



PART 1 PREVENTION

NEA SCHOOL GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

GUIDE



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About the National Education Association and Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund

The [National Education Association \(NEA\)](#) is more than 3 million people—educators, students, activists, workers, parents, neighbors, and friends—who believe in the opportunity for all students and the power of public education to transform lives and create a more just and inclusive society. NEA has affiliate organizations in every state and more than 14,000 communities across the United States. The Association brings the expertise, drive, and dedication of our educators and allies to focus on providing the best public education to each and every student across race, place, background, and ability. Our members work at every level of education—from prekindergarten through graduate-level university programs—and in other types of public service.

The NEA Health and Safety Program, within the Association’s Education Policy and Implementation Center (EPIC), partnered with Everytown’s team to develop this guide. It draws on the expertise and work of several centers, departments, and initiatives across the organization, including EPIC, the Center for Advocacy and Political Action, the Center for Communications, the Center for Organizing and Affiliate Support, the Center for Professional Excellence and Student Learning, the Office of General Counsel, and the Center for Racial and Social Justice. Audrey Soglin—whose career in public education includes service as the executive director of the Illinois Education Association, a local association president, and a 25-year classroom teacher—worked with the Health and Safety Program staff as a consultant on this project.

The guidance and feedback of NEA state and local affiliate leaders, staff, and members have been crucial in conceptualizing, developing, and fine-tuning this guide, which incorporates, in part, material from the [NEA School Crisis Guide](#), published in 2018. You can contact the NEA Health and Safety Program at healthandsafetyprogram@nea.org and find [NEA Health and Safety Program content](#) on NEA’s website.

The staff of Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund—the education, research, and litigation arm of Everytown for Gun Safety (Everytown)—provided their expertise on gun violence prevention, research, and education to help create a comprehensive and data-driven resource. As the nation’s largest gun violence prevention organization, Everytown has more than 10 million supporters and more than 700,000 donors, including parents and guardians, students, survivors, veterans, mayors, and everyday people throughout the United States who are fighting for commonsense gun safety measures that can help save lives. The Everytown Support Fund seeks to improve our understanding of the causes of gun violence and help reduce it by conducting ground-breaking research, developing evidence-based policies, communicating this knowledge to the public, and advancing gun safety and gun violence prevention in communities and the courts.

The leadership and guidance from subject matter experts on gun violence prevention at Everytown were pivotal in the content creation and development of this guide. You can contact Everytown Support Fund’s team at info@everytown.org and find their Research and Policy content on [Everytown Support Fund’s website](#).

Letter from NEA President Becky Pringle

On April 20, 1999, I had been a middle-school science teacher in Pennsylvania for 23 years. None of my two decades of experience and training had prepared me to answer the questions my frightened students had about the shooting happening at Columbine High School that day. Along with my fellow educators, I shared the country's profound shock and grief that a school building—a place that should always be safe—had become the site of a massacre. The only thing that comforted us was the belief that this—then the deadliest mass shooting at a K-12 school in U.S. history—was a terrible anomaly. We believed our country would learn from the tragedy and take every measure to ensure it never happened again.

But the Columbine death toll was surpassed at Sandy Hook Elementary School...and Parkland High School...and Uvalde's Robb Elementary School. Each time, we thought, "They have to do something now." But close to 400 school shootings later, the biggest change seemed to be in 2020, when firearms finally surpassed car accidents and disease to become the No. 1 killer of children in America.

We must put a stop to the gun violence that continues to terrorize our students, our educators, families, and communities. As President Biden, who finally passed the most comprehensive gun safety legislation in 30 years, said, "We all want our kids to have the freedom to learn to read and to write instead of learning how to duck and cover in a classroom."

Gun violence in schools affects all students and educators, and its ripple effects spread out to the entire community. There is the constant fear that your school, your children, will be the next victims. According to the American Psychological Association's report, "Stress in America 2023: A Nation Recovering from Collective Trauma," 56 percent of U.S. adults report mass shootings as a significant source of stress. And we know that the long-term effects of toxic stress can change the brain and body's makeup, particularly for children, severely affecting both physical and mental health.

According to the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, with whom NEA partnered to create this guide, 107 incidents of gun violence on school grounds have already caused 29 deaths and injured 61 people—and this is just during the first five months of 2024.

This is unacceptable. No matter how many school shootings we have seen happen, they are just as unacceptable today as they were in 1999. We cannot, we must not, accept the lie that there's nothing we can do to stop them.

While we are grateful for the strides President Biden has made, it is clear that more still needs to be done, which is why NEA set out to issue a call to action to end gun violence in our schools and communities. The result is this guide—a collection of hundreds of calls to action for educators; for school district, college, and university boards and administrators; for politicians; and for students, parents, and families. We look to the day when this guide will be unnecessary and obsolete, but for now, we—the members of this nation's largest labor union—must focus our attention on how to end gun violence in our schools and our communities.

And we must take a hard look at what that violence really looks like. While the picture most people have in their minds about schools and guns involves young White male shooters and White victims, the truth is that our students of color are disproportionately affected by gun violence. According to Everytown, “2 in 3 incidents of gunfire on school grounds from 2013 to 2021 occurred in schools where one or more racial and/or ethnic minorities constituted a majority of the student population.”

The good news is that gun violence is preventable. Not by absurd and impossible measures like arming teachers or putting armed security officers in every school, but through commonsense gun laws and trauma-informed schools that create safe environments and that have the staffing and mental health resources necessary to do it right.

The guide focuses on the roles of state and local education association leaders, staff, building representatives, faculty liaisons, and more. But it is meant to serve as a bridge between what NEA affiliates can do to facilitate gun violence prevention, preparation, response, and recovery and the crucial work of so many others in the broader school community. We know that each community varies with respect to their approach to guns and their experiences with gun violence. This guide is designed to help educators of all types and all levels of experience join with others to end gun violence in our schools.

NEA, we must find a way forward together. We must stop our children—our hope for the future—from continuing to fall prey to this country’s epidemic of gun violence. And we must help the survivors recover and succeed despite their trauma.

Thank you for picking up this guide and committing to being part of the solution!



Rebecca S. Pringle
President, National Education Association

Letter from Moms Demand Action Executive Director Angela Ferrell-Zabala

Gun violence is the No. 1 killer of children in America.

This is a statistic I say often, but it never becomes less jarring. And while this fact encompasses more than just school shootings, it is undeniable that our classrooms are not the safe havens that they should be.

Students deserve the freedom to live, learn, and play without the constant threat of gun violence. But this is our current reality, caused by a reckless gun industry, a corrupt gun lobby, and extremist lawmakers who refuse to take decisive action.

I know that with an issue this large and complex, a safer future can often feel out of reach. The truth is, there's no one-size-fits-all answer to preventing gun violence—but we do have the solutions to this crisis. We need to create powerful, informed networks in our communities that know how to keep our children safe. It will take all of us—educators, administrators, parents, students, law enforcement, mental health professionals, advocates, and policymakers—working together to create change.

To address this urgent need, we are proud to partner with the National Education Association to introduce a comprehensive guide that equips Pre-K-12 schools and higher education institutions with resources, recommendations, and evidence-based solutions for gun violence prevention. This new tool is intentionally organized into four parts: Prevention of, Preparation for, Response to, and Recovery from gun-related incidents on school grounds—because we've seen how important it is not only to prevent gun violence but also to heal from the trauma when it does occur.

As a mother of four children myself, I've seen up close how our gun violence crisis shapes the educational experiences and well-being of our students. But we cannot—and will not—normalize the fact that our children live in fear of being shot in their classrooms. This guide serves not just as a collection of strategies, but as a call to action for protecting young people in America.

I am hopeful that with dedication, collaboration, and the right tools, we will save lives. This is a necessary step in that direction, and our movement is here to support you every step of the way.

Thank you for your commitment. Together, I know that a safer future is possible.

In solidarity,



Angela Ferrell-Zabala
Executive Director of Moms Demand Action

Introduction

WHY THIS GUIDE

The United States suffers from an epidemic of gun violence. Every day, more than 120 people are killed by guns, and more than 200 are shot and wounded (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-j). Less than 1 percent of gun deaths per year occur on school grounds, but the impact extends far beyond these casualties: Gun violence shapes the lives of millions of people in this country who witness it, who know the victims, or who live in fear of the next shooting. Gun violence has a profoundly harmful impact on students, educators, families, and communities.

For most of this country's history, infectious diseases and car accidents constituted the greatest risks to childhood health, but today, gun violence is the No. 1 cause of death for children and teens. Each year, more than 4,000 children and teens are shot and killed, and more than 17,000 are shot and wounded (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-k). Homicides account for roughly 6 in 10 gun deaths among children (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-k), and gun suicides are on the rise—a public health crisis (American Public Health Association, 2023) that communities and elected officials can prevent. In the United States, an estimated 3 million children per year are exposed to shootings (Finkelhor et al., 2015), and the trauma of witnessing shootings—whether in their schools, communities, or homes—can have a devastating impact on their lives. The Stress in America survey provides ample evidence of the collective trauma our country faces, including from mass shootings (American Psychological Association, 2023).

The Everytown Support Fund's [Gunfire on School Grounds](#) database details the myriad ways in which gun violence manifests in U.S. schools. Over the past 11 years, the Everytown Support Fund has identified at least 1,200 incidents of a firearm discharging a live round inside or into a school building or on or onto school grounds. Of these incidents, 841 occurred on the grounds of a prekindergarten, elementary, middle, or high school, resulting in 270 people killed and 580 people wounded. In the 326 incidents that occurred on university or college campuses during that time period, 120 people were killed and another 251 were wounded (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-b).

Students exposed to the trauma of violence, crime, and abuse are more likely to suffer from substance use disorders, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); fail or have difficulties in school; and engage in criminal activity (Finkelhor et al., 2015); (Cronholm et al., 2015). Even for those who have not experienced gun violence at school, the trauma of lockdowns and active shooter drills—which are happening with notable frequency—leaves students, educators, and their families across the country experiencing firsthand the impact of fear from the anticipation of gun violence.

The National Education Association (NEA) remains committed to ending the scourge of gun violence. As NEA President Becky Pringle told the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform in testimony urging Congress to act to end gun violence, “Inaction means we are willing to accept what should be unacceptable to us all” (NEA, 2022-b).

With attention to the disproportionate impact of gun violence on communities of color, NEA advocates in Congress, develops resources and trainings, encourages media and academic coverage of the subject, mobilizes members and communities, and engages with partners across the country to end gun violence. However, more must be done. To further address gun violence in our schools at every level of education, in July 2022, the NEA Representative Assembly (RA)—the Association’s highest decision-making body—directed NEA to issue a national call to action to help ensure that all students, educators, schools, campuses, and communities are safe from the epidemic of gun violence.

Working with an NEA-wide team that meets regularly to assess, plan, and work toward the ambitious goal set by the RA, the Association has convened members, leaders, and staff across the country to help develop strategies and identify needed actions. As part of its call to action, NEA has partnered with the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund (Everytown Support Fund) to produce the NEA School Gun Violence Prevention and Response Guide. The guide helps NEA’s state and local leaders, staff, and worksite leaders—like building representatives and faculty liaisons—prevent, prepare for, respond to, and facilitate recovery from gun violence in all education settings.

Ideally, this guide will be used for planning and advocacy that should already be taking place in Pre-K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. By focusing on the roles of association leaders, staff, and worksite leaders, like building representatives and faculty liaisons, it is meant to complement—not supplant—planning, preparation, and action by school administrators.



www.nea.org

www.everytownsupportfund.org

ORGANIZATION AND FOCUS OF THIS GUIDE

We published the guide’s four sections—on prevention, preparation, response, and recovery—separately to facilitate their use. Each part includes material for Pre-K–12 schools and institutions of higher education and for all categories of employees.

This guide uses the term “educators” broadly to refer to NEA’s rich and diverse membership, including aspiring educators; classroom teachers; education support professionals (ESPs), such as paraeducators and clerical service, custodial and maintenance, food service, health and student service, security, skilled trades, technical service, and transportation workers; the faculty, staff, and graduate workers in colleges and universities; and specialized instructional support personnel (SISP), like school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, school nurses, speech-language pathologists, and school librarians.

The guide presents resources, tools, recommended practices, and checklists for incorporating gun violence-related strategies into the school crisis prevention and response plans of associations, Pre-K–12 schools, and institutions of higher education.

The Guide’s Checklists and Resources

The guide includes separate checklists for state leaders and staff and for local leaders, staff, and building representatives, department liaisons, department representatives, and other educators taking on worksite leadership roles.

The prevention, preparation, and recovery checklists start with steps for people newer to this work and advance to action items for those who are expanding their ongoing work. People who are broadening and deepening their engagement are likely to have already taken many of the early steps identified in the checklists. The response-related checklists outline actions based on the time elapsed since the gun incident: the first few hours, the first 12 hours, and the first week and beyond.

The end of the guide includes detail on all URLs of the resources hyperlinked throughout the body of the document.

The Guide's Four Main Sections

- 1 PREVENTION:** Prevention aims to reduce the risk and prevent the occurrence of gun violence incidents on school grounds, on campuses, and in communities. It includes taking actions to foster a positive and safe school climate and limit access to firearms that could be used in acts of school violence. This section presents strategies to help schools plan for trauma-informed crisis intervention practices, promote secure storage of guns, increase mental health and suicide prevention supports, integrate community violence intervention programs into schools, advocate for legislation that limits the presence of guns in schools, and take other steps to address gun violence.

- 2 PREPARATION:** Preparation involves planning for gun violence-related scenarios and continually planning, practicing, and evaluating the efficacy of responses. The goals are to minimize emotional, psychological, and physical harm when incidents occur and to have a system in place for immediate, effective response and recovery, which includes establishing crucial relationships with school administrators and community groups. The preparation and prevention phases often occur simultaneously and are ongoing. This section includes strategies to install evidence-based security upgrades to prevent shooters' access to education settings, examine the efficacy and potential harm of active shooter drills and school policing, and establish the processes and relationships that will facilitate effective responses.

- 3 RESPONSE:** The response phase includes action steps to minimize the harm of gun violence to students, educators of all types, and their families. The focus is short-term and requires coordination and rapid response during and immediately after a gun violence incident. The checklist for this section includes strategies and action steps based on how long ago the gun incident took place—the first few hours, the first 12 hours, and the first week and beyond. It also includes recommendations on how to speak with students about gun violence.

- 4 RECOVERY:** Recovery focuses on coping with trauma after a gun violence incident and restoring a safe and healthy school environment. It is imperative to focus on supporting the emotional, physical, and psychological health of students, educators, and their families. This section includes approaches to supporting recovery efforts, providing care and support to those impacted by gun violence incidents, and evaluating the planning and incident response to identify areas that need improvement or adjustment.

The NEA Gun Violence Prevention and Response Guide

FOUR PHASES OF WORK TO ADDRESS GUN VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

1

PREVENT

- Understand Guns in Schools
- Consider ACEs, Trauma, and Toxic Stress
- Apply Evidence-Based Prevention Strategies
- Foster Safe and Supportive Schools
- Implement Education and Advocacy Strategies
- Carry Out Plans to Prevent Gun Violence

2

PREPARE

- Adopt Evidence-Based Approaches to Security
- Examine School Policing and Active Shooter Drills
- Understand, Assess, Improve, and Work with Emergency Operations Plans
- Put the Pieces in Place to Facilitate Response and Recovery

3

RESPOND

- Know How to Talk with Students About Gun Violence
- Support College Students After Gun Violence
- Implement Successful Communications Strategies
- Respond in a Deliberate, Effective Manner

4

RECOVER

- Understand Gun Violence Trauma
- Communicate Supportively
- Provide Care and Support
- Foster and Rely on Community Partnerships
- Evaluate and Improve Your Incident Response



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND CHECKLISTS

The prevention section of the NEA School Gun Violence Prevention and Response Guide highlights recommended strategies to reduce the risk and prevent the occurrence of gun violence incidents in education settings and communities. It includes taking actions to foster a positive and safe climate and limit access to firearms that could be used in acts of violence. For broader context and related recommendations, consult the other sections of this guide: Part Two—Preparation, Part Three—Response, and Part Four—Recovery.

Trauma-informed and restorative practices play a crucial role in maintaining strong connections between students, their peers, and educators within the school community. Across all education settings, prevention efforts are geared toward creating an environment that fosters trust-building and a sense of belonging for students.

Combating feelings of isolation and alienation among students relates directly to preventing gun violence because the majority of Pre-K-12 and higher education shooters maintained some level of affiliation with their educational institutions. Individuals who carried out a mass shooting in a Pre-K-12 school often exhibited behaviors of concern in advance, and 75 percent of the time at least one person, often a peer, was aware of the plan (National Threat Assessment Center, 2019); (Violence Prevention Project, n.d.).

Educators can play a pivotal role in breaking the cycle of trauma and fostering a positive school climate. Recognizing warning signs, having resources to address students' mental health and emotional needs, and ensuring that racial profiling does not take place in the process are crucial to preventing gun violence in education settings. To achieve these goals, adequate funding and sufficient staffing must be available. Recognizing the warning signs is only a part of the solution; reducing access to guns is also critical.

This section also includes recommendations for the broader community. Anonymous reporting systems have demonstrated effectiveness, providing students and other community members with a trusted avenue to raise concerns related to student wellness and safety. These systems also serve as alerts for mental health professionals regarding interpersonal violence and suicide risks.

Considering that 4.6 million children under the age of 18 live in homes with guns, secure storage interventions play a critical role in overall school safety (Miller & Azrael, 2022). Additionally, community-based intervention programs offer services to students off school grounds and while traveling to and from school.

The evidence indicates that arming educators does not enhance student safety. In fact, it compromises the safe and trusting environment necessary to thwart gun violence, introducing new liability risks and complicating law enforcement responses in the event of an active shooter incident (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-d). In contrast, commonsense gun laws are essential for saving lives. Effective measures include:

- 1 Require background checks on all gun sales**, an approach proven to reduce gun violence;
- 2 Pass Extreme Risk/Red Flag laws** to provide a way for family members and law enforcement to petition a court to remove firearms from a person at risk of causing harm without a criminal proceeding;
- 3 Secure firearm storage laws** to prevent unauthorized access by children by requiring gun owners to lock up their firearms, which has been shown to prevent unintentional shootings and firearm suicides;
- 4 Raise the age to purchase semi-automatic firearms to 21** to prevent potential younger shooters from easily obtaining such firearms;
- 5 Prohibit guns on college campuses where legally viable to do so**; and
- 6 Prohibit assault weapons and high-capacity magazines**, which allow shooters to fire more rounds over a short period of time and inflict more gunshot wounds during an attack.

Promoting the adoption of gun violence-related collective bargaining language and administrative policy, including the creation or enhancement of health and safety committees, is another effective way to combat gun violence. Bargaining language and administrative policy also offer important opportunities to enhance mental health supports and professional development on topics including trauma-informed crisis intervention and restorative practices.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

SUMMARY ACTION CHECKLIST: PREVENTION: STATE

STATE PRESIDENTS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS					
Newer to the Work: For those beginning to work on gun violence issues					
	To Do	Where to find it, contacts, etc.	Complete	Assigned to	Next steps, follow up, dates, not applicable, etc.
1	Disseminate this guide to local presidents, staff, and worksite leaders.				
2	Review this guide's material on educational and advocacy approaches to preventing gun violence, and identify opportunities for state engagement.				
3	Advocate for funding for Pre-K-12 schools and institutions of higher education to invest in mental health resources, including the personnel and training needed for trauma-informed and de-escalation practices. See this guide's resources on mental health services grants, school-based health centers, community schools, and after-school programs.				
4	Develop a plan to advocate for a statewide policy that mandates anonymous reporting tools for students, family members, spouses or partners of higher education students, and community members.				
5	Promote effective restorative and trauma-informed practices.				
6	Review state requirements for Pre-K-12 schools and institutions of higher education related to gun violence prevention to ensure they are reflective of evidence-based practices related to community violence intervention, trauma-informed practices, and restorative practices.				
7	Develop model collective bargaining, health and safety committee, and school board or other administrative policy language for local associations to advocate for effective gun violence prevention measures.				

SUMMARY ACTION CHECKLIST: PREVENTION: STATE

STATE PRESIDENTS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS					
Expanding the Work: For those deepening or broadening ongoing work on gun violence issues					
	To Do	Where to find it, contacts, etc.	Complete	Assigned to	Next steps, follow up, dates, not applicable, etc.
1	Identify state-mandated, gun-related professional development opportunities that can be enhanced to include evidence-based approaches.				
2	Develop a plan to advocate for gun safety improvements, including information related to state gun laws and active shooter drills.				
3	Review this guide's material on educational and advocacy approaches to preventing gun violence, and identify opportunities for state engagement.				
4	Review gun violence prevention plans from state government entities, nongovernmental organizations, and other unions active alongside association members; identify where the association fits, how plans reflect trauma-informed and restorative practices, and how the association can strengthen the plan; and engage with state and other entities to build relationships, identify mutual interests, and improve plans.				
5	Convene community groups to explore common interests, shared goals, opportunities for mutual support, and next steps.				

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

SUMMARY ACTION CHECKLIST: PREVENTION: LOCAL

LOCAL PRESIDENTS, LOCAL STAFF, AND WORKSITE LEADERS					
Newer to the Work: For those beginning to work on gun violence issues					
	To Do	Where to find it, contacts, etc.	Complete	Assigned to	Next steps, follow up, dates, not applicable, etc.
1	Disseminate this guide to local leaders, staff, and worksite leaders.				
2	Create an opportunity to discuss this guide with leaders, staff, worksite leaders, and other members who have an interest in and potential insight into gun violence prevention.				
3	If collective bargaining takes place, review existing bargaining language and NEA's model collective bargaining language related to gun violence for applicable provisions. If bargaining does not take place, review the language for potential adoption of administrative policy. Review or create health and safety committee language to include gun violence-related content.				
4	Develop partnership-oriented relationships with local organizations that are championing civil rights, countering gun violence, promoting student health, and supporting family members, spouses, or partners of higher education students.				

SUMMARY ACTION CHECKLIST: PREVENTION: LOCAL

LOCAL PRESIDENTS, LOCAL STAFF, AND WORKSITE LEADERS					
Expanding the Work: For those deepening or broadening ongoing work on gun violence issues					
	To Do	Where to find it, contacts, etc.	Complete	Assigned to	Next steps, follow up, dates, not applicable, etc.
1	Obtain and review gun violence prevention plans from Pre-K-12 schools and institutions of higher education.				
2	Seek and obtain documentation on gun-related incidents in education settings.				
3	Discuss approaches to and mutual opportunities for support on gun violence prevention with organizations that are championing civil rights, countering gun violence, promoting student health, and supporting family members and spouses or partners of higher education students.				
4	Deepen partnership-oriented relationships with local organizations championing civil rights, countering gun violence, promoting student health, or supporting family members, spouses, or partners of higher education students.				

BACKGROUND

According to the American Psychological Association, “A complex and variable constellation of risk and protective factors makes persons more or less likely to use a firearm against themselves or others. For this reason, there is no single profile that can reliably predict who will use a gun in a violent act. Instead, gun violence is associated with a confluence of individual, family, school, peer, community, and sociocultural risk factors that interact over time during childhood and adolescence” (American Psychological Association, 2013).

Given this complexity, taking meaningful actions to keep our students, educators, and surrounding communities safe must begin from an understanding of four key facts about gun violence in education settings.

Shooters Often Have a Connection to the Pre-K–12 School or Institution of Higher Education

In Everytown for Gun Safety’s [Gunfire on School Grounds](#) database, 60 percent of school-age shooters were current or former students of the Pre-K–12 school, including all shooters involved in mass shootings and nearly all in self-harm incidents (96 percent) and unintentional discharges of a gun (91 percent) (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2022). For example, Everytown analyzed the New York City Police Department’s review of active shooter incidents in K–12 schools over the five-decade period from 1966 to 2016, finding that in 3 out of 4 of these incidents, the shooter or shooters were school-age and were current or former students (New York City Police Department, 2016). Similarly, the Violence Prevention Project found 89 percent of shooters at colleges and universities had a connection to the institution (Violence Prevention Project, n.d.). These data suggest the need for comprehensive strategies that combine prevention, mental health support, and crisis response to effectively tackle school gun violence.

Guns Discharged in Pre-K–12 Schools Generally Come from the Home of a Parent or Close Relative

School-age shooters generally do not purchase the weapon or weapons used. In a study of targeted K–12 school violence from 2008 to 2017, the U.S. Secret Service noted that 3 out of 4 shooters acquired their firearm from the home of a parent or close relative (National Threat Assessment Center, 2019). This was the case, for example, with the Oxford High School shooting on November 30, 2021, in Michigan (Albeck-Ripka & Kasakove, 2021).

Debunking Myths and Misconceptions About Gun Violence

MYTH: The only way to stop a “bad guy” with a gun is a “good guy” with a gun.

FACT: If more guns everywhere made us safer, the United States would be the safest country in the world. Instead, we have a gun homicide rate 26 times that of other high-income countries (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023-b).

MYTH: I don’t own a gun, so I don’t need to worry about my kids getting ahold of one.

FACT: More than 60 percent of unintentional gun deaths among children involve a gun belonging to a family member of the shooter (Wilson, 2023). In the United States, 4.6 million children under the age of 18 live in a household with at least one loaded, unsecured gun (Miller & Azrael, 2022), but research also suggests that school shooters under the age of 18 predominantly obtain their guns from family, relatives, or friends (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2022). As a result, children may be able to get ahold of a gun even if no one in their household owns one.

MYTH: Arming educators will keep our kids safer.

FACT: Research suggests that the presence of a gun may potentially increase the risks posed to children. Many school safety experts and law enforcement groups oppose arming teachers, as does the NEA (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-d). Law enforcement officers receive hundreds of hours of training in areas including firearm proficiency and active shooter response. Training requirements for educators are often a fraction of the training hours required by police officers.

MYTH: Criminals will always find a way to get their hands on a gun.

FACT: Laws like [background checks](#) stop gun sales to people legally prohibited from buying guns. This includes people with felony convictions, domestic abuse restraining orders, and others. Since 1994, these laws have blocked more than 4 million gun sales to people who could not legally own guns (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-h); (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2021-c).

There Are Nearly Always Warning Signs

Warning signs of school shootings, if appropriately identified, can offer an opportunity for intervention beforehand. However—as discussed in more detail in the sections that follow on trauma-informed intervention practices and restorative disciplinary practices—identifying and intervening based on advanced indicators is essential but must be done without perpetuating adverse racial stereotypes, targeting those that demonstrate behavioral concerns, or compromising the trust and emotional safety of a school environment.

The U.S. Secret Service study of targeted school violence from 2008 to 2017 found that 100 percent of the perpetrators showed behaviors of concern and 77 percent of the time at least one person—most often a peer—knew about their plan (National Threat Assessment Center, 2019). In the higher education context, about 44 percent of people who perpetrated mass shootings had communicated their intent in advance (Peterson et al., 2021).

These data suggest that fostering a trusting and emotionally safe climate where students are willing to ask adults for help and report any statements and behaviors of concern, such as gun threats on social media or weapons carrying, can be effective tools for prevention. Addressing warning signs and taking immediate action while also ensuring that racial profiling is never supported or permitted is essential.

The Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on December 14, 2012, in Connecticut, underscores the importance of intervening when possible to stop violence before it happens. The official investigation revealed that there were several instances of the shooter’s prior behavior that were concerning. For example, when the shooter was in seventh grade, a teacher reported that “his writing assignments obsessed about battles, destruction and war, far more than others his age. The level of violence in the writing was disturbing” (Sedensky, 2013).

Gun Violence in U.S. Schools Disproportionately Affects Students of Color

In the shooting incidents where the Everytown Support Fund was able to identify the racial makeup of the student body, 2 out of 3 incidents occurred in majority-minority schools (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2022). Although Black students represent approximately 15 percent of the total K-12 school population in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 2020), they make up 30 percent of the average population at schools that have been affected by a fatal shooting (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2022). While perpetrators of mass shootings in schools have tended to be White, and mass shootings are often portrayed in media coverage as occurring predominantly in schools with a majority of White students, gunfire on school grounds disproportionately affects students of color.

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES, CHILDHOOD TRAUMA, GRIEF, AND TOXIC STRESS

Gun violence—in a community, a home environment, or an education setting—can be a factor that produces trauma and stress for children and adults. A 2021 analysis of mass shooting data showed that a majority of mass shooters experienced early childhood trauma and exposure to violence at a young age and had an identifiable grievance or crisis event (Shahid & Duzor, 2021).

Therefore, it is important to understand the potential impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress when addressing an incident of gun violence. Educators can play a pivotal role in breaking the cycle of trauma through early detection and focused support. To achieve this goal, state legislatures must fully fund and staff schools so that educators have the time and attention to recognize early warning signs and take action to address students' needs. NEA's website provides additional information on [toxic stress and trauma](#).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 64 percent of adults in the United States reported having at least one type of adverse childhood experience (ACE) before the age of 18. The CDC also noted that ACE events are typically the result of violence, abuse, neglect, and environmental factors that expose children to substance use, mental health-related issues, and parental separation (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.).

Trauma occurs when someone feels threatened by serious harm, whether it is physical, mental, or emotional. While not all ACEs lead to childhood trauma, people who suffer from one or more such adversities may experience a negative impact on their overall well-being, education, and career. Researchers have found that trauma can change the brain and the body's makeup, which can lead to diseases like obesity, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and mental health disorders (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2014). Neuropsychologists have found that traumatic experiences can, in fact, alter a child's brain, activating its “fight, flight, or freeze” responses and reducing the areas where learning, especially in regard to language, occurs. When this shift happens repeatedly, it fundamentally changes the brain, particularly for children under the age of 5, to adapt and survive under the worst conditions (Flannery, Mary Ellen, 2016).

The ongoing presence of ACEs may also contribute to toxic stress. The American Academy of Pediatrics defines “toxic stress” as prolonged or significant adversity in the absence of mitigating social-emotional buffers, such as a supportive adult. This kind of persistent activation of the stress response systems can result in a wide array of biological changes that occur at the molecular, cellular, and behavioral levels; disrupt the development

of brain architecture; and increase the risk for stress-related disease and cognitive impairment well into adulthood (Garner & Yogman, 2021).

Experiencing adversity, including trauma and toxic stress, can significantly shape an individual's health and life outcomes. Childhood trauma can also negatively affect the mental health of and educational outcomes for higher education students (Lecy & Osteen, 2022); (Assari & Landarani, 2018).

Many other factors have been proven to cause toxic stress, including poverty, racism, bullying, community violence, and generational (historical) trauma (Cronholm et al., 2015); (Garner & Yogman, 2021). According to researchers at the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University, ACEs-generated trauma includes community and systemic threats from inside or outside the home environment because the brain recognizes a present threat and goes on high alert (Center on the Developing Child, 2020).

Childhood bereavement can also have a significant impact on children's health and well-being. "The death of someone close to a child has a profound and lifelong effect on the child and may result in a range of both short- and long-term reactions" (Schonfeld & Demaria, 2016). Schools can learn more about the impact of bereavement and becoming grief-sensitive schools to better support student learning and development. Organizations such as the [Coalition to Support Grieving Students](#) provide resources to assist schools in becoming grief-sensitive.



PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Education settings at all levels must establish safe, supportive, nurturing environments where students can thrive. Strategies including trauma-informed crisis intervention programs and active engagement with students and their families are essential to gun violence prevention. In addition, community violence intervention programs that integrate mental health and emotional supports help address the systemic and underlying factors that can lead to gun violence.

Foster Safe and Supportive School Climates

When schools are adaptable to the needs of their students, educators, families, and community, they can provide students with care and compassion and create conditions that prevent shootings and other violence. For example, a community school that has high levels of violence inside or outside the school building may fund programs that create safe walking and transportation routes to and from school, often referred to as safe passage; grant alternatives to out-of-school suspensions that offer meaningful educational opportunities for students; provide family counseling; increase access to mentoring, both inside and outside of school; and incorporate restorative justice into disciplinary policies. NEA's website includes additional information on [community schools](#).

Students are often the first to notice signs that a peer is in crisis, has brought a weapon to school, or has shared plans to commit a violent act; however, they are sometimes reluctant to share these observations—or their own personal struggles and needs—with adults they do not trust. Students may be reticent to relay information that might help avert a gun violence incident because of fear of getting in trouble, being labeled a “tattletale,” or not being believed or taken seriously. A pre-established relationship of trust with at least one educator increases students’ willingness to report potential incidents or identify bullying or violence they experience or witness (Volungis & Goodman, 2017).

Many education support professionals (ESPs) live in the same community as their students and are often trusted confidants; they play a key role in the

The Importance of Connections in Higher Education

Compelling evidence indicates that students at institutions of higher education who felt connected to individual staff and/or faculty experienced multiple positive outcomes, including those related to emotional well-being. Students are also less likely to experience substance and alcohol use and have better health outcomes. Connectedness is especially crucial for first-year students; perceived decreases (from high school) in social connectedness can lead to heightened feelings of loneliness and anxiety. These positive connections had little to do with an educator’s teaching style or pedagogy but with their ability to care about their students as people (Morgan et al., 2014).

NEA's Vision for Safe, Just, and Equitable Schools

[NEA's vision for safe, just, and equitable schools](#) consists of thriving spaces that are safe and welcoming for all students; are discriminatory toward none; integrate the social, emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the whole student; and equitably and fully fund the community school model with wraparound services and resources (NEA, 2022).

The resources in this guide can help make this vision a reality. NEA's website includes additional information on [cultural competency](#), [racial justice systems](#), and [addressing unconscious bias](#).

preventative and intervention actions. ESPs—including, but not limited to, custodial and maintenance, food service, clerical, security, and transportation professionals—are often the first to confront a shooter. Indeed, almost half of NEA ESP members—48 percent—spend a great deal of their time promoting school safety. The job responsibilities of another 28 percent are somewhat related to promoting such work.

To build trust, educators must have cultural competency to counteract unconscious bias and reduce the risk of biased decision-making that can impede a student's ability to trust them.

An all-staff activity called [Know Me, Know My Name](#) is an example of an effective way to identify students who may need support but go unseen (Illinois

Education Association, n.d.). Low-cost and relatively simple, the activity helps educators identify children who may need adult intervention via outreach and relationship-building, encompassing the ideals of safe, stable, and nurturing relationships (SSNR). SSNRs help interrupt cycles of violence and reduce the impact of students' exposure to abuse and neglect. The Harvard School of Education also developed [relationship mapping](#), which is another example of this type of activity (Harvard Graduate School of Education, n.d.).

Implement Trauma-Informed and Grief-Sensitive Crisis Intervention and Restorative Disciplinary Practices

Students who commit acts of gun-related violence in schools almost always have shown warning signs that concerned other people around them (National Threat Assessment Center, 2019, p. 58). Therefore, identifying students who may need support to prevent a crisis from becoming violent while ensuring that racial profiling and other biased actions are neither supported nor permitted is key to preventing gun violence in schools.

To respond to signs of distress in a manner that serves students and protects the community, schools can convene a multidisciplinary team that uses trauma-informed and grief-sensitive crisis intervention practices in collaboration with other community partners. A School Improvement Team, Resilience Team, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Team, or other such entities that may already exist could potentially serve this function. Whatever its name, such a team would receive information about a student who may be in crisis, evaluate the situation, design interventions to prevent violence, and provide appropriate in-school engagement, support, and resources. Every team that addresses crisis intervention should include ESPs; however, ESP membership must be voluntary. Every school community is different, so team structures and functions must be designed and implemented based on the unique needs of the student body and the broader school community.

Behavioral threat assessments are frequently used to identify students who are at risk of committing violence and get them the help they need. These programs generally consist of multidisciplinary teams that are specifically trained to intervene at the earliest warning signs of potential violence and divert those who would do harm to themselves or others to appropriate treatment. NEA opposes “behavioral threat assessment programs and approaches that disproportionately target Native students and students of color” (NEA,



2023). The Association urges all school community members to be prepared to ensure that if they use behavioral threat assessments, they achieve their desired outcomes without adverse racial impact. If such assessments are in use, they must be properly resourced, including with release time for the counselors, nurses, or other educators who serve on a team conducting behavioral threat assessments.

NEA does not believe that the criminalization and over-policing of students is the right approach to addressing gun violence in education settings. Research shows that exclusionary discipline programs, including zero-tolerance policies, disproportionately impact students of color and contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline, including through their subjective application toward students of color (Ford, 2021). Zero-tolerance policies and harsh disciplinary practices result in negative academic outcomes for students given that school suspensions are a stronger predictor of dropping out of school than grade-point average and socioeconomic status (Suh & Suh, 2007). Furthermore, a longitudinal study done with children ages 9 and 10 found that “enforcing these kinds of disciplinary actions can impair typical childhood development, leading to academic failure, student dropout, and

Investing in Restorative Practices

Restorative practices are based on values that holistically prevent and repair harm, build community and relationships, and result in a positive, supportive school climate. Schools that increased the use of restorative practices saw a decrease in schoolwide misbehavior, substance use, and student mental health challenges as well as improved school climate and student achievement. A key recommendation from the Learning Policy Institute is to invest in ongoing education and support for all educators to develop knowledge of and expand access to restorative practices among all students (Darling-Hammond, 2023).

emotional and psychological distress, disproportionately affecting Black children, multiracial Black children, and children from single-parent homes (Fadus et al., 2021).

By contrast, NEA emphasizes the use of behavioral practices centered in restorative justice and the elimination of inequitable policies, practices, and systems that disproportionately harm Native People and People of Color—including those who are LGBTQ+, have disabilities, and/or are multilingual learners—and deprive many students of future opportunities. Trauma-informed prevention strategies should include restorative-based practices.

Engage School Communities in Gun Violence Prevention Efforts

School safety requires all stakeholders—students, families, educators, educators’ unions, mental health professionals, law enforcement professionals, organizations promoting racial and social justice, and community members—to collaborate and work together.

Here are examples of how to engage students and families in gun violence prevention:

- **Create a safety reporting program.** These programs should ensure all students, families, educators, and community members are aware of the reporting system so that they have a trusted avenue to raise concerns when issues of student wellness or safety arise. In a four-year study of the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System (SS-ARS) in a school district in the southeastern United States, more than half of firearm-related tips were deemed “life safety” events, requiring an immediate response from the school team and emergency services. The SS-ARS also identified tips related to interpersonal violence and suicide concerns, which both have implications for firearm violence. Research suggests that adolescent firearm injuries often stem from interpersonal violence, and firearm use significantly escalates the risk for self-inflicted injury and suicide completion. It is imperative that awareness of such reporting systems is amplified to increase use by the community, particularly students; however, it likely requires additional investment in supports and services for adolescents to help mitigate the burden on those who respond to these tips (Thulin et al., 2024). State initiatives—like [Utah’s SafeUT crisis chat and tip line](#), which is used in almost all K–12 schools and some institutions of higher education in the state, by the Utah National Guard, and with first responders and their families—can also serve this function (SafeUT, n.d.).

In higher education contexts, there are greater restrictions on how schools can communicate with parents and families than in elementary, middle, and high schools.

- **Help families start conversations with their school community.** When families communicate openly, honestly, and directly with school officials, educators, and administrators, they can help prevent gun violence. Stand with Parkland developed the resource “[5 Questions Every Family Should Ask as the School Year Begins](#)” to assist families in ensuring their children’s safety and better understand how prepared a school is to address safety issues (Stand with Parkland, n.d.).
- **Use strategies that encourage effective communication on difficult topics.** The NEA Health and Safety Program partnered with the Right Question Institute and the Brown School of Public Health to provide a training module to help support families, educators, and students effectively communicate around health and safety issues. The Association also produced a training module—[Pathways for Effective School-Family Partnerships: A Strategy for Productive School Health and Safety Dialogue](#). This training is based on the Right Question Institute’s Question Formulation Technique (QFT), a structured method for generating and improving questions that can be used by individuals or groups.



Promote Secure Storage Practices to Keep School Communities Safe

Evidence strongly suggests that secure firearm storage—storing guns unloaded, locked, and separated from the ammunition—is essential to any effective strategy to keep students, educators, schools, and communities safe (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023-d). One study showed that the majority of children are aware of where their parents store their guns. More than one-third of those children reported handling their parents' guns, many doing so without the knowledge of their parents (Baxley & Miller, 2006).

Secure storage not only decreases the likelihood of gun violence on school grounds, but it also reduces firearm suicide rates. A recent study of two decades of suicide prevention laws showed that the rate of gun suicide among young people ages 10 to 24 years old was lower in 2022 than in 1999 in states with the most protective secure gun storage laws, which hold gun owners accountable for failing to store their firearms securely. In states with no secure storage laws or only reckless access storage laws, the gun suicide rate among young people ages 10 to 24 years old increased by 36 percent from 1999 to 2022 (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023-h).

In states where colleges and universities are required to allow firearms on campus, schools should encourage students to securely store their firearms.

Educators can encourage a culture of secure gun storage by increasing awareness of [secure storage practices](#). One example of an effective awareness campaign is the Everytown Support Fund's [Be SMART](#) program, which focuses on fostering conversations with other adults about secure gun storage. Although educators may be

The Value of Trauma-Informed Practices

Researchers have defined trauma-informed practices (TIP) as a set of approaches that address the impact of trauma by creating a safe and caring environment. TIP includes restorative practices and a focus on creating a safe school culture, building relationships, and supporting students' self-efficacy. When effectively implemented, these practices can reduce instances of bullying and aggression, improve achievement, increase self-esteem for students, improve connections between students and educators as well as among students, and strengthen social and emotional skills. By doing so, schools can create school climates where gun violence is less likely (Lodi et al., 2021).

The entire school community must receive training to successfully implement a restorative practices discipline model. Ineffective training and partial implementation can contribute to frustration and skepticism about such initiatives.

NEA's [guidance on trauma-informed practices](#) provides a list of common actions that educators can take to implement across education settings, which include the following:

- Support students from the bus stop to the classroom (and beyond!);**
- Be aware of what may upset a student;**
- Show compassion, not judgment;**
- Give students a safe space to share and express their feelings;**
- Help students develop a growth mindset;**
- Use restorative practices that minimize punitive discipline outcomes;**
- Build relationships;**
- Meet students where they are;**
- Don't ignore possible "warning signs";**
- Take care of yourself; and**
- Encourage all educators to be trained on trauma-informed practices.**

familiar with the SMART acronym for goal-setting purposes, in this context, the acronym stands for **Secure** guns in homes and vehicles, **Model** responsible behavior, **Ask** about unsecured guns in homes, **Recognize** the role of guns in suicide, and **Tell** your peers to be SMART. The program's purpose is to facilitate behavior change for adults and help parents and adults prevent child gun deaths and injuries (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023-d).

Schools can partner with Be SMART and pass resolutions requiring that all student households receive Be SMART information, which is already happening in Los Angeles, San Diego, and Denver, among other locations (Sawchuk, 2021). School districts across the country have taken this vital action, impacting more than 10 million students (Everytown for Gun Safety, 2023-j), and some institutions of higher education have partnered with the program. [Be SMART's Secure Storage Toolkit](#) provides all the information and resources you need to encourage your school to pass a secure storage resolution.

Governors, federal and state departments of health and education, legislatures, nonprofit organizations, and local officials can also work together to develop and fund programs that increase awareness of the need to store firearms securely.¹

Increase Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Support

Firearms are the leading cause of death among youth in the United States, and firearm suicides account for more than 4 out of 10 of these deaths. The rate of firearm suicide among young people ages 10 to 24 years old increased by 30 percent from 1999 to 2022 (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023-h). Experts are sounding the alarm about young people's mental health. A recent survey from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that, overall, 42 percent of teens experienced a persistent feeling of sadness or hopelessness, while 57 percent of female and 29 percent of male respondents felt that way. The same survey found that, overall, 22 percent of teens seriously considered attempting suicide, while 30 percent of female respondents and 14 percent of male respondents did (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021, p. 63). For many reasons—including the prevalence of guns in our society—the elevated risk for youth gun suicide continues to rise. Furthermore, a large proportion of perpetrators of mass shootings expressed suicidal intentions, suggesting suicide prevention through crisis intervention could be a meaningful mitigating factor for mass shooting incidents (Violence Prevention Project, 2021); (Remnick, 2022).

School-employed health professionals, who navigate the education system and the challenges of emotional and social development, serve as a critical resource for students. These professionals may be among the first to know when students are experiencing difficulties or when they are at risk of turning to violence. Unfortunately, the current national shortage of specialized school-based counselors, psychologists, sociologists, and nurses means that meeting the needs of students can be a challenge, and this challenge is often exacerbated in under-resourced communities. NEA determined in the report "[Elevating the Education Professions: Solving Educator Shortages by Making Public Education an Attractive and Competitive Career Path](#)" that solving educator shortages requires evidence-based, long-term strategies to address both recruitment and retention. The report noted that mental health positions were among the most understaffed in schools (NEA, 2022-a).

School-based health services, including behavioral health, provide crucial support to students. School-based Medicaid services, for example, play an essential role in the health of children and adolescents, including those related to behavioral health. With more than 41 million kids covered by Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the school setting offers a unique opportunity to meet children where they



are (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2023). Schools, early childhood settings, and local education agencies help support children and their families, providing children and youth with access to important healthcare services on-site. For information on how to utilize the historic investment into school-based services by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, see [NEA's Your Guide to the BSCA](#). NEA's website also includes [guidance on bargaining and advocacy tactics to support educators' mental health](#).

School-based health centers (SBHCs) can also help make quality primary care more accessible for children and adolescents (Kjolhede et al., 2021). "School-based health care advances health equity for children and adolescents who experience barriers to accessing care because of systemic inequities, their family income, or where they live," according to the School-Based Health Alliance. "School-based health centers, the most comprehensive type of school-based health care, do this by providing primary, behavioral, oral, and vision care where youth spend most of their time—at school" (School-Based Health Alliance, 2024). These organizations can collaborate with schools to support student well-being by contributing clinical expertise to supplement existing services at the school (National Council for Mental Wellbeing, 2023, p. 6).

The trauma that comes from the threat of gun violence is deeply affecting the mental health and well-being of not only students but also educators. The needs of educators are too often overlooked when resources are being offered in schools to address trauma from gun violence. There must be an increase in support and mental health resources for educators to sustain the workforce as they continue to face the threat of gun violence in schools.

Through NEA Member Benefits, NEA members receive access to the [NEA Mental Health Program](#), powered by AbleTo, which provides 24/7 access to "evidence-backed tools for stress, anxiety, depression, or whatever you're going through."

The federal government's [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\) Disaster Distress Helpline](#) offers free, 24/7 crisis counseling for people experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster, including shootings. Dial or text 1-800-985-5990 to connect with counselors in more than 100 languages via third-party interpretation services.

Programs that help educators recognize the warning signs of mental health issues include [Emotional CPR](#) and [Mental Health First Aid](#).

Help is also available for individuals who are struggling or in crisis by calling or texting [988](#) or chatting at [988lifeline.org](#). State initiatives, like SafeUT described earlier in this section, on anonymous reporting for school safety can also provide mental health support for Pre-K-12 and higher education students.

Integrate Community Violence Intervention Programs into Schools

Community violence occurring in and around schools significantly affects students and educators. An assessment of the [CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021) showed that witnessing community violence was linked to elevated odds of gun carrying, substance use, and suicide risk among Black, Hispanic, and White students, regardless of gender (Harper et al., 2023).

In neighborhoods that experience community violence, schools can support [Community Violence Intervention \(CVI\) strategies](#) to mitigate its impact on youth (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-i). Examples of these programs include the following:

- **Safe passage programs** provide safe routes to and from schools to reduce student exposure to gun violence. To achieve this goal, educators, law enforcement groups, and communities collaboratively implement protocols and procedures to ensure student safety (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-k). A longitudinal study analyzing data from 2005 to 2016 found that following the program's implementation, incidents of crime along these routes dropped an average of 28 percent for simple assault and battery; there was a 32 percent reduction in aggravated assault and battery. Furthermore, overall weekday criminal incidents on school grounds decreased by an average of 39 percent per year where safe passage programs were implemented (Sanfelice, 2019).
- **School-based violence prevention programs** provide students and educators with information about violence, change how youth think and feel about violence, and enhance interpersonal and emotional skills. Chicago's [Becoming a Man \(BAM\) program](#)—one example of a school-based violence prevention program—has reduced juvenile justice system readmission by 80 percent (Heller et al., 2016).
- **Youth engagement and employment programs** support students outside of schools (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023-f). These programs often center on healing or personal development. For example, The [TraRon Center](#) helps youth gun violence survivors in Washington, D.C., heal through after-school art therapy (TraRon Center, 2024). Programs focusing on youth employment also show success. For example, a researcher found that participation in Boston's Summer Youth Engagement Program led to a decrease in participants' violent crime arraignments by 35 percent in the 17 months after program completion (Modestino, 2019).
- **Crime prevention through environmental design** involves deliberate efforts to change the built environment of neighborhoods, buildings, and grounds to reduce crime and increase community safety (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2021-a); (CityGRIP, n.d.). Programs encompass a wide variety of approaches and efforts to rehabilitate areas and discourage violence through visible signs that a community is cared for and watched over. Because gun violence is so costly and these simple fixes are not, communities save hundreds of dollars for every dollar that is invested (Branas et al., Urban Blight Remediation as a Cost-Beneficial Solution to Firearm Violence, 2016).

Together, these programs offer services to students going to and from school and students on and off school and building grounds.

Do Not Arm Teachers or Other Educators

Arming teachers and other educators does not make schools safer; to the contrary, it escalates the risk of shootings and introduces new liability risks (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-d). As noted earlier in this guide, many educators, parents, and school safety experts, including several law enforcement groups, are opposed to arming teachers.

Research strongly indicates that children will access guns when guns are present, including on school grounds. There have been numerous incidents of misplaced guns in schools that were left in bathrooms (Metrick, 2016), in locker rooms (Associated Press, 2018), and at sporting events (Laine, 2019).

For more on school resource officers and policing in school, see this guide's section on school policing. Everytown's [Students Demand Action](#) website includes additional information on strategies to oppose arming teachers.



ADVOCACY-BASED PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Advocate for Measures That Limit Access to Guns

Gun safety policies save lives. The Everytown Support Fund's [Gun Law Rankings](#), which compare the gun violence prevention policies of all 50 states, show a strong correlation between a state's gun laws and its rate of gun deaths. States with strong gun safety regulations, such as the policies outlined below, have lower rates of gun violence. States with weaker gun laws, such as no-permit carry and Shoot First laws (also known as Stand Your Ground laws), have higher rates of gun violence (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-a). The following gun violence prevention policies save lives and reduce the toll of gun violence on communities:

- **Requiring [Background Checks on All Gun Sales](#):** Background checks are proven to reduce gun violence. Twenty-two states and the District of Columbia already require a background check on all handgun sales (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-g). An Everytown Support Fund investigation showed that as many as 1-in-9 people looking to buy a firearm on this country's largest online gun marketplace cannot legally purchase firearms—including those under the age of 18 (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2021-b). As part of a comprehensive plan to prevent gun violence in education settings, states and the federal government must pass laws that require background checks on all gun sales so that adolescents and people prohibited from possessing firearms cannot easily purchase them from unlicensed sellers.
- **Enacting [Extreme Risk/Red Flag Laws](#):** Prior to the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, on February 14, 2018, nearly 30 people knew about the shooter's previous violent behavior, and law enforcement groups had been called to incidents involving the shooter on dozens of occasions (Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission, 2019, p. 264). This is just one of many examples where a school shooter displayed warning signs of potential violence. States must enact [Extreme Risk laws](#) to create a legal process by which law enforcement, family members, and possibly educators can petition a court to temporarily prevent an individual from accessing firearms when there is evidence that they are at serious risk of harming themselves or others. These Extreme Risk protection orders, sometimes also called red flag orders or gun violence restraining orders, provide a way for concerned bystanders to intervene without a criminal proceeding against a potentially dangerous individual. Extreme Risk protection orders include robust due process protections. The court issues final orders after a hearing.
- **Enacting [Secure Firearm Storage](#):** Studies show that secure firearm storage laws save lives, particularly by preventing unintentional shootings and firearm suicides. For example, one study found that households that locked both firearms and ammunition had a 78 percent lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries and an 85 percent lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children and teenagers, compared to those households that left firearms and/or ammunition unlocked (Grossman et al., 2005). To protect kids in and out of schools, states must enact and enforce secure firearm storage laws. More than half of states

and the District of Columbia currently have some form of secure storage law (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-f). In addition, several cities, including New York City and San Francisco, have passed secure storage laws.

- **Raising the Age to Purchase Semi-Automatic Firearms:** Under federal law, a person must be 21 years old to purchase a handgun from a licensed gun dealer.² However, a person only needs to be 18 years old to purchase that same handgun through an unlicensed sale (such as unlicensed sellers offering guns for sale online or at gun shows) or purchase a rifle or shotgun from a licensed dealer.³ Research shows that 18- to 20-year-olds commit gun homicides at triple the rate of adults 21 and over.⁴ Despite evidence that most perpetrators of school shootings are school-age and have a connection to the school, many states have failed to step in to close these gaps that easily allow firearm access for 18- to 20-year-olds (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-c).⁵ At a minimum, states and the federal government must raise the minimum age to 21 years old to purchase or possess handguns and semi-automatic rifles and shotguns to prevent younger shooters from easily obtaining firearms.
- **Keeping Guns Off College Campuses:** The vast majority of colleges and universities prohibit guns from being carried on campus, either by state law or school policy. Institutions of higher education have unique risk factors, such as high rates of student mental health challenges and increased use of alcohol and drugs, which make the presence of guns potentially deadly. By contrast, some states require colleges and universities to permit guns to be carried on campus under some circumstances (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2024-e).

Supporting the enactment by federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal governments of statutes, rules, and regulations that would prohibit people other than law enforcement agents from possessing firearms on the property of institutions of higher education, the American Bar Association (ABA) noted evidence suggesting that “permissive concealed gun carrying generally will increase crime and place students at risk.” Despite state laws allowing firearms in institutions of higher education, those institutions may still have independent authority to prohibit guns⁶ (American Bar Association, 2023).

In states where colleges and universities are required to allow firearms on campus, schools should encourage students to securely store their firearms.

- **Prohibiting Assault Weapons and High-Capacity Magazines:** Assault weapons are generally high-powered semi-automatic rifles specifically designed to allow shooters to wound and kill many people quickly. When combined with high-capacity magazines—commonly defined as magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition—a shooter is able to fire more rounds over a short period without pausing to reload. The more rounds a shooter can fire consecutively, the more gunshot wounds they can inflict during an attack. From 2015 to 2022, incidents where individuals used an assault weapon to kill four or more people resulted in 23 times as many people wounded on average compared to those who did not use an assault weapon (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023-a). Numerous mass shooters in schools, including those responsible for two of the deadliest shootings since 2016, have used assault weapons and high-capacity magazines (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023-a). NEA and Everytown recommend that states prohibit the possession and sale of assault weapons and magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition.

For more on strategies to advocate for measures that limit access to guns, see NEA’s [Legislative Program](#) and Everytown’s [Moms Demand Action](#) and [Students Demand Action](#).

Promote Strong Bargaining Language and Administrative Policies

NEA provides [guidance on how to secure language regarding aspects of working conditions surrounding gun violence](#) in administrative policies, employee handbooks, and collective bargaining agreements. This bargaining support includes language on:

- ❑ Prohibition against arming educators;
- ❑ Violence/abuse and threats against educators;
- ❑ Support after an assault;
- ❑ Broad health and safety provisions for overall safe work environments; and
- ❑ Joint health and safety committees.

Promoting Strong Union-Backed Language on School Safety

The San Diego Education Association bargained language on school safety plans that ensures the association is involved in the process of keeping schools safe. The language includes “rules and procedures to be followed by site personnel for their protection, including a method of emergency communication and rules and regulations governing the entering and leaving of school sites.” The language requires that school safety plans explicitly address weapons (Board of Education of the San Diego Unified School District and the San Diego Education Association, 2022).

In another example, Racine Educators United (REU), in Wisconsin, has aggressively organized around safety concerns in the district, leading, in part, to the creation of the School Safety Committee, an advisory group including five

representatives selected by REU and five chosen by the Racine Unified School District (RUSD). Together, REU and RUSD will select parent, student, and community representatives to serve on the committee. The district superintendent also appoints a building services representative. The committee was a settlement of REU grievances and an REU lawsuit against the district.

According to [the agreement between REU and RUSD](#), the School Safety Committee’s review of district policies and procedures will be informed by trauma-sensitive and restorative justice practices and will cover topics including weapons policies, responding to weapons, and gun violence and active shooter response (Racine Unified School District and Racine Educators United, 2024).

Engage State Occupational Safety and Health Agencies

State and local associations in any of the 29 states that have created state occupational safety and health agencies can look to the state agency for advocacy and organizing opportunities related to gun violence in Pre-K-12 public schools and public institutions of higher education.⁷

In states with a safety and health agency covering public employees but without a workplace violence standard, the association or an individual member can file a complaint if workplace conditions are unsafe. Workplace violence standards allow for the association and members to be involved in the development and review of worksite violence plans. The state of New York has established a workplace violence prevention standard applicable to public schools (New York State, 2024), and California is developing one.

Promote Professional Development, Capacity-Building, and Staffing

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education have awarded \$1.5 billion in short-term grants for school safety, improved access to mental health services, and support for young people to address trauma and grief from gun violence. The U.S. Department of Justice has awarded an additional \$60 million in short-term grants. The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) commits to expanding the pipeline by designating \$500 million for training to increase the pool of skilled professionals providing mental health services in schools.

In early 2024, Vice President Harris announced an additional \$285 million in funding for schools to hire and train mental health counselors (Psychiatrist.com, 2024). Grants are not meant to be the long-term solution, but they can assist school districts with infrastructure needs and the ability to hire and train counselors, psychologists, social workers, and other mental health professionals.

To identify funding opportunities for mental health support in education settings, see NEA's webpage on [school-based mental health services grants](#). In addition, explore whether state-mandated professional development for educators includes trainings on suicide prevention, trauma-informed crisis intervention, de-escalation techniques, restorative practices, and trauma-informed strategies.

Get Involved in Local Government

Educators play an essential role in the communities in which they work. The experience they've gained while working with students gives them a unique perspective when it comes to making public education policy, negotiating collective bargaining agreements, and setting budget priorities for their communities.

Building Strong Partnerships

Addressing gun violence in education settings requires strong, meaningful relationships with partners to deepen association understanding, build relationships, strengthen the processes and policies of Pre-K–12 schools and institutions of higher education, and ensure that approaches developed to keep students, educators, and communities safe are culturally and racially appropriate.

From state to state and within states, potential partners may vary. An important place to start is with other unions representing workers in the Pre-K–12 schools and institutions of higher education where association members work, gun violence-focused organizations, racial and social justice organizations, after-school programs, mental and physical health providers and organizations, associations representing principals or other administrators, and local colleges and universities with programs that identify or address violence in communities or, more specifically, in education settings.

The following list includes several national-level organizations—with links to their websites—that may have state or local counterparts. Identifying local groups working on similar topics may also serve the same purpose.

AAPI Victory Alliance

<https://aapivictoryalliance.com/gunviolenceprevention>

AASA—The School Superintendents Association

<https://www.aasa.org/resources/all-resources?Keywords=safety&RowsPerPage=20>

Alliance to Reclaim our Schools

<https://reclaimourschools.org>

American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/gun-violence-prevention>

American Psychological Association

<https://www.apa.org/pubs/reports/gun-violence-prevention>

American School Counselor Association

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Standards-Positions/Position-Statements/ASCA-Position-Statements/The-School-Counselor-and-Prevention-of-School-Rela>

Color of Change

<https://colorofchange.org>

Community Justice Action Fund

<https://www.cjactionfund.org>

Continued on next page.

Hope and Heal Fund

<https://hopeandhealfund.org/who-we-are>

League of United Latin American Citizens

https://lulac.org/advocacy/resolutions/2013/resolution_on_gun_violence_prevention/index.html

Life Camp

<https://www.peaceislifestyle.com>

Live Free

<https://livefreeusa.org>

March for Our Lives

<https://marchforourlives.org>

MomsRising

<https://www.momsrising.org/blog/topics/gun-safety>

NAACP

<https://naacp.org>

National Association of Elementary School Principals

<https://www.naesp.org>

National Association of School Nurses

<https://www.nasn.org/blogs/nasn-inc/2023/07/27/take-action-to-address-gun-violence>

National Association of School Psychologists

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis>

National Association of Secondary School Principals

<https://www.nassp.org/community/principal-recovery-network>

National Association of Social Workers

<https://www.socialworkers.org>

National PTA

<https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy/federal-legislation/Public-Policy-Priorities/gun-safety-and-violence-prevention>

National School Boards Association

<https://www.nsba4safeschools.org/home>

Parents Together

<https://parents-together.org/the-heart-of-gun-safety-and-a-new-approach-to-advocacy>

Sandy Hook Promise

<https://www.sandyhookpromise.org>

The Trevor Project

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org>

UnidosUS

<https://unidosus.org/publications/latinos-and-gun-violence-prevention>

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION RESOURCES

National Education Association Resources

National Education Association

<https://www.nea.org>

The National Education Association is the nation's largest union, representing more than 3 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, specialized instructional support personnel, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become educators.

NEA Health and Safety Program

<https://www.nea.org/healthy-schools>

The NEA Health and Safety Program provides information and solutions related to student and educator mental health, violence prevention and response, infection control, and environmental and occupational safety and health, among other topics.

Bargaining and Advocacy Tactics to End Gun Violence

<https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/ending-gun-violence.pdf>

NEA provides advocates in bargaining and non-bargaining statute states with sample language to secure in board policies, employee handbooks, and collective bargaining agreements regarding aspects of working conditions surrounding gun violence.

Gun Violence Prevention Measures Using the Hierarchy of Controls

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/using-hierarchy-controls-prevent-gun-violence-education-settings>

To help address this worsening public health crisis, employers and educators can implement the hierarchy of controls—a proven approach to minimize or eliminate exposure to workplace hazards—to sensibly prevent gun violence in education contexts.

NEA School Crisis Guide

<https://www.nea.org/resource-library/neas-school-crisis-guide>

Produced in 2018, the guide provides detailed content on how to effectively prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from school crises.

Responding to Gun Violence

<https://www.nea.org/gunviolence>

This portion of the NEA website provides health and safety content on taking action, helping students and educators cope, resources for school leaders, fostering mental health, and preventing hate and bias.

We Can Change This: Educators Take on Gun Violence

<https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/we-can-change-educators-take-gun-violence>

Educators across the country are working to end the era of school shootings that has defined students' lives.

NEA Legislative Program

<https://www.nea.org/about-nea/governance-policies/nea-legislative-program>

The National Education Association's Legislative Program encapsulates NEA's priorities for advocating in Congress for federal laws that support public Pre-K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions, student learning, and educators.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Bargaining and Advocacy Tactics to Support Educators' Mental Health

<https://www.nea.org/resource-library/bargaining-and-advocacy-tactics-support-educators-mental-health>

This resource compiles strategies to improve mental health support for educators using collective bargaining or advocacy.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act

<https://www.nea.org/bsca>

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act unlocks more than \$1 billion additional funding for mental health and other services.

NEA Member Benefits Mental Health Program

<https://www.neamb.com/products/nea-mental-health-program>

Through NEA Member Benefits, in partnership with AbleTo, NEA members receive no-cost access to evidence-backed tools for stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health needs.

School-Based Mental Health Services Grants

<https://www.nea.org/resource-library/school-based-mental-health-services-grants>

NEA provides a summary of federal grant programs that support efforts to increase school-based mental health services and programs.

SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS

Addressing the Epidemic of Trauma in Schools

<https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Addressing%20the%20Epidemic%20of%20Trauma%20in%20Schools%20-%20NCSEA%20and%20NEA%20Report.pdf>

This report builds a framework to advance trauma awareness and trauma-informed approaches, including some currently being implemented by NEA state affiliates. It includes key recommendations for ways in which NEA may address the trauma crisis through policy, programs, and practices. It also includes a list of selected resources developed or suggested as references by affiliates to address student and educator trauma.

Cultural Competence Training

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/professional-learning/resources/cultural-competence>

Through NEA's Cultural Competence Training Program, NEA members learn how to become culturally competent educators.

How Restorative Practices Work for Students and Educators

<https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/how-restorative-practices-work-students-and-educators>

This *NEA Today* article explores what happens in public schools where educators care more about creating a community built upon kindness, not consequences.

How to Be an Advocate for Students Who Are Bullied

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/how-be-advocate-bullied-students>

These recommendations support educators in helping students who are bullied.

How to Identify Bullying

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/how-identify-bullying>

This article provides tips for addressing bullying.

NEA Micro-Credential Courses on Restorative Practices

<https://nea.certificationbank.com//NEA/CandidatePortal/CategoryDetail.aspx?Stack=RP>

Each of the five micro-credentials in this stack can stand alone or be completed sequentially: Exploring Restorative Practices; Building a Positive Classroom Community with Affective Language; Restorative Circles—Building Relationships in the Classroom; Restorative Conferencing; and Implementing Restorative Practices.

NEA Micro-Credential Course on Trauma-Informed Pedagogy

<https://nea-mc.certificationbank.com/open-doc-loader.aspx?pid=E4033E41-057D-422C-899D-2B6D32FD-55B8&i=1>

This course addresses child trauma, how trauma affects the brain, trauma-informed pedagogy, leveled intervention strategies, behavioral support plans, replacement behaviors, and teaching students to self-advocate.

Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships and Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools—A Guide for Educators

https://schottfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/restorative-practices-guide_0.pdf

This guide helps educators better understand what restorative practices are and how they can foster safe learning environments through community building and constructive conflict resolution.

Supporting the Advocacy, Communication, and Implementation of Life Skills in Public Schools: A Toolkit

<https://www.nea.org/resource-library/freedom-thrive-strengthening-and-supporting-students-life-skills>

Social-emotional learning (SEL)—also known as positive youth development or life skills—is widely

supported by families, students, and educators and provides valuable skills and lessons that contribute to students' success throughout their lives.

Tools and Tips for Trauma-Informed Practices

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/trauma-informed-practices>

Educators in every school community can use these practices to create safe and supportive learning environments for their students.

Trauma-Informed Schools

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/trauma-informed-schools>

Supporting students who suffer from childhood trauma requires whole-school involvement and transformation. The NEA and its affiliates are actively engaged in finding ways for schools and educators to address the issue of trauma and its implications for learning, behavior, and school safety.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DIALOGUE

Community Schools

<https://www.nea.org/student-success/great-public-schools/community-schools>

Community schools are public schools that provide services and support that fit each neighborhood's needs, created and run by the people who know our children best—all working together.

Strategies for Effective Health and Safety Dialogue

<https://www.nea.org/resource-library/strategies-effective-health-and-safety-dialogue>

This NEA training module will help support families, educators, and students effectively communicate around health and safety issues.

Everytown for Gun Safety Resources

Everytown for Gun Safety

<https://www.everytown.org>

Everytown for Gun Safety is the largest gun violence prevention organization in America. The organization is a movement of more than 10 million supporters working to end gun violence.

Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund

<https://everytownsupportfund.org>

The Everytown Support Fund is the education, research, and litigation arm of Everytown for Gun Safety. It seeks to improve our understanding of the causes of gun violence and help to reduce it by conducting ground-breaking original research, developing evidence-based policies, communicating this knowledge to the American public, and advancing gun safety and gun violence prevention in communities and the courts.

Be SMART

<https://besmartforkids.org>

The Be SMART program focuses on fostering conversations with other adults about secure gun storage. In this context, the acronym stands for **Secure** guns in homes and vehicles, **Model** responsible behavior, **Ask** about unsecured guns in homes, **Recognize** the role of guns in suicide, and **Tell** your peers to be SMART. The program's purpose is to facilitate behavior change for adults and help parents and adults prevent child gun deaths and injuries.

City Dashboard: Gun Homicide

<https://everytownresearch.org/report/city-data/#cities-with-real-time-gun-violence-data>

The FBI is the leading source of city gun violence data across the country, covering more than 94 percent of the U.S. population in 2022. Everytown's City Gun Homicide dashboard allows users to explore gun homicide trends across more than 500 cities with populations of 65,000+ that reported data to the FBI from 2018 to 2022.

EveryStat

<https://shorturl.at/fqsFL>

EveryStat is a one-stop source for gun violence in your state and county, including breakdowns by intent, race and ethnicity, gender, economic cost, and more.

Everytown Gun Law Rankings

<https://shorturl.at/rtKQ9>

Everytown compares gun policy across the country and scores every state on the strength of its gun law and compares it with its rate of gun violence.

Everytown Law Fund

<https://everytownlaw.org/fund>

Everytown Law Fund provides support for impact litigation to advance the right of every person to be free from gun violence and to speak, work, learn, pray, assemble, protest, and vote without fear or intimidation.

Everytown Survivor Network

<https://everytownsupportfund.org/everytown-survivor-network>

The Everytown Survivor Network is a nationwide community of survivors working together to end gun violence. The network amplifies the power of survivor voices, offers trauma-informed programs, provides information on direct services, and supports survivors in their advocacy.

Extreme Risk/Red Flag Laws

<https://www.everytown.org/solutions/extreme-risk-laws>

Extreme Risk laws, sometimes referred to as "Red Flag" laws, allow loved ones or law enforcement to intervene by petitioning a court for an order to temporarily prevent someone in crisis from accessing guns.

Gunfire on School Grounds

<https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds>

The database details myriad ways in which gun violence manifests in U.S. schools.

Mayors Against Illegal Guns

<https://mayors.everytown.org>

Mayors Against Illegal Guns is a coalition of mayors fighting to end gun violence by working to fight for gun safety laws and enact gun violence prevention strategies.

Moms Demand Action

<https://momsdemandaction.org>

Moms Demand Action, a part of Everytown for Gun Safety, is the nation's largest grassroots volunteer network that is working to end gun violence. The organization campaigns for new and stronger solutions to lax gun laws and loopholes that jeopardize the safety of families, educates policymakers and parents about the importance of secure firearm storage, and works to create a culture of gun safety

through partnerships with businesses, community organizations, and influencers. There is a Moms Demand Action chapter in every state and more than 700 local groups throughout the country.

One Thing You Can Do

<https://onethingyoucando.org>

This database includes information about extreme risk orders by state. An extreme risk order is a way to intervene when there is reason to believe a loved one is at serious risk of harming themselves or others.

Students Demand Action

www.studentsdemandaction.org

Students Demand Action is the largest grassroots, youth-led gun violence prevention group in the country, with more than 800 groups and active volunteers in every state and the District of Columbia. The movement, created by and for teens and young adults, aims to channel the energy and passion of high school and college-age students into the fight against gun violence.

Other Resources

SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL CLIMATES

Bullying Prevention

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/school-violence-resources/bullying-prevention>

From the National Association of School Psychologists, this site provides resources to prevent bullying.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

https://www.cdc.gov/youth-violence/media/pdfs/cdc_cptedschoolassessment.pdf

From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

(CPTED) focuses on principles to create safer schools by developing environments that promote positive behavior and reduce opportunities for violence to occur.

Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>

From the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, this document recommends evidence-based practices that schools and school districts can take to implement fair student discipline approaches, which keep students safely in learning environments and help to address disproportionality in discipline and exclusion.

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>

From the National Center on Safe and Supportive Schools, this site offers information and technical assistance to states, districts, schools, institutions of higher education, and communities focused on improving school climate and conditions for learning.

The National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

<https://www.pbis.org>

The center provides information, tools, and technical assistance for implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a tiered framework for supporting students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health. These resources include guides, lesson plans, assessment surveys, and examples of how to integrate trauma-informed practices into PBIS.

Resources for Educators

<https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/blog/teacher-resources>

From Sandy Hook Promise, this site provides resources on multiple topics.

Schoolsafety.gov

<https://www.schoolsafety.gov>

This interagency website created by the federal government provides a broad range of information, resources, and guidance to create safe and supportive learning environments for students and educators.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

<https://988lifeline.org>

The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

Emotional CPR

<https://www.emotional-cpr.org>

Emotional CPR (eCPR) is an educational program designed to teach people to assist others through an emotional crisis by implementing three simple steps: **C** = Connecting; **P** = emPowering; and **R** = Revitalizing.

Mental Health First Aid

<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org>

Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based, early intervention course that teaches participants about mental health and substance use challenges.

The Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

<https://mhttcnetwork.org>

Funded by SAMHSA, the center develops resources, disseminates information, and provides training and technical assistance to mental health work, including a free online course for educators on mental health literacy.

Project Aware

<https://www.samhsa.gov/school-campus-health/project-aware>

Through SAMHSA, Project Aware (Advancing Wellness And Resiliency in Education) promotes a sustainable infrastructure for school-based mental health programs and services. AWARE grantees build collaborative partnerships with the state education agency, local education agency, tribal education agency, the state mental health agency, community-based providers of behavioral health care services, school personnel, community organizations, families, and school-age youth.

Screen4Success

<https://www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you/screen4success>

Screen4Success is a screening tool to identify areas where someone may benefit from more support on personal health, wellness, and well-being. It also provides local and national resources to help address those concerns. You can use the tool for self-screening, or you can send it to someone you

are concerned about. You can also help that person fill out the screener—this provides opportunities for discussion in the moment—or they can complete it on their own if that’s not possible.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline
<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

SAMHSA’s National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) (also known as the Treatment Referral Routing

Service), or TTY: 1-800-487-4889 is a confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year information service, available in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations. The site also includes additional resources.



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ENDNOTES

- 1 For example, see the City Gun Violence Reduction Insight Portal (CityGRIP), available at <https://citygrip.org>.
- 2 18 U.S.C. § 922(b)(1).
- 3 18 U.S.C. § 922(b)(1); 18 U.S.C. § 922(x)(2).
- 4 Everytown Research analysis using FBI Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) and U.S. Census American Community Survey data 2016-2020.
- 5 Only six states and DC require a person to be 21 to possess a handgun: DC, DE (beginning in July 2025), IL, MA, MD, NJ, and NY. Only IL and DC require a person to be 21 to possess a rifle or shotgun, and eight states require a person to be 21 to purchase a rifle or shotgun: CA, CO, DE, DC, FL, HI, IL, VT, and WA.
- 6 The American Bar Association (ABA)—citing recent authority holding that new bans on guns on campus should be permitted—highlighted that “a unanimous Montana Supreme Court ruled that state legislators infringed on authority granted to higher education officials by the state constitution by passing a law that permitted open and concealed firearm carrying on university and college campuses. The court declared that ‘maintaining a safe and secure education environment’ fell within the Board of Regents’ purview (and implicitly, that the Board could determine it was necessary to maintain that environment by prohibiting firearms on campus), and recognized that ‘Montana is not immune from the catastrophic loss that follows the use of firearms on school campuses.’” The ABA also called for “states that do not make it unlawful for any person, other than law enforcement, to possess firearms on property owned, operated, or controlled by any public institute of higher education, authorize such institutions of higher education to restrict or regulate the concealed or open carry of firearms on their campuses.”
- 7 The federal government’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) serves to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for the private sector. Federal OSHA does not have jurisdiction over state and local public sector workers. Where established, state agencies are required by federal law to be at least as effective as OSHA in protecting workers and in preventing work-related injuries, illnesses, and deaths.

PART 1 | PREVENTION



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