

Madison School Board President Reyes: Statement on gun violence

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I am deeply saddened by the passing of 11-year-old Anisa Scott. These senseless acts of violence will create long lasting trauma for our youth and for so many in our community.

My thoughts and prayers are with Anisa's family today and the difficult days to come.

Beyond being saddened, we must act. Our entire community needs to stand together against this violence. Madison Police needs cooperation from anyone who knows who these perpetrators are. Here are six steps we should take:

1. Every resident of this city should donate to Crime Stoppers to increase the cash reward for information that will lead to the arrest of those responsible for the senseless murder of Anisa Scott. Tips to Crime Stoppers are anonymous.
2. We need to move with a sense of urgency to develop actionable public health strategies that get at the root causes of violence.
3. We need to re-invest funding that was cut from the Focused Interruption Coalition so that we build the capacity to rapidly, and immediately, respond with intervention strategies.
4. We must support our Madison Police Department Special Investigations Unit and Violent Crime Unit to utilize focused deterrence strategies that work in collaboration with community partners to focus on those violent offenders involved.

5. We need empathetic action that involves working and responding together for the transformation of the entire community. When we are divisive as a community, we allow violent behaviors to begin and escalate.
6. We should establish and implement a Homicide Review Commission in partnership with the community to review shootings and homicides that allow us to use data driven strategies to get to root cause of violence.

As a former Law Enforcement Officer and Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, I know firsthand the work that can and must be done to keep our community safe. As the President of the Madison Board of Education, I know firsthand the negative and far reaching consequences violence has on our families, our students, our staff, and our entire school community. We must prepare and implement a plan of action to prevent violence and to stop this horrific rise in violence. We must do so for the sake of our youth, our City, and our future.