

ECE 210-150(W)

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School Safety and Gun Control

According to Safe Supportive Learning, “School safety is defined as schools and school-related activities where students are safe from violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use. Safe schools promotes the protection of students from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying, and the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds (Safe Supportive Learning, 2021).

According to Keeping our school safe, “Gun control is the set of laws or policies that regulate the manufacture, sale, transfer, possession, modification, or use of firearms by civilians. Most countries have a restrictive gun guiding policy, with only a few legislations being categorized as permissive. The article *"Keeping Our Schools Safe,"* states that the last 20 years, students, educators, and parents lived with the reality of school shootings. Therefore, 20 years back we had students and families and the staff in the schools go through these school shootings that happen, it's like they know what it's like to be in a school shooting that can be very horrifying.

According to the article *"Keeping Our Schools Safe, (2021)"* “From 2013 to 2019, Everytown identified 549 incidents of gunfire on school grounds. Of these, 347 occurred on the grounds of an elementary, middle, or high school,² resulting in 129 deaths and 270 people wounded.³ At least 208 of the victims were students.⁴ This represents a small proportion of the more than 3,000 children and teens (ages 0 to 19) shot and killed, and 15,000 shot and wounded,

annually.⁵ While Everytown’s database includes gunfire on the grounds of higher-education institutions, for the purposes of this report all numbers and analyses reflect only those incidents that occurred on the grounds of elementary, middle, and high schools.” The problem is that from that time period to even today there have been a lot of mass shootings in schools in the United States. So many innocent kids die because of these mass shootings in the schools that occur.

According to *The Impact of Mass school shootings on Mental Health*, “Mass shootings are a first-line traumatic event that can potentially trigger post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in people who are directly exposed, as life and limb are under direct and violent threat. Children, in particular, are even more vulnerable; multiple studies have shown that childhood trauma has more lifelong and pervasive effects on young developing psyches, both in terms of their psychological worldview, and their physiological systems that handle stress and anxiety” (*The Impact of Mass School Shootings on Mental Health*, 2020).

The community is being affected as well because they might have children of their own. That it will make them angry and vulnerable, as well that the schools that their children are in don’t have safety guidelines when there’s a shooting that’s about to happen. It will be hard for the community to heal.

Children and parents are the ones affected the most. As well as the teachers and the community because it will be hard for them to heal. *The Impact of Mass School Shootings on Mental Health* also stated, “Any time a gun discharges a live round inside (or into) a school building, or on (or onto) a school campus or grounds, where “school” refers to elementary, middle, and high schools—K–12—as well as colleges and universities” (*The Impact of Mass School Shootings on Mental Health* 2020).

If the child has gone through a horrific mass shooting in their school, the parent's child should always check upon them. To make sure that they are okay. Just to make sure that their child doesn't end up hurting themselves.

School safety and gun control need to be addressed now because enough is enough, how many more innocent lives are we going to keep losing if there is not a stop to it. The shootings that happen in schools, churches, in public, etc. There needs to be an end to all of these shootings that happen. Children In K-12 should not have to go through something so horrifying in their life. Saying goodbye to their parents because there is a shooting that is happening and saying that last goodbye because you never know if they will make it out alive. Children that are young from 3-6 years old are still young and they don't know what is happening. School safety is a top priority for all parents, educators, students, and community members that can't be taken for granted. Having to put an end to gun violence would make it a lot safer for the students, teachers, and for everyone who is in school buildings. Taking guns away from people who have mental problems and putting out stricter laws.

Parents should take time to check up on their children if they went through a mass shooting at their school. just to make sure that their child is okay. If their child is not okay and having some side effects, the parent should take their child to therapy. making sure that the parents get help so their child. As well for parents, they should get help as well if they lost their child in a mass shooting that occurred at their child's school. I'm advocating for all these mass shootings in schools and in public to end. Having stricter laws for guns, and keeping the school environment safe for all students grades k-12. That way children and everyone in the school building have to go through a school shooting.

My target audience includes teachers, lawmakers, administrators, Chancellor, and community members. Teachers and parents can help make a change by not having to send their child to school if no one is wanting to change to have a better safety environment for children and having to end the shooting that occurs in schools. Teachers are more like first responders when it comes to mass shootings.

Resource Article Summaries

In the first article, “Protecting students from Gun Violence” by Bryan Warnick and Ryan Kapa (2020), discusses what kind of impacts do security practices and technologies have on the learning environment. What messages do such practices send to students about their schools? To be sure, some students might feel safer and calmer in hardened environments, but it is equally plausible that intensive security procedures send the message that schools are unsafe, fearful places, thus adding elements of stress to the learning environment. An important question that was brought up is: to what extent and in what ways do teachers and other school personnel reinterpret their roles and responsibilities in a target-hardened school? That some security practices-the use of armed officers and metal detectors, for an example-set the stage for a different way of thinking about students.

I chose this article because it gives parents, teachers, and the community an idea of what security practices and technologies schools should have. That way parents know that when students enter the school building, no one is walking in with a weapon or anything that will cause violence in the school. This idea of schools having security practices and technologies can make children feel a lot calmer, that they don't have to worry about a school shooting happening in their school or no one in the school trying to hurt them with a weapon.

In the second article, “Why Is School Safety Important” by Gabrielle Applebury (n.d), has brought up that research continues to illustrate children who feel unsafe at school perform worse academically and are more at risk for getting involved in drugs and delinquency. The issue of school safety is a major concern at all levels of government, from local to federal. How school boards should meet with teachers and parents to listen to their concerns and suggest solutions. She also mentions that state and federal governments are taking steps to improve school safety and law enforcement as the nation realizes the importance of this issue and how it impacts children’s futures. Some even argue violence in certain areas has reached epidemic proportions, desensitizing many students and leaving them feeling violence is a normal part of their school life. Sadly, violent acts in schools occur at all educational levels with 8 percent of students reporting they have been involved in at least one physical fight at school, and 6 percent reporting missing school at least once in a month-long survey period because they did not feel safe. Witnessing these acts can also cause intense fear and anxiety within other students as well as staff members, making the school environment a psychologically distressing place to be.

I chose this article because it comes to the point where children who feel unsafe at school would eventually perform worse academically. It gives an idea for parents and teachers to go have a meeting with the school boards to listen to their concerns and suggest solutions in keeping the schools safer for their children and for teachers to look out for their students, in keeping them safe and not having them feel unsafe. Not only school shootings are the only concern for children’s safety but as well inside the school, where children would at times get into a physical fight and end up not showing up to school due to them feeling unsafe. The reason why to keeping children safe in schools because if they witness any of these violent acts there can be effects of fear and anxiety that children would feel and not even show up to school anymore.

In the third article, “One year later: How has School safety, gun control policy changed since the Parkland Shooting?” by Jessica Campisi (2019), speaks on, in the 365 days since the parkland violence, dozens of federal and state laws have passed that relate to school safety and gun violence. Gun control and school safety policy didn’t just stem from the nation’s capital. Arkansas lawmakers filed several school safety bills, including a mandate for bleeding control training in public schools. One bill, titled the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High school Public Safety Act, would iron out how often schools would have to perform active shooter drills. A Kentucky bill pushes for more school resource officers, school safety training, and mental health counselors, while two additional bills move to expand gun control policy; however, another proposal would allow people with concealed deadly weapon licenses to carry their guns in schools. A comprehensive school safety bill in Utah moved to revamp evacuation drills, create a threat assessment and support team, and require schools to conduct a climate survey, while a Wyoming bill would mandate schools to develop and review their own safety plans annually.

Jessica as well talks about education issues; including teacher’s pay and school funding, which has garnered significant attention nationwide in a way that gun control policy, as it relates to school safety, hasn’t. Overall, her purpose is to inform us that in other states a school safety bill has made some schools develop and review their own safety plans annually. Ever since the Parkland shooting had happened in other states started to take action on school safety for children.

Small Advocacy Action

In order for me to get help, I will bring attention to school safety and gun control by finding out where events can be held to educate families about the side effects that their children can get when experiencing a mass shooting at their school. I will make a presentation that will

form families of the gun laws that we have in the US and what side effects children get from the mass shootings that happen in their child's school. I will have a list of programs for parents, families to get help for their child or for themselves. Programs that can help the families heal from situations like a mass shooting. In the aftermath of a shooting, people typically go through three stages of healing (Novotney, 2018). Also, to let the parents know that their voices should be heard when it's their children that they look out for them to be safe from violence while they are in the school.

Large Advocacy Action

For me to address the issues with everyone I will work together with others by spreading awareness to every social media platform. There will be flyers sent home to the children's parents. That way the word about what I'm doing can get around easier to families and friends. If there are organizations that feel the need to advocate with me, I can easily contact them from my social media or by email, a phone call. As we approach our meeting, I will talk about what needs to be done and how to set guidelines to keep the children in schools safe. Other people who aren't parents themselves can learn from this or maybe they know too much that maybe in the future they would have their own children and don't want the same things that they hear on the news to keep happening. It's not only for children but for everyone because nowadays there are people being killed in public.

First I will start off by stating what my mission is, which is to put an end to gun violence and for schools to have a better safety environment for children. I will then discuss the bad side effects children can get from these shootings in their schools. As well discuss the lack of safety there is in some schools. We need officers on duty at all times, who are well prepared and know what they are doing. Planning a little room in the classrooms that the door is bulletproof so that if

there was a shooting in the school, it will be harder for the shooter to get in or harder for the shooter to hurt anyone inside the room. Discuss safety protocols as in getting prepared in case there was a shooting at the school. Schools should follow these safety guidelines; Implementing a threat assessment team, develop an emergency management plan, train staff, conduct site assessment, form community partnerships, and conduct drills and tabletop exercises (Preventing and Preparing for School Shootings).

Commentary

I choose to advocate for school safety and gun control because it's about time that we take this topic very seriously, we are in 2021 that all these mass shootings that are still happening even today there should be an end to it. Like how many more innocent people are going to die in these shootings happen. Hearing about the school shooting that happened and the number of crimes that are rising in today's world. You will hear about someone's son or loved one killed for no reason like that is really sad. We don't want any more families suffering from losing their loved ones as well, we don't want them to go through something like that.

School safety and gun control are important to me because it is important for students, parents, and especially teachers to be aware of the dangers in the school and surrounding areas of the dangers in the school. Schools should make sure they have crossing guards present before and after school and teachers monitoring them at all times. Along with this, the school must have plans of shootings, natural disasters, etc. As well in my future if I do have children, I want my kids to go to school knowing that they are safe and that they don't go through all that if there was a shooting as well as the other children I don't want children going through something like that when they are young because that can cause health effects towards them. I don't want them to have to fear going to school.

School safety and gun control will impact me as an early childhood professional that I know that the school that I am teaching at has backup or that is safe for the children. I will always check up on my students just to know if anyone is not bullying anyone because if there is I will have to stop that right away. Once the students are in the school building they become the schools' responsibility. Whether it's school youth violence, intruder safety, or just the general safety of students during class, lunch, hallways, and recess, teachers must have an action plan. The more practiced teachers are the more prepared they will be reacting as best as possible to dangerous situations.

Dear Chancellor Porter,

E: When thinking about gun control, many people think of the news channels, or the speeches from Congress and the president about guns and some of the problems that they cause. Many groups of students are targeted as victims of school violence but the problem affects all students, their families, the school environment, and the community as a whole. School violence places students indirect harm and also causes a decrease in students' sense of safety and well-being and disrupts the learning environment.

P: Having school safety and gun control prevention and intervention throughout all schools is needed because the more traumatic experiences a child is exposed to, the more likely the child will have difficulty with social and emotional functioning in childhood, exhibit cognitive problems, and perform poorly in school and experience mental and or substance use disorders as an adult if they are targets in these school shootings or any violence that goes on inside the school building.

I: On February 14, 2018, a gunman opened fire with a semi-automatic rifle at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, killing 17 people and injuring 17 others. There was no prevention in measures in place for the gunman. There was an armed security guard who failed to enter the building and stop the shooter.

C: Please make school safety and gun control prevention and intervention a part of schools so that there are policies that create a safe learning environment for children in which they can thrive and not be hindered by the fear of unsafe neighborhoods and teachers who don't care about their safety. Implement measures like encouraging parents to volunteer to be crossing guards/ hall monitors so they can help protect one of the places that children should feel that they are safe. putting more bodyguards on duty 24/7 monitoring the whole school. Making sure that

the bodyguards are well prepared and know what they are doing. Having a meeting with the children's parents on their suggestions or some of the concerns that parents have on the safety of their child. Will you direct your staff to detect school safety and how to do interventions? Will you also direct your staff in finding resources to help trace any gun violence threats.

You can follow up with me at 929-327-5929. My email is JessicaR@gmail.com. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Jesica Rodriguez

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