

## NEWS

### Monroe County Prosecutor: School threats not tolerated

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Monroe County Prosecutor Michael G. Roehrig has a stern warning for those who copycat school threats, a bizarre and dangerous phenomenon sweeping across suburban Detroit and beyond: You will be punished harshly.

"In a sadistic way, maybe they think it's funny. Maybe they see it as a way to get out of school for a day or two. But it's a crime," Roehrig said in a statement. "The crime of intentionally threatening to commit an act of violence with a dangerous weapon against a school, students, staff or school property is a felony carrying a maximum of 10 years in prison. Members of the law enforcement community take these threats seriously and will work together to find these people."

Roehrig noted nearly 30 lives have been lost to incidents of gunfire on school grounds in 2021.

"There have been a staggering 21 school shootings since August," he said. "The murder of four teens on Tuesday at a high school in Oxford is just one example of the "epidemic" of gun violence across the United States."

Roehrig wrote that the shock and fear of the shooting about 100 miles north of Monroe County is difficult enough for communities to endure without the addition of senseless threats.

"And then there are the copycats," he said. "People who threaten to murder and maim, to frighten, to disrupt. Even in the face of unbelievable tragedy, these people pursue evil rather than good."

About 80 Michigan schools have closed amid copycat threats following the Oxford shooting. Across Monroe County, officials have reported a smattering of incidents that quickly caught the attention of school administrators and subsequently involved law enforcement.

**At Ida**, a student made a threatening comment while on a district school bus. Monroe County Central Dispatch was contacted within 10 minutes of the report and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office is investigating.

In a letter to parents posted on the district website, Superintendent Sandy Kreps said the student has been identified and is confined to his or her home.

"Ida Public and the Sheriff department take all threats seriously," Kreps wrote in the letter. "Please reassure your children that we are doing everything we can to keep our schools safe."

Kreps wrote that once she was reassured by law enforcement that the issue was under control, school was allowed to remain open.

**Dundee Community Schools** Superintendent Edward Manuszak said he learned of a recent social media post that informed the district that a student at the high school may harm other students.

"Our high school administration and school resource officer investigated a situation clearly showing that this was not a credible threat," Manuszak said. "The accused student had never stated that nor did he post this information. We are now further investigating the originator of the threat and why they would put this message out."

And at **Bedford Public Schools**, Superintendent Dr. Carl Shultz informed parents that a social media post was created by a former student who mentioned a threat of a school shooting taking place.

However, Shultz noted the threat was directed toward the suspect's current school and not at Bedford.

"BPS leadership and our partners in the Monroe County Sheriff Department do not feel that there is any connection with the district," he wrote. "Throughout the foreseeable future, we will be working with the Monroe County Sheriff Department to have available patrols stepped-up on and around our district campuses as an additional measure of security."

Other school districts posted letters addressing the tragedy at Oxford or reminding students and others that even casual threats will be taken very seriously and treated as felony crimes.

John Krimmel, superintendent of **Airport Community Schools**, said he continues to urge parents to have conversations with their children regarding the danger of making online or verbal or written threats of any kind. Recent incidents, he added, cost many kids and families valuable days of school and work this week.

"We have all learned or confirmed the value of being able to have in person school over the last two years," Krimmel said. "Please be aware, as much as we work to keep kids in school and safe, threats will not be tolerated. Airport is working diligently to investigate all rumors and situations that may be threatening. Although most of these threats are not credible, we investigate any threat that we become aware of."

At **Milan Area Schools**, Superintendent Bryan Girbach posted a statement on the district website Friday.

"Every threat, no matter how big or small, is illegal and investigated by schools and law enforcement," he wrote. "Threats against the safety of our schools are never a joke, and law enforcement and school leaders will take action to protect our community, including and up to prosecution."

Girbach asked parents to talk to their children about the seriousness of making or sharing threats, and report any threats seen on social media.

Roehrig warned that offenders will be charged criminally.

"The Prosecuting Attorney's Office will prosecute offenders and bring the full weight of the criminal justice system to bear in holding them accountable," he wrote. "Think before you act. Think of the consequences of your actions. If you want to be unique, if you want to be remembered, do something good."