

For Immediate Release

Detroit Public Schools Emergency Financial Manager Robert C. Bobb today made the following statement:

“In the course of my more than two dozen community forums and thousands of conversations, phone calls and email messages from Detroit’s parents over the course of my first 107 days in the district, it is clear that safety and security of our children, not only on campus but on the way to and from school is their major concern, in many cases surpassing even academics as the number one issue. It is a daily real life issue for too many Detroit children, and the lack of a successful and comprehensive safety and security plan has over time produced a long term drain on enrollment.

Frankly, this week has been no exception in reminding us all how much of an issue that safety and security for our children, adults, and properties have become. We have been behind the eight ball in redeploying officers from the elementary schools where they rarely are needed in a full time context, to the high schools where tens of thousands of students are currently attending summer school classes. We have in at least one case fumbled the ball on creating a safe environment at a closed school building due to miscommunication about officials getting access after the locks were changed. Detroit’s parents deserve better. Detroit deserves better.

We have continuously stated that a long term plan for safety and security is needed. Today, in the same way that we have launched transformative changes to begin the turnaround in our schools and our facilities, in our curriculum and instruction department and in our central office, today we are launching what will be transformative change for one of departments that needs it most, the Office of Public Safety.

I am announcing the appointment of Roderick I. Grimes as Chief of Police in the Office of Public Safety. Grimes is a 32 year police veteran including 25 years with the Detroit Police Department and seven years with Detroit Public Schools.

Chief Grimes has provided invaluable counsel to me, including producing detailed reports of gang activity at schools that were recommended for consolidation this summer, and in fact this information resulted in changes in recommendations before implementation.

Grimes’ career with DPS includes supervising the night response unit which made 74 B&E arrests in a six month period and supervising the gang enforcement team which identified over 50 gangs and several hundred gang members. He also provided security for the Martin Luther King Jr. High School Marching Band’s trip to the Beijing Olympics in 2008. Most recently he served as a Sergeant in the Executive protection Unit.

With DPD Grimes successfully assisted with a collaborative effort between the Department and over 20 other local police agencies to participate in policing major public events including the North American International Auto Show, Detroit River Fireworks,

Thanksgiving Day parade and championship parades. He served eight years on Mayor Dennis Archer's protection detail, was selected to assist with security on Nelson Mandela's visit to Detroit and worked in conjunction with the U.S. Secret Service covering President Clinton and Vice President Gore.

Chief Grimes like many of our appointments has strong Detroit roots and is a DPS graduate, having graduated from Pershing High School, and currently serving on the DPS Heroes Don't Quit Mentoring Advisory Board.

In addition to this appointment, I am permanently placing the Public Safety function as a division under our Office of Inspector General, which is led by and staffed with law enforcement professionals. The Inspector General's office has in short time proven its value and worth, with completed investigations, results, removal of employees for wrongdoing, and working cooperatively with state and federal agencies. That agency currently has 84 investigations, most of which stemming from well-utilized hotlines.

We have created the position of Executive Deputy Chief and are working with a highly qualified candidate to fill that role.

We will place an attorney from our general counsel's office as the general counsel to the Police Chief and the Office of Public Safety, as is done in many municipalities and law enforcement agencies.

We will invest in additional training, and will bring on board consultant help.

We will work to harden our infrastructure and systems and just last week were offered assistance from Compuware to assist us in setting up a command center and develop other technology-based security solutions.

Chief Grimes will immediately meet with the Chief of Police for the City of Detroit, and within the next two weeks with myself, Inspector General Bell with the County Prosecutor and face to face meetings with other members of the law enforcement community.

We will ensure that each school's safety plan is updated as required by law, and will make certain that our principals are not working to hide the data regarding incidents in the schools.

Chief Grimes will make it his priority to ensure that all personnel are properly trained and equipped with the necessary tools and work in an environment where there are proper procedures established for accountability.

These are investments in an area that sorely need them. Parents rightly expect to send their students in a safe environment.”