

April 2, 2026

Dear Mr. Harris,

Thank you for your letter dated April 2, 2026.

Let me begin by saying clearly: we share your concern. The safety of our students—and our community—is not negotiable, and I take both your message and the situation seriously.

At the same time, I want to ensure we are aligned in both understanding and approach. This is not an issue that Youngstown City Schools has ignored, nor is it one we view as outside of our responsibility. We have been actively working—alongside law enforcement and community partners—to address student conduct, supervision, and accountability in and around transit spaces.

I do want to be equally clear about the reality we are operating within. We have deployed district security to key areas when personnel is available; however, we cannot and will not leave our school buildings unsecured to do so. Our security force, like many across the region, is currently stretched thin due to a variety of factors. Despite that, we have made every effort to be present and responsive where and when we can.

Additionally, we have recently met with Chief Sharon Cole and Captain Rod Foley to ensure alignment and coordination with the Youngstown Police Department. That collaboration is ongoing and remains a critical part of addressing these concerns in a meaningful way.

We have also maintained ongoing communication with our students and families regarding behavioral expectations, accountability, and the seriousness of conduct both during and after the school day. This messaging is consistent with our Code of Excellence and our broader commitment to “Defending the Y.” Students who violate the laws of our city outside of school should be held accountable as any other citizen. We agree and support that.

I will also be direct: this is a shared community issue that requires a coordinated, unified response. No single entity—schools, WRTA, law enforcement, or the city—can solve this in isolation. Our scholars move between all of these spaces, and our systems must be aligned if we expect different outcomes.

Any perception or assertion that the district is unwilling to take ownership is simply not accurate and disrespectful. We are engaged, we are acting, and we are committed. However, we must ensure that our response is not reactive in isolation, but strategic and unified across all stakeholders.

This is exactly the kind of moment where “One Vision. One Youngstown.” must move from words to action.

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I will also reiterate that my offer to help fund school-specific routes still stands—an option we first put forward during our June 10, 2024 meeting. That opportunity remains on the table because we are committed to solutions that prioritize student safety and reliability. I would welcome the opportunity to highlight that offer to the others who were copied on this communication to ensure they have the full perspective of all that YCSD has done and offered to do to be good partners in our city.

We are engaged, and we want only what is best for Youngstown. However, let me be clear, the days of blaming Youngstown City Schools for every community challenge are behind us. We expect—and will continue to insist on—mutual respect and a true partnership moving forward.

I welcome the opportunity to continue working together to align next steps and ensure we are moving forward collectively—with urgency, clarity, and shared accountability.

Respectfully,



Jeremy J. Batchelor

CC:

Youngstown City School District Board Members

Mayor Derrick McDowell

Robert Kearns, YCSD Chief of Staff

Mahoning County Commissioners

Chief Sharon Cole, Youngstown Police Department

Sheriff Jerry Green, Mahoning County Sheriff's Office

Chief Shawn Varson, Youngstown State University Police