

**Resolution Number 23/24-34**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE SCHOOL BOARD FOR THE CITY OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA PROMOTING THE SECURE STORAGE OF FIREARMS TO PROTECT THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN SUFFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THOSE WHO RESIDE IN THE CITY OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA**

**WHEREAS**, an estimated 4.6 million American children live in households with at least one loaded, unlocked firearm; and

**WHEREAS**, every year, roughly 350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else. That's nearly one unintentional shooting per day, and 70 percent of these incidents take place inside a home; and

**WHEREAS**, another 1,200 children and teens die by gun suicide each year, most often using guns belonging to a family member; and

**WHEREAS**, in incidents of gun violence on school grounds, 75 percent of active shooters were current students or recent graduates; and

**WHEREAS**, evidence strongly suggests that secure firearm storage is an essential component to any effective strategy to keep schools and students safe; and

**WHEREAS**, research shows that secure firearm storage practices are associated with up to an 85 percent reduction in the risk of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center emphasizes the importance of appropriate storage of firearms because 76 percent of school shooters use firearms acquired from the homes of parents or close relatives; and

**WHEREAS**, across the country, lawmakers, community members, and local leaders are working together to implement public awareness campaigns, such as the Be SMART program, which is endorsed by the National PTA, and which encourages secure gun storage practices and highlights the public safety risks of unsecured guns; and

**WHEREAS**, school districts across the country have begun proactively to send materials home to parents and guardians informing them of applicable firearm

storage laws and firearm secure storage best practices; and WHEREAS, keeping students, teachers, and staff safe from gun accidents and gun violence should be the responsibility of all adult stakeholders at each of our school sites; and

WHEREAS, Virginia law requires adults to securely store their firearms to prevent a child from having unauthorized access to a firearm; and

WHEREAS, in order to continue with preventative measures to increase student and school safety we must act now.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Suffolk City School Board directs the Superintendent to take such actions as are necessary to increase awareness among Suffolk Public Schools students, families, and staff about the importance of secure gun storage, the legal requirements of parents and guardians to securely store their firearms, and the best practice of keeping all guns unloaded, locked up, and stored separately from ammunition; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Suffolk City School Board directs the Superintendent to create an appropriate letter, in English and other languages spoken by Suffolk Public Schools families and staff, to parents and guardians that explains the importance of secure gun storage in preventing minors from accessing guns, the legal requirements of parents and guardians to securely store their firearms, and the best practice of keeping all guns unloaded, locked up, and stored separately from ammunition, which letter shall also be included in annual registration materials at each school site; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024, that the Suffolk City School Board and the Superintendent will continue to work with local law enforcement agencies, health agencies, and non-profits to collaborate and increase efforts to inform Suffolk Public Schools families of their obligations regarding secure storage of firearms in their homes.

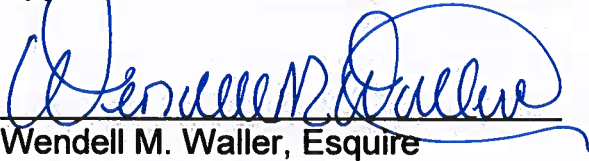
Adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

Approved as to both form and content:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wendell M. Waller", written over a horizontal line.

Wendell M. Waller, Esquire  
School Board Attorney