes the two new schools), plus eight (8) to serve as backup/relief deputies and four (4) supervisors for <u>a total of thirty-seven (37) new law enforcement positions</u>.

The cost for thirty-seven (37) new sworn deputy positions is approximately 5.5 million dollars. It appears that the State of Florida will provide approximately 1.4 million dollars in Safe Schools Funds and may redirect an additional $600,000 from the "Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program." If this occurs, the county will receive approximately two million dollars to direct towards complying with the new state guidance for law enforcement staffing in our schools <u>resulting in an overall deficit of $3.5 million dollars.</u> This deficit presents significant challenges for our School Board and our County, especially in light of the homestead exemption initiative on the ballot in November. If passed, the exemption would further reduce the financial resources available to comply with the guidance of the Public Safety Act and add to the financial challenges of a rapidly growing community such as ours.

Though I am skeptical of placing a sworn officer in every school as the wisest method of spending limited resource to address the active shooter phenomena, the legislature believes it is and so do many of our citizens. However, although student safety is a community responsibility, we will continue to play our role in keeping our students safe. We will work towards assigning a law enforcement deputy to each of our schools recognizing that our current resources do not allow us to have in place a 1:1 ratio of law enforcement officers in our schools on the first day of school in August 2018.