Superintendent’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Pupil Protection

Hosted by Yuba County Superintendent of Schools
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Prepared and facilitated by FSU Consulting

Schools and school districts throughout the nation have been grappling with major acts of violence for more than 20 years, with our own Lindhurst High School the site of a mass shooting in 2002. Greater attention has been given to what appears to be a growing concern for parents, students, and administrators as we have witnessed repeated atrocities in Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Marshall County High School, Aztec High School, Rancho Tehama Elementary School, Mattoon High School, Freeman High School, North Park Elementary School, West Liberty-Salem High School, June Jordan High School for Equity, Townville Elementary School, Jeremiah Burke High School, Antigo High School, Madison High School since January 2017 (this is list not exhaustive).

In Yuba County, 20.8% of the population live below the poverty level, compared with the national average of 14%. Worse, for children under the age of 18, this rate jumps to 28.9%. Contributing significantly to the rates of poverty, 29.3% of residents over the age of 25 have less than a high school education, and only 19.7% have more than a high school education. According to the US Department of Education, “A concentration of poverty increases the likelihood that children face mental health and physical challenges, such as obesity, poor nutrition, and lack of exercise, and are afraid to attend school. Children’s health and safety are extremely important in their own right, but each also is linked to improved academic outcomes.” The Department continues, “Comprehensive community-wide models are a promising approach to overcoming the challenges faced by schools located in communities with concentrated poverty.”

The responsibility for creating an environment which reduces the incidence of violence, and provides safe and healthy havens for growth, extends beyond the reach of each school and the school district - solutions must reach throughout our community. The convening of this Panel and its membership highlights the broad impact we can all have in building a safer community together. Represented are experts in education, law enforcement, mental health, law,
government, and ____. It is our intent during these proceedings to examine the variety of solutions that have been proposed, and to offer reasonable analysis of these solutions which our partner agencies can use to build collaborative strategies which seek to address the occurrence of violence in our community.

In this background report, we present summaries of policy recommendations proposed by other organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Center for Education Statistics, Departments of Education, the Columbine Review Commission, the Sandy Hook Advisory Commission, and related reports from research institutions and professional organizations. As this brief was prepared, two major themes became apparent - solutions can be classified into two primary categories with marginal overlap. These two categories are (1) Facilities Best Practices, which relate to the safety, security, and response on school grounds and nearby; and (2) School Climate, which relate to the atmosphere in the community which may give rise to, or enable healthful de-escalation of potential incidence of violence.
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Secure School Facilities - “Hardening”

There is a wealth of research and recommendations for changing and adapting infrastructure and facility use to prevent intrusion and mitigate the amount of damage that can be caused during a single incident. In this section, we present these concepts for consideration by the Panel. A holistic approach which includes not only enhancing the infrastructure itself (eg. installing door locks which can be locked from the inside), but also ensuring staff take appropriate measures to ensure the improvements are effective (eg. not propping locked doors open). School hardening assumes that incidents of violence will be initiated, and hopes to insulate students from being victimized by those incidents.

A continuum exists between open campuses with community space and the free flow of students and supports, and completely secure facilities with strict entry and regimented movement (prisons). Each measure taken to lock down a school facility has the effect of impeding the learning environment and creating an atmosphere of oppression and fear. As these measures are considered, the Panel should consider these impacts on student learning. The Sandy Hook Advisory Commission notes, turning schools into minimum security prisons “may, in fact, effectively eliminate some of the risk... But they achieve that objective at great cost, not just financial, but mental, emotional and developmental as well.”

Key Control - Types of Access

Key control is a common concern among all organizations with multiple keyholders - according to InstaKey security systems, an average K-12 school system may have 5,000 keyholders or more.² Schools and school districts should have key management plans which include, at minimum, the following five best practices:³

1. Have a Formal Plan
   
The systematic control of locks and keys is essential in today’s university environment. In developing a plan, the first step is knowing the identity of authorized key holders, which keys they have or have access to and why they are needed. The next step is to take a physical inventory of every access point and every piece of door hardware in every building. Following this inventory, it is then necessary to identify the keys that fit each of the locks, who has the keys,

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² [Making Key Control Simple for the Education Marketplace](#)
³ [How to Manage Campus Keys](#)
what keys they have and what doors they access. This step is usually followed by labeling every door with an ID number, and labeling and recording the corresponding key.

Once these preliminary steps have been accomplished, the key control policy and procedures guide can be written. A simple but strong policy defines areas of responsibility and enables better control over the keys with fewer keys being lost or compromised. When selecting a key control system, those that automatically record the access history of each key, including user, date and time of checkout/return as well as only releasing assigned keys to users with the proper authorization code, can help to ensure adherence to the established policies and procedures.

2. **Properly Balance Security and Public Access**

   It is necessary to understand how the facility works on a day-to-day basis so that routines and operations are disrupted as little as possible when a key control and management plan is implemented. Discussions and interviews with faculty and staff can provide the needed information that can minimize the trade-off between security and convenience.

3. **Plan for Future Needs**

   Not planning for future growth is another area in which key control policies can fall short. Systems should be designed and implemented with an eye toward future-proofing as well as growth to help protect the original investment.

4. **Track Your Keys**

   Key storage without some form of automated tracking and accountability is only half a solution and can quickly become a problem. Online monitoring, updating and reporting capabilities enhance the functionality of a key control system and add to the integrity of an institution's security. For instance, at any time, campus security can view who has keys out or who previously had the keys out and when. If keys are not returned when scheduled, E-mail alerts can be sent to security management to allow quicker action.

   Also, names can be added or deleted from the system through the network. In addition to the time and effort saved, these changes can help prevent incidents by denying access to unauthorized or at-risk individuals, such as recently terminated employees. The network connectivity of the system also allows management to remotely release any key, adding to the convenience and inherent safety provided by a key control and management solution.

5. **Find Other Uses for Your Key Control Equipment**

   The capability to integrate a key control and management system with other physical security measures adds tremendous value to key management systems and allows appropriate solutions to be implemented without costly upgrades or
For example, when a building is secured with an access control system, the access cards can also be stored and secured in a key locker, using the same key locking mechanisms for tracking and auditing. And if someone tries to leave the building without returning an item taken from a key locker, an alert can be sent to campus security.

Any system should account for access control based on the keyholder's job duties. At times, this system must balance convenience against security. For instance, a teacher may be given access to one classroom only, with the custodian or administration providing access to common areas such as the gymnasium or library when occasionally needed. It is inconvenient for the teacher and administrator to manage strict access, and access controls may create a sense of distrust. However, the alternative is a lack of security for students and staff.

Due to funding restrictions, schools tend to use padlocks on fences and simple key locks for doors. Access to keys and combinations requires significant staff resources, paper or electronic logs, role management, and recovery of keys from separated employees and vendors. Secure systems have locks keyed for specific roles, which require the maintenance and issuance of multiple types of keys. Lost keys may require unplanned re-keying of locks, and administrators may not be able to fully control the duplication of keys.

The Sandy Hook Advisory Commission recommended legislation in Connecticut which provides: (1) electronic locks, and (2) remotely controlled locks, on all entrance and exits.

**Hardening points of entry**

Violent acts on school campus, particularly school shootings, have been shown to rarely be the result of impulsive acts. Perpetrators take time to understand school systems, identify weaknesses, plan routes of attack and escape, and assess potential threats to accomplishing their objective. Furthermore, acts of violence perpetrated by youth do not account for consequences in the way that adults are capable. Things that may seem "natural" for an adult professional to consider may never occur to the youth, or may be distorted by their lack of experience and maturity.

The first line of defense for a campus is denying access to a perpetrator. Schools generally make "soft" targets, because educators want to foster a comfortable and open space which encourages learning and social development. In response to violence on campus, schools have implemented measures which deny access to unauthorized

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persons and control for the intrusion of weapons. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 91.7% of all schools have locked or monitored doors on buildings, HOWEVER, only 46% have locked or monitored doors/gates on school grounds. These statistics are inflated relative to rural schools, because the study also found that the rates for access control were significantly greater for schools with more than 1,000 students.

All sources which considered best practices and recommendations for facilities security recommend all external points of entry should be equipped with locking hardware. These points of entry should be locked at all times during the school day, and signs should direct all visitors (including vendors) to the front office for entry. In November 2017, a shooter at Rancho Tehama Elementary School was unable to find an unlocked door and left the school, frustrated. The U.S. Department of Education underscores the difficulty in locking down external doors in stating, “The need for unrestricted egress to the outside poses problems for all building types, but especially schools because it makes it easy for students to let others inside. There are many stories about school staff illegally chaining exit doors shut to keep out strangers and contraband. As dangerous as this practice is, one can empathize with school administrators trying to balance competing safety concerns.”

There are various options for securing perimeter access from low-tech traditional locks and chains to high-tech, wirelessly connected, remotely controlled locks. With any choice, consulting with fire officials and adhering to building code standards for egress is imperative. These various locking options have advantages and disadvantages which impact cost, effectiveness, student ingress/egress, and staff effort. Notably, if a system is difficult to work with, staff and students may seek to circumvent the security measures.

Fairfax County Public Schools have been cited as a “national model of school emergency preparedness” by the US Department of Education. Fairfax Director of the Office of Safety and Security noted that people “seem to feel more secure,’ as ‘door-access technology helps schools strike a balance between convenience and security.’” In relation to circumventing systems, he stated: “teachers or students who participate in extracurricular activities may need to enter the school building after hours or through doors other than the main entrance. If no provision is made for them, they may be tempted to prop doors open.”

Access controls are included among Fairfax security measures, including:

5 Best Practices in School Security - 2013 Hanover Research
6 4 Dead After California Shootings: Gunman Tried to Enter School
7 Door Locking Options in Schools
- Door access technology to aid in visitor control for all elementary and middle schools
- Updated high security padlocks on out-buildings and gates
- All exterior doors, except the main doors and those necessary for modular access, must remain locked
- Signs are posted on all doors directing visitors to report to the main office

The advantages of installing wirelessly connected electronic locks are many, but the cost is high. With the use of key-card readers or other keyless technology, schools can provide computerized access to classrooms and other facilities in a system that provides for easier tracking, management and disabling of keys. Using a well-designed system can help mitigate the negative impacts of requiring all doors to be locked all of the time, as teachers and staff will not need to fumble for metal keys to gain access to classrooms and other buildings. Moreover, a centrally-controlled electronic locking system provides rapid access to lockdown the facility in response to an active shooter, unlock all facility doors in response to a fire or earthquake emergency, and provide selective access for law enforcement response.

Schools are also installing new door locks on classroom doors which allow teachers to lock the classroom from the inside. Despite this being a consistent recommendation from school shooting reports, as recent as February 2018, KCRA reported that at least 35,000 classrooms in California “only lock from the outside -- putting the teachers [and students] in those classrooms at risk during a lockdown.” The US Department of Education notes:

“For decades, classroom function locksets have been standard for classroom doors. A key cylinder is located on the outside of the door. When the door is locked, no one can enter the classroom, but those inside the classroom can exit unimpeded. If the door is unlocked and a school lockdown occurs, however, the teacher must open the door, step into the hallway, lock the door, step back inside the classroom, and close the door — a time-consuming process with a potentially dangerous exposure.”

In the aftermath of the Columbine shootings, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) created new specifications for classroom door locks - termed “Columbine locks”. Made in various compliant forms, these locks must be ADA compliant and allow egress according to fire standards. The US Department of Education describes them as:

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8 Thousands of California Classrooms Don’t Lock From Inside
“Newer classroom security function locksets add a key cylinder to the classroom side of the door so the door can be locked without leaving the room. These locksets are designated by their American National Standards Institute (ANSI) specification... Their lever-handled version is ADA compliant. Replacement... locksets can be installed for several hundred dollars per door.”

Taking this recommendation a step farther, schools in Martinez Unified School District in Contra Costa County, and in Santa Rosa County among others, are requiring classrooms to remain locked at all times. Numerous shootings have occurred when the perpetrator opened an unlocked classroom and fired on students inside. Even when locked against intrusion, the lever-handled locksets described above unlock when the handle is turned from the inside allowing for quick escape if necessary. Locking systems are also available which connect wirelessly to a central system and use keyless access, making operation simpler from the outside which may mitigate the instinct to prop open a locked door. One provider of keyless locks states, “Electronic locks provide the same capability as mechanical locks, and increase the level of security. These locks can be programmed so each user has their own code, card, or fob. They can be set on an access, and lock/unlock schedule, and provide tracking for auditing the door when an incident arises.”

Once doors and gates are secured, and traffic is directed to a single point of entry - the front office - there are measures that can be taken to monitor visitors and prevent unauthorized access through this entry point. New school design has used the office to create a sally port - a vestibule where visitors can be identified and monitored before they are allowed through a locked door to enter the campus. Most often, this second locked door is controlled with a “buzzer” system which enables administration to unlock it from their desk, preventing unnecessary disruption to workflow. Under its list of ways to enhance school security, CampusSecurity states, “While a school vestibule is not up to the same level of security as an embassy or jail, the purpose is the same… Ideally, visitors granted access through the primary entrance are required to pass through the main office. The office would allow visitors to enter the first entrance, but the secondary entrances or exits would remain locked and monitored.”

The practice of using a single point of entry and a sally port system is supported by the US Department of Education as well. In their summary of door locking options, they describe, “Access-controlled egress doors at the building entrance, used in conjunction with an intercom and, if needed, a security camera, allow visitors to be...”

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9 To Lock Classroom Doors or Not
10 Keyless Locks for Classrooms
National School Safety and Security Services recommends, “Reconfigure main entrance design so that there is a secondary set of secure doors and all traffic is funneled into the main office before they can gain access into the school.”

Schools have added another layer of security to help protect office staff by locking both sets of doors and monitoring entrants into the office with video surveillance and a “buzzer” system. The Panel may wish to discuss the impact on school climate presented by barring student, parent, and visitor access to the main office through a locked door and security camera system.

With the campus perimeter secured, and access controlled through a system of locked doors, school security experts consider that the shooter at Sandy Hook broke a glass window beside a locked door to gain entry. **Bulletproof glass or film** can be installed on external windows to prevent penetration by attackers. One struggle schools have found with bulletproofing is that there are eight levels of bulletproof glass, with increasing cost at each level. The eight standard UL (Underwriters Laboratory) ratings range from 9mm projectile protection (3 rounds) to 7.62 rifle metal jacketed projectile protection (5 NATO rounds).

Schools also have the option of applying security glazing to existing windows. Global Manufacturer 3M has successfully marketed its Security Window Film to schools nationwide. However, 3M and other product manufacturers note that these products do not stop bullet penetration - the primary design purpose is to hold the glass together, making it more difficult to gain entry after it has been broken. In 2015, CampusSafety reported that 22 school districts nationwide had included safety and security film as part of their school safety upgrades. The Executive Director of the International Window Film Association issued a letter of concern regarding the marketing of security film as a projectile deterrent. The letter states, in part:

“The International Window Film Association (IWFA) has the utmost concern about any written specification or recommendation that would call for the use of any type of window film, such as a safety or security film, as a primary component of a "bullet resistant glazing… Since window films are an addition to a glazing and not intended for use as the glazing itself, we firmly believe that an individual glazing should be tested both with and without film installed on it for any comparison of improvement in total performance… Any attempt to imply performance due to the application of

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11 School Access & Visitor Control
12 Bulletproof Protection Levels
13 More Schools Upgrade Campus Security With Window Film
the film under any other conditions... we believe, would be irresponsible as the margin for error could be one of life safety.”14

This caution and the lack of an associated UL standard specification for window films reveals that these products should not be considered to be bulletproof or bullet resistant. They may, however, provide a small delay in the time it takes for an offender to breach the glass on which it is applied.

Monitoring persons entering campus

Beginning in the late 1980’s and continuing through the early 2000s, following the shooting at Columbine, schools started installing metal detectors. The effectiveness of metal detectors has received mixed reviews; however, it appears the bulk of evidence shows that they are not effective deterrents against violence in schools. Research has been summarized thus: “recent research on the effectiveness of high-tech school safety measures, including metal detectors and surveillance cameras, finds these approaches to be only marginally helpful in most settings.”15 A coalition of school principals, resource officers, counselors, psychologists, and social workers included the following guidance in their publication A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools:

“Relying on highly restrictive physical safety measures alone, such as increasing armed security or imposing metal detectors, typically does not objectively improve school safety. In fact, such measures may cause students to feel less safe and more fearful at school, and could undermine the learning environment.”

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California opposes the use of metal detectors in schools, stating that they “contradicts existing LAUSD policies such as the School Climate Bill of Rights, and [they are] ineffective, intrusive and excessive.”16 Presently Los Angeles Unified School District employs random searches of students with metal detectors. In March 2018, the Los Angeles Times reported, “Many students already complain about the random use of metal-detecting wands to check a small percentage of students each day for weapons. They find it demeaning and say it interrupts class time…”17 The Times continues that searching all students with

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14 Bullet Resistance
15 Student Perceptions of the Impact School Security Measures Have on their High School Experience - Kenneth C. Stuker
16 American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California
17 Locked-down schools with metal detectors may harm students more than help them
metal detectors “would make schools feel more like detention centers and less like places of learning and mutual respect.”

In a scholarly review published in the Journal of School Health, the author reports:

“...Schools in which the principal reported a higher-than-average level of school problems, the presence of metal detectors had no significant association with student safety climate. However, in schools with an average level of principal reported student problems, metal detectors’ presence had a significant negative association with perceived safety (ie, the presence of metal detectors was associated with a lower perception of safety).”

The review continues to examine other studies which repeat the same findings - that perceptions of student safety are negatively impacted by the use of metal detectors. It goes on to report “only 32% of [School Safety Administrators] stated that the metal detectors were either somewhat or very effective at reducing violent crime,” and “only 32% of [administrators in districts using metal detectors] thought that this type of technology was effective in preventing or minimizing crime.” The National Center for Education Statistics reports that as of 2017, only 4% of public schools use random metal detector checks.19

Security Cameras have been implemented in about 94% of public high schools, 89% of middle schools and 73% of elementary schools.19 The Sandy Hook Advisory Commission recommended, “Video surveillance cameras shall be installed in such a manner to show who enters and leaves the building and shall be monitored at locations which are attended whenever the school is occupied.” Student perceptions of security cameras are generally positive, with most of the focus on vandalism and theft deterrence and prosecution.19

Much like the evidence surrounding effectiveness of metal detectors in schools, studies report that there is little to suggest that security cameras are effective deterrents for school violence. A publication by George Mason University states:

“A statewide study in California... schools reported using surveillance cameras, canine searches, and metal detectors. But the majority of school districts had no evidence supporting the effectiveness of these efforts” and “the evidence suggested that these measures were ineffective in suppressing gang activity and student violence in the schools.”20

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18 Impact of Metal Detectors Use in Schools - Journal of School Health, February 2011, Vol. 81, No. 2
19 Indicators of School Crime & Safety 2017 - National Center for Education Statistics
20 Alternative Strategies for School Violence Prevention
Furthermore, sources including the ACLU state that security cameras “have little value as a security measure and send the wrong message to students.” Conversely, school administrators say “cameras help identify culprits in vandalism, fights and other incidents in and around school.” So, while there is evidence to support the assertion that security cameras are not an effective deterrent for perpetrators of mass violence, they can be useful for administrators to monitor and reinforce a positive, violence-free school climate.

Schools have invested in enhanced visitor identification and tracking systems according to Hanover Research Best Practices in School Security. While visitors are in the sally port, administrators ask for identification, get reports on potential threats, validate vendors, provide badges which can be monitored throughout the campus, and track entry and exit. These systems create the potential for an administrative burden, and if not properly staffed the office can become a bottleneck which prevents the flow of students, staff and visitors. However, by using a well-designed and connected system of identification, school administration can create a significant deterrent to violence.

The most common visitor management software used in schools is made by Raptor Technologies, covering more than 20,000 schools nationwide. According to the company’s website, the Visitor Management System instantly checks visitors against sex offender databases in all 50 states, and custom district databases (e.g. child custody orders, vendors, gang members, or banned visitors). It can be configured to automatically message law enforcement, and print visitor badges. While other solutions exist, including paper tracking solutions which may be in place at some campuses, the concepts are all similar.

An identification component schools have implemented to quickly identify persons who are out of place is a system of colored badges or lanyards. Schools require school-issued identification to be worn at all times. Attaching these badges to colored lanyards, schools can easily distinguish administrators, teachers, classified staff, vendors, and visitors who are on campus. School personnel are trained to look for anyone not wearing a lanyard. In a few instances, this system has been expanded to include the students as well. While the benefits and negatives associated with school uniforms are expansive and well documented, we will include the use of school uniforms in this section discussing standards for identification. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that 21% of students are required to wear a uniform, and 7% of students are required to wear a badge or picture ID.

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21 Will Cameras Make Schools Safer - USA Today
22 Raptor Technologies website
Armed threat response

Factions have entered the debate regarding armed persons on school campuses - with opinions ranging from open opportunities for school staff to be armed, to prohibiting firearms on campus altogether. The two distinguishable policies which promote having armed personnel on campus include placing armed school resource officers (SROs) on every campus, and allowing teachers to be trained and armed if they elect to do so.

In 2017, 48% of schools reported having a sworn law enforcement officer on campus, and 42% reported having a school resource officer (note: SROs are sworn officers with specific training for school patrols). 19 By grade level, 64% of high schools, 63% of middle schools, and 29% of elementary schools employ security personnel at least once per week. 23 However, only 66% of these schools used security personnel to engage in mentoring with students, while 90% of schools used them to enforce discipline (see section XX for additional discussion on this topic).

Following school shootings, proposals surface in support of arming teachers on campus. After the Stoneman Douglas shooting in February 2018, President Trump endorsed these proposals, and Florida officials passed legislation and funding to provide 10 armed personnel in each school - other jurisdictions have also pursued similar policies. Notably, the Broward County School District in which Stoneman Douglas is located rejected the funding offered by the state. 24

There is considerable opposition to these policies, based on school climate concerns, safety, liability, and a wide range of potential consequences. National Education Association (NEA) President Lily Garcia stated, “Bringing more guns into our schools does nothing to protect our students and educators from gun violence. Our students need more books, art and music programs, nurses and school counselors; they do not need more guns in their classrooms.” NEA Vice President Becky Pringle followed up with, “I can’t imagine being in an environment where guns are all around me. What’s being described by the president and others sounds more like a prison to me, with the teachers as armed guards and students as prisoners.” 25

In a survey commissioned by NEA in March 2018, educators overwhelmingly rejected proposals to arm them, including 63% of those who personally own a firearm. In a striking symmetry, 64% of educators reported that they would feel less safe if educators were allowed to carry firearms, and 69% said that armed educators would be

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23 Public School Safety & Discipline - National Center for Education Statistics
24 Parkland, Florida, school district rejects funds to arm teachers
25 Arming Teachers is NOT The Answer
ineffective at preventing gun violence.\textsuperscript{26} Kenneth Trump, President of National School Safety and Security Services described other factors in saying, “School districts considering arming teachers and school staff with guns would take on significant responsibility and potential liabilities that I firmly believe are beyond the expertise, knowledge-base, experience, and professional capabilities of most school boards and administrators.”\textsuperscript{27} There are also the psychological aspects of preparing non-law enforcement to kill another human, and the deterrent effects that armed educators might have on perpetrators. An article in Psychology Today summarizes: “Bottom line: It is doubtful that more guns in schools will act as deterrence. Most school shooters don’t expect to survive and can do significant harm prior to being shot themselves. Even on military bases such as Fort Hood, the site of two mass shootings, increased weaponry did not act as deterrence.”\textsuperscript{28}

On the other side of this debate are those that look at the average incident length (about three minutes) in relation to law enforcement response time, and believe that having personnel trained with firearms on campus is the only way to intervene and protect life. Notably, the National Rifle Association website does not highlight its support for arming teachers on its website - there are no reports or policy documents, and a search for the subject does not provide any official statement in this regard. The NRA has launched a National School Shield program to evaluate and confer with stakeholders regarding school security measures. As a part of this program, the NRA states, “When a threat occurs, a quick and timely response by law enforcement professionals is what everyone hopes for. However, in these situations — when time is clearly of the essence — we strongly believe that trained school personnel can also serve a vital role.”

In Ohio, 63 out of 88 counties have armed response teams with teachers who have gone through Peace Officer Training.\textsuperscript{29} Although Idaho does not have state policy in place, schools are acting independently to provide training and opportunity for educators to be armed. As part of that debate, Congressional Representative Seth Berglee said, “When a threat occurs, a quick and timely response by law enforcement professionals is what everyone hopes for. However, in these situations — when time is clearly of the essence — we strongly believe that trained school personnel can also serve a vital role.”\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{26} New NEA national survey: educators overwhelmingly reject proposals to arm teachers
\textsuperscript{27} Arming Teachers and School Staff
\textsuperscript{28} Arming Teachers: Good or Bad Idea?
\textsuperscript{29} Guns in school: ‘We have to be ready in seconds and not minutes’
\textsuperscript{30} Officials discuss pros and cons of arming school teachers
Electronic devices and social media

Schools often have wireless networks to connect a variety of devices - computers, smart boards, tablets, chromebooks, televisions and other equipment. Access to school WiFi networks for students varies greatly between school districts, as does the limits placed on those networks. Reports from across the country are polarized between open access and highly restricted access, especially related to the use of social media on school networks. Significant arguments in this debate include:

1. Half of low income families do not have access to the internet at home. Providing access for personal devices through the school’s WiFi network helps to level the field for students from low income families.
2. Restricting access to social media on the school’s network is ineffective, because most students have devices which can use cellular data. This can create social pressure on students who do not have data-enabled devices.
3. Social media has become an integral part of daily life - including in many workplaces - and will continue to integrate with younger generations. Restricting access to social media in school does not prepare students to engage in real-life learning and development.
4. Social media is a distraction in the learning environment and should be banned from all school campuses.

Schools can potentially find an advantage in allowing students to use the school WiFi network. Since the infrastructure belongs to the school, all of the material passed over it can be monitored by the school for inappropriate activity. Third-party software and contract services are available to monitor student activity - including social media. Social media monitors can highlight specific phrases and identify emerging trends in specific locations. Schools in Florida and California, among others are using social media monitoring. Opponents have argued that monitoring social media will not prevent school shootings, noting that few of the perpetrators have posted their intent on social media. However, the technology has broad application beyond simply identifying perpetrators of mass violence - it can be an effective tool to manage school climate, including cyberbullying. Among Infosec Institute’s prevention techniques is: “Install monitoring software: Now this would be considered extreme privacy violation, but it has beautiful results. This could be used in case of a minor child, and it would also

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31 Best Social Media Monitoring Software
32 Schools are helping police spy on kids’ social media activity
33 Monitoring kids’ social media accounts won’t prevent the next school shooting
prevent a child from Adult content online. [Monitors] may check the interaction logs monthly or quarterly."

In a survey conducted by CompTIA, they found that “school Wi-Fi was one of the things they most desired. The results were based on their enthusiasm to have more technology in the classroom and the ability to connect their multiple devices to a robust school wireless network.” Students are also keenly aware that the workplace they will be entering integrates technology, and want their education to be reflective of that reality. In order to ensure they have access to technology and relevant tools, they want access to a wireless network. “They realize that what they are experiencing in schools is starting to reflect what will be expected in the workforce. 92% of students say technology is teaching them the skills they will need in the workforce.”

The use of social media is often seen by educators as a distraction from the learning environment at a school. School response has ranged from prohibiting phones on campus altogether, to blocking cellular signals, and allowing use only during break periods (lunch, etc.). While the merits of blocking kids cellular signals can be debated, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued a strong prohibition on this technology: “We remind and warn consumers that it is a violation of federal law to use a cell jammer or similar devices that intentionally block, jam, or interfere with authorized radio communications such as cell phones, police radar, GPS, and Wi-Fi.” Although educators concerns about access to social media are legitimate, it is obvious that they cannot prevent such access.

Moreover, in the case of an emergency, cellular messaging and social media have been helpful to first responders, educators, and parents alike. Police have used social media and direct connections with students to respond to mass shootings and evaluate the scenario. Parents who are concerned about students have been able to communicate directly with them or with their peers to determine that their child is unharmed. These communications can help to reduce response time and alleviate parental concerns which can otherwise impede or place a strain on response resources.

Anonymous threat reporting

Recommendations for anonymous threat reporting systems have been made as early as the Governor’s Commission Report on the Columbine Shooting. In that report it states:

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34 Cyber-bullying threats, prevention, and solutions
35 What Students Want and Expect from Our School Wi-Fi Networks
36 Jamming cell phones and GPS equipment is against the law
“Each school district should establish a mechanism like an anonymous telephone line, through which students and others may anonymously report statements or conduct that worries them... Whatever the mechanism for anonymous reporting eventually established in a school district, it is important that students learn of it and be advised of its importance to their safety and the security of school premises.”

Technology has progressed massively since 1999, and anonymous telephone lines are unlikely to be the most effective methods for activating today’s students in threat reporting. Several companies have developed apps for students to anonymously report bullying. Despite these recommendations and offerings, only 35.9% of schools have anonymous threat reporting systems. Broken down by school type, that’s 45.6% of high schools, 47.7% of middle schools and 30.1% of elementary schools. Finding that schools themselves are not taking enough initiative, a group of parents from Sandy Hook founded the Sandy Hook Promise, which in 2018 launched the Say Something anonymous reporting system which allows students to report troubling behavior through a website, telephone hotline or mobile app. In the article on EdWeek, “The PepsiCo Foundation plans to fund an initial rollout of the reporting system in a group of states that are most ‘at-risk states for gun violence’— California, Florida, Texas and New York— Sandy Hook Promise said in a news release.”

One commercially available system - SafeSchools - allows for reporting through a website, telephone hotline, email, and a mobile app. The “Bullying Reporting System” is only one component of the SafeSchools system. Monroe Public Schools Compliance Officer is quoted as saying, “We Can Now Respond Immediately! The SafeSchools Alert System allows our administrators to respond immediately to bullying, and helps us provide a safe environment for our students.” This software and others like it provide a system which can track, organize, and help resolve anonymous tips - including referring issues to law enforcement, where appropriate.

Schools continue to struggle with barriers to effective use of anonymous threat reporting systems. Two significant reasons students do not come forward with information about threats are described in the Governor’s Commission Report on Columbine. First, the student climate in schools is often one that promotes protecting one another - a code of silence - and punishes students who are found to be (or suspected of) “ratting” on one another. The general lack of ability to discern jokes from real (or indirect) threats of violence can be a compounding factor. Second, students often worry about repercussions if the reported threat is found to be invalid. Repercussions can come from the administration, but are more likely to come from the

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37 Sandy Hook Promise Launches Anonymous Reporting System for School Violence Tips
38 SafeSchools Bullying Reporting System
subject of the report and his/her friends if the investigation does not conceal the identity of the informant. Conscious and direct communication about reporting systems can help to highlight their existence and mitigate fears about the process for evaluating an anonymous tip. Furthermore, training which stresses the importance of reporting possible bullying and threats - even without hard evidence - can improve the use of these systems.

Safe School Climate