

# Mayor Ballard's Education and Public Safety Initiative

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## **Bucket #1 – Prevention:**

### **\$25 million program to nearly double number of children served by pre-school scholarship program**

Last week the State announced that Indy would be one of five communities to participate in its new Early Childhood Education pilot program. Current funding allows for approximately 700 children from low income families to receive a scholarship to attend a high-quality pre-school program.

Mayor Ballard proposes to nearly double the number of children served by these pre-school scholarships and expand eligibility through a five-year \$25 million program. The City will partner with the United Way of Central Indiana to serve approximately 1,300 children a year whose families would qualify for the school free lunch program. Funds would also be made available to increase the number of high-quality pre-school programs, particularly in impoverished neighborhoods.

The Mayor proposes to fund this initiative through the immediate elimination of the Local Homestead Tax Credit. This local credit is not to be confused with the State Homestead Exemption that reduces the assessed value of a person's primary residence up to \$45,000. 40% of Indy homeowners are already at the one-percent property tax caps and would see no impact from this credit elimination. For those not already at the cap, this proposal would cost them an average of \$1.84 per month.

### **Help students who have been expelled, suspended, or drop out of school**

Every year approximately 1,800 students are expelled or drop out of schools in Marion County. 22,000 students are suspended on an annual basis. Often times these students drop off society's radar with no education, job skills, positive role model or way to sustain him or herself, thus they reemerge in society wearing handcuffs. History indicates a disproportionate number of these students are minority and come from impoverished homes.

Mayor Ballard acknowledges we don't know enough about this problem and its impact. He is asking the "Your Life Matters" Task Force to lead a study on this issue with the IU Public Policy Institute in order to testify and make legislative recommendations for consideration by the Indiana General Assembly.

The City is also developing a new charter school to better serve students who are being detained in the Juvenile Justice Center. Too many times a young person is detained and his/her education stops. The Francis Marion Academy will help juvenile offenders continue their education inside the Juvenile Justice Center. Operators will later open a second location outside of the Juvenile Justice Center so those students can continue their education. This new school, which is being hailed as a national model, will also serve some of the 1,800 students who are expelled from Marion County schools on an annual basis.

### **Change City's curfew ordinance**

Current City ordinance allows 15-17 year olds to be out unaccompanied by a parent until 11:00 p.m. on weeknights and 1:00 a.m. on weekends. Mayor Ballard and many other community leaders are calling on the City-County Council to make the curfew for 15-17 year old residents 11:00 p.m. every night unless accompanied by a parent or guardian or going to for from work, school or church function. Changing the curfew law would protect kids from being victims or involved in violence and give police a chance to intervene with the parents of curfew violators in the hopes of interceding before violence takes place.

**Expand conflict resolution training through Peace Learning Center and Indy Parks**

One-third of the homicides, expulsions and suspensions take place in Indy due to fights, disputes and revenge. These stats clearly show that many of our young people lack the basic conflict resolution skills that others learned as young children from parents and/or in school. The Peace Learning Center has been working with Indy Parks for 15 years helping to teach people how to resolve conflicts without violence. They currently operate at Eagle Creek Park. The Peace Learning Center and Indy Parks are currently finalizing plans to provide more services in different parts of the city and to develop a family centered class that focuses on solving the problems experienced by many families on a daily basis.

**Launch regional heroin awareness campaign**

Heroin is a growing problem in Indianapolis and Central Indiana. Heroin caused 110 deaths in Marion County in 2013. The Metro Drug Task Force is on pace to seize more than three times the amount of heroin this year compared to last year. Mayor Ballard supports creation of a regional public awareness campaign about the dangers of heroin use and overdose through the Central Indiana Regional Council of Elected Officials.

Mayor Ballard created the Regional Council of Elected Officials to bring together Mayors, County Officials, Town Managers, and Council Leaders from communities across Central Indiana to discuss issues and challenges that face the entire region.

**Bucket #2 – Protection:**

**Hire 280 new IMPD officers by 2018**

2014 marks the third straight year Mayor Ballard has asked the City-County Council to provide additional sustainable funding to hire more IMPD officers. Mayor Ballard is already hiring 80 new IMPD recruits in 2014. He proposes to hire 280 additional officers by using the increase in the Public Safety Income Tax recommended by the Council’s bi-partisan IMPD Staffing Commission. This hiring would increase IMPD staffing to the highest number in the history of the department by 2018.

The proposed Public Safety Income Tax increase would cost the average Indianapolis household (median household income \$42,603) approximately \$5.32 per month. If the Council approves this proposal, the City would also explore obtaining federal COPS grant funding.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
New Recruits	80	90	90	50	50
Projected Attrition	-42	-42	-42	-42	-42
Projected Year-End Staffing	1,565	1,613	1,661	1,669	1,677

**Encourage people to report illegal gun possession through CrimeStoppers**

Mayor Ballard knows that it is likely that there are parents, siblings, and friends who know of someone who is illegally in possession of a firearm but are too afraid to report it. 60% of the city’s non-fatal shooting victims refuse to cooperate with police, and many fear retaliation. The Mayor encourages anyone with information about illegal guns or persons illegally possessing guns to call Crime Stoppers at 262-TIPS (8477). You can also text “INDYCS” plus your tip to 274637 (CRIMES). Anonymous tips may also be submitted at [www.CrimeTips.org](http://www.CrimeTips.org). You will remain anonymous and may be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$1000 if the information leads to a felony arrest. Only tips submitted directly and anonymously to Crime Stoppers are eligible for these cash rewards..

**Full-Time IMPD SWAT Team**

A few months ago, Indy became one of only a few cities its size to designate a full-time IMPD SWAT team. Previously the SWAT team contained officers from many beats and units who were called-in on an as needed basis. IMPD’s new full-time SWAT team now deploys in uniform and undercover to make our neighborhoods safer. Two weeks ago, a suspect who was under surveillance in an area of repeated gun fire was shot by undercover SWAT officers when he allegedly opened fire on people in a parked vehicle.

### **Bucket #3 – Punishment:**

#### **Mayor Ballard will lobby state lawmakers again for mandatory minimum sentences for gun criminals**

IMPD estimates that 25% of the criminal homicides in Indianapolis this year would not have taken place if the State already imposed a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years on criminals who use guns because those suspects would still be in prison from a previous crime. Criminals brandish guns to scare their victims. Mayor Ballard believes those criminals should be scared by the prison sentence. Mayor Ballard will ask State Lawmakers again in 2014 to change the law so any criminal who uses a gun will be locked up for 20 years in addition to the sentence they receive for their other crimes.

#### **Increase funding for Courts, Prosecutors, Probation and Community Corrections**

Recommendations from the bi-partisan IMPD Staffing Commission, if approved by the City-County Council, would not only increase the number of IMPD officers being hired and help fund the City's new pre-school program, it would also provide up to \$10 million in new revenue to Marion County government agencies. That money would benefit County Courts, Sheriff, Prosecutor, Probation, Public Defender, and Community Corrections and could be used to stop the revolving door of criminals reentering Indy and returning to a life of crime and better prepare former prisoners to successfully re-enter society.