



Guns in Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

Bottom Line: In recent years, the gun lobby has pushed legislation across the country that would allow civilians to carry guns into our elementary, middle and high schools. These bills are sold as a way to keep children safe, but in reality, they do just the opposite, putting children at risk of unintentional shootings and escalating conflict without decreasing the risk of an active shooter. That's why **teachers and school safety experts oppose these bills**. Statehouses should listen to school safety experts and local communities, rather than letting the gun lobby put children's lives at risk.

❑ **Teachers and school safety experts oppose allowing guns in schools.**

- The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, the nation's two largest teachers' organizations oppose allowing guns in schools.¹
- The federal government's chief legal, law enforcement, public health, education, and emergency management agencies all agree that allowing civilians to carry guns in schools is not a sound security practice: "*The possibility of an active shooter situation is not justification for the presence of firearms on campus in the hands of any personnel other than law enforcement officers.*"²

❑ **Schools are already safe from gun violence.**

- On average, only 1 percent of all homicides of school-age children occur on school grounds, on the way to or from school, or during a school sponsored event.³
- There is approximately one homicide of a school-age youth at school per 1.8 million enrolled students.⁴
- "Active shooter" incidents, like those at Sandy Hook School and Columbine High School, are extremely rare.⁵

❑ **The focus on arming teachers ignores the risks and consequences of bringing more guns onto school grounds.**

- Everytown has tracked 113 shootings on elementary, middle, and high school campuses since 2013. Of those shootings, over 1 in 10 were **unintentional shootings**, and more than 1 in 6 incidents began as **a verbal altercation that escalated** because of the presence of a gun. Introducing guns on school campuses increases the potential for such tragedies.⁶
- Schools that have allowed employees to carry guns have seen difficulty in obtaining insurance coverage. Some liability insurance providers have declined coverage to these schools while others have increased annual premiums, stretching already tight budgets.⁷

❑ **The gun lobby uses fear of "active shooter" situations to justify these policies, but arming civilians is not an effective way to stop an active shooter.**

- Even police officers, with all their training and frequent exposure to high-risk and life-threatening events, do not always shoot accurately in a crisis encounter. Research casts significant doubt on the idea that civilians could shoot as well as trained police officers in an active shooter situation.⁸



- The FBI found that in 160 active shooter incidents, there was only one successful armed civilian intervention—and the civilian in that incident was a highly trained U.S. Marine.⁹ In contrast, *unarmed* civilians successfully intervened in over 20 incidents.
- ❑ **Based on what we know about school shootings, there are common-sense policies that can help reduce the risk.**
 - In incidents where the source of the gun is known, **more than half of children bringing a gun to school obtained the gun from home.**¹⁰
 - Making it harder for children to bring firearms from home --by enacting child access protection laws and promoting a culture of safe storage—could help address those situations.

¹ National Education Association. AFT, NEA: Arming educators won't keep schools safe. December 20, 2012. <http://www.nea.org/home/53943.htm>.

² U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students. Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans. 2013. http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS_k-12_Guide_508.pdf.

³ National Center for Education Statistics. Digest of education statistics- Table 228.10: School-associated violent deaths of all persons, homicides and suicides of youth ages 5-18 at school, and total homicides and suicides of youth ages 5-18, by type of violent death: 1993-93 to 2012-13. December 2015. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_228.10.asp.

⁴ Anlan Zhang, Lauren Musu-Gillette, Barbara A. Oudekerk. Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2015. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. May 2016. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016079.pdf>.; National Center for Education Statistics. Digest of education statistics- Table 105.20.: Enrollment in elementary, secondary, and degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level and control of institution, enrollment level, and attendance status and sex of student. February 2016. http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_105.20.asp?current=yes. In the school year 2012-13, 31 homicides and 6 suicides of school age youth took place at school. In this academic year, 55 million students were enrolled in elementary and secondary schools.

⁵ Everytown for Gun Safety. School Shootings In America Since 2013. October 3, 2015. <https://everytownresearch.org/school-shootings/>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Yaccino S. Schools seeking to arm employees hit hurdle on insurance. *U.S.* August 11, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/08/us/schools-seeking-to-arm-employees-hit-hurdle-on-insurance.html>.

⁸ White MD. Hitting the target (or not): Comparing characteristics of fatal, injurious, and Noninjurious police shootings. *Police Quarterly*. 2006;9(3):303-330.; Nieuwenhuys A, Oudejans R. Effects of anxiety on handgun shooting behavior of police officers: A pilot study. *Anxiety, stress, and coping*. 2009;23(2):225-33. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19462309>.

⁹ Blair, J. Pete, and Schweit, Katherine W. A Study of Active Shooter Incidents, 2000 - 2013. Texas State University and Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice. 2014. <https://www.hsd1.org/?view&did=757920>.

¹⁰ Everytown for Gun Safety. Analysis of school shootings. December 31, 2015. <http://everytownresearch.org/reports/analysis-of-school-shootings/>.