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School Safety and Gun Control

The term "school safety" refers to a wide range of policies and procedures intended to establish a safe and encouraging atmosphere in educational settings. It entails tactics meant to stop and address risks to the mental, emotional, and physical health of students, teachers, and staff. Schools put policies and initiatives in place to stop discrimination, bullying, and harassment of students. This could entail teaching students the value of decency, cultivating wholesome relationships, and offering assistance to those who have been bullied. Understanding the role that mental health plays in overall safety, schools provide services and resources to support the mental and emotional health of their students. This includes programs to lessen stigma and promote mental wellness, as well as access to counselors, psychologists, and other mental health specialists. According to the American Institutes for Research (2022), "School safety is defined as schools and school-related activities where students are safe from violence, bullying harassment, and the influence of substance use. Safe schools promote the protection of all students from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying and harassment, the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds, and other emergencies. School safety is linked to improved student and school outcomes".

The term "gun control" describes laws and practices intended to lessen the availability of firearms, stop gun-related violence, and increase public safety. The breadth and focus of these policies can vary greatly, but generally speaking, they aim to strike a balance between people's

rights to bear arms and the necessity of maintaining public safety. The sale, acquisition, and use of firearms are governed by laws and regulations passed by governments. These could include waiting periods before buying a gun, background checks for gun buyers, license requirements for gun owners, and limitations on the kinds and features of firearms (such as prohibitions on assault weapons). Laws requiring safe storage procedures for weapons may be implemented to stop illegal access, especially by minors and those who pose a risk of self-harm. Gun safes, locking mechanisms, and storage space requirements are examples of safe storage practices. Erdman (2018) defines "school safety" as the precautions taken to ensure the security and welfare of educators, staff, and students in educational settings.

The subject matter of school safety and gun regulation pertains to the safety issues that arise in educational environments, specifically concerning the availability and presence of weapons. Examples include the installation of metal detectors, security guards, and active shooter drills in schools; Political initiatives to pass more stringent gun control legislation are also examples of ways to stop gun violence. The particular concern is the high rate of gun violence in schools, which puts students', teachers', and staff members' safety and well-being in grave danger.

In addition to causing physical and psychological harm and a generalized sense of fear and insecurity among students, families, and communities, gun violence at schools can also result in fatalities. Erdman (2018) discusses the role of educators in promoting gun safety by integrating child development knowledge into safety protocols and decision-making processes. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, law enforcement, legislators, and the larger community are all considered stakeholders.

Twenty first-graders and six adults were slain by a gunman at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, on December 14, 2012. The families of the children who survived experienced severe psychological and emotional suffering. Numerous pupils displayed signs of distress, such as nightmares, worry while they were alone, and behavioral problems. In addition, the shooting sparked the movement for tougher gun control legislation and the formation of numerous advocacy organizations dedicated to reducing gun violence. *Academics* (n.d.) states that “the earliest known United States shooting to happen on school property was the Pontiac's Rebellion school massacre on July 26, 1764, where four Lenape American Indians entered the schoolhouse near present-day Greencastle, Pennsylvania, shot and killed schoolmaster Enoch Brown, and killed nine or ten children (reports vary). Only two children survived” The most recent school shooting took place at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde County on May 24, 2022, and resulted in the deaths of 19 children and 2 adults. Over 40,000 people have died from gun violence in this year alone, according to the Gun Violence Archive (n.d.). There are far too many school shootings, so we need to tighten up on gun control and improve school safety. We must assist the children, families, schools, and communities that these persistent problems have impacted.

One of the main causes of death for children and teenagers in the US, according to the CDC, is injuries caused by firearms. Gunshot wounds are now more common than auto accidents as the primary cause of death for kids and teenagers between the ages of one and nineteen. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), gun-related injuries rank among the top causes of death for kids and teenagers. As a result, the AAP promotes stricter gun control legislation and emphasizes the importance of taking preventative measures. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation (July 8, 2022), "Firearms recently overtook motor vehicle deaths and

other injuries as the leading cause of death for children in the United States." July 8, 2022: The Kaiser Family Foundation,

Fear and trauma have an impact on children, making it more difficult for them to learn and grow in a secure setting. "Fear and trauma significantly impact children, making it more challenging for them to learn and grow in a secure setting. The psychological effects of experiencing or witnessing violence can hinder cognitive development and impede academic progress" (Caven, 2022, p. 7). In school shootings, they could also sustain physical harm or lose their lives. An *NBC News article* (2018) says, "35 percent of parents fear for their children's safety at school, up from 24 percent in 2017, according to a new Gallup poll" (8) Due to the increase from 2017 to 2018, I'm almost certain the percentage of parents who are fearful for their child's safety has only increased in recent years as more school shootings have occurred.

The emotional and psychological toll that worrying about their children's safety at school takes a toll on families. Families affected by school shootings may endure terrible stress and loss. In "School Safety for All Students," Meg Caven (2022) addresses the significant emotional and psychological effects that school safety worries have on families. She draws attention to the fact that school shootings illustrate the glaring differences in how various families see school safety. While some parents may never be concerned about their kids' safety at school, others live in continual fear that their kids may be the victims of violence, whether it be from systemic problems like bullying because of homophobic policies or racist disciplinary actions. Families that are either directly or indirectly impacted by these tragedies may experience severe stress and emotional strain as a result of these fears. (Kappan Online) (Caven, 2022) (ERIC).

The community is impacted by the decline in confidence and security within educational establishments. “The community is significantly impacted by the decline in confidence and security within educational establishments. This erosion of trust affects not only the students and staff directly involved but also parents and community members who rely on schools as safe spaces” (Caven, 2022, p. 8). Broader societal effects from school shootings may include heightened anxiety and requests for more stringent gun control laws. “Broader societal effects from school shootings may include heightened anxiety among the general population and increased advocacy for more stringent gun control laws. These incidents often lead to public outcry and a demand for policy changes aimed at preventing future tragedies” (Caven, 2022, p. 9).

Communities with greater rates of gun violence and less access to funding for school safety measures are disproportionately affected by this issue. When it comes to addressing concerns about school safety, communities of color and low-income areas frequently face more obstacles. “Suburban and rural, wealthier, and low-minority schools had more school-targeted shootings; such shootings were the most fatal and most commonly committed by students; / Urban, poor, and high-minority schools had more shootings overall and more motivated by disputes; non-students often committed these shootings or unknown shooters; / More shootings happened outside, but those inside schools were usually more deadly” (U.S. Government Accountability Office, n.d.).

Early intervention is necessary to avoid detrimental effects on families and children. To effectively address the underlying reasons for violence and foster positive social and emotional development in children, interventions should begin before the child enters school. According to Kids and Guns (2022) “Over 221,000 K–12 students have experienced a shooting at their school

since Columbine, and more than four million students endured at least one lockdown during the 2017-2018 school year. Most American schoolchildren today have been alive for at least six of the 10 deadliest mass shootings in American history, including the December 2012 mass murder at Sandy Hook Elementary that left 20 first-graders and six adults dead. Unsurprisingly, a majority of high school students report feeling concerned about a mass shooting in their school or community.(p.10)

To stop such tragedies and terrible events in schools, the problem must be resolved immediately. Ignoring the situation and waiting to solve it invites additional tragedies and feeds the cycle of fear and violence. Protecting children's and communities' well-being requires early intervention According to the CDC (n.d.), “a firearm was reported to have been involved in the deaths of 1107 children; 957 (86%) of those occurred in the United States. Of all firearm-related deaths, 55% were reported as homicides; 20%, as suicides; 22%, as unintentional; and 3%, as intention undetermined. The overall firearm-related death rate among U.S. children aged less than 15 years was nearly 12 times higher than among children in the other 25 countries combined (1.66 compared with 0.14) (Table 1). The firearm-related homicide rate in the United States was nearly 16 times higher than that in all of the other countries combined (0.94 compared with 0.06); the firearm-related suicide rate was nearly 11 times higher (0.32 compared with 0.03); and the unintentional firearm-related death rate was nine times higher (0.36 compared with 0.04). For all countries, males accounted for most of the firearm-related homicides (67%), firearm-related suicides (77%), and unintentional firearm-related deaths (89%)’”. It is important to enact comprehensive gun control laws, such as a prohibition on assault weapons, limitations on magazines with a large capacity, and universal background checks.

It is important to invest in security infrastructure, provide more funds for mental health services, and train teachers and students in crisis management and conflict resolution techniques to improve school safety measures. Encourage community involvement and teamwork to tackle root causes of gun violence, including but not limited to poverty, resource scarcity, and structural injustices. I'm pushing for an end to gun violence, both on the streets and in schools. Change can be affected, and the message I want to get out about guns can be furthered with the assistance of the US President, the US House of Representatives, and the US Senate.

Administrators are in charge of assigning resources, monitoring policies and procedures, and organizing initiatives to improve school safety. The president of the United States, Joseph R. Biden, Jr., popularly known as Joe Biden, as well as the Senate and House of Representatives. Executive orders may be issued by the president, but they might not be sufficient. The United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate draft the actual laws. Additionally, legislators possess the authority to promulgate laws and regulations that can effectively curb gun violence by implementing all-encompassing gun control measures and providing funds for school safety efforts. These people can assist because they have the power and influence to make significant changes in their roles. Legislators may pass laws regulating firearms, educators can put safety measures into place in classrooms, and community members can support and push for systemic changes that will improve safety and well-being. For the complex problem of gun control and school safety to be effectively addressed, cooperation between various parties is necessary.

Research Source Summaries

In the first article, Kayla M. Gass & Judson C. Laughter. (2015). "Can I Make Any Difference?" Gang Affiliation, the School-to-Prison Pipeline, and Implications for Teachers. *The*

Journal of Negro Education, 84(3), 333–347. The piece is entitled "Is There Any Way I Can Help? The nexus of gang affiliation, the school-to-prison pipeline, and the role of teachers are examined in "Gang Affiliation, the School-to-Prison Pipeline, and Implications for Teachers." It looks at how societal factors like discrimination and poverty affect students' propensity to join gangs. It also covers how harsh disciplinary actions taken by schools can unwittingly contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. The paper highlights how crucial it is for educators to comprehend the structural problems that cause students to get affiliated with gangs and how they can break the cycle of gang membership by using alternative disciplinary methods, empathic partnerships, and supporting relationships. It draws attention to the possible influence teachers may have on resolving these intricate problems within the educational framework. One piece of evidence that stood out to me was that "children with aggressive behavior tendencies during childhood may be more likely than prosocial children to seek out a social context, such as a gang, where their antisocial behavior is supported. . . For stable gang members, early behavior problems may have contributed to their rejection by a prosocial peer group and acceptance by a similarly deviant peer group. (Craig et al., 2002, p. 55). This illustrates how childhood can affect a child's growth, and we as educators need to do something about it.

This particular reference was chosen because it provides a comprehensive analysis of how your upbringing can have an impact on you. Furthermore, as an aspiring educator, it assisted me in gaining knowledge about how I might make adjustments to better the future of children.

The second article, Haynes, N. M. (1996). Creating Safe and Caring School Communities: Comer School Development Program Schools. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 65(3), 308–314. The Comer School Development Program (SDP) helps to create secure and encouraging settings in schools, as examined in the article "Creating Safe and Caring School

Communities: Comer School Development Program Schools.” The SDP places a strong emphasis on a holistic approach to education, with particular emphasis on intellectual, social, and emotional growth. The program tackles family dynamics, community resources, school culture, and other issues that affect students' well-being through collaboration between educators, parents, and community members. Comer SDP schools seek to establish loving settings that enhance learning and personal development by uplifting relationships and offering extensive support systems. The paper emphasizes how well this strategy works to foster student achievement and create strong school communities. One piece of evidence that seems interesting is where the author states, “The SDP Parent Team is charged with establishing strong linkages between home and school, thereby reducing the isolation and bifurcation in children's lives often caused by conflicts between school and home learning. Through its activities, the home and school environments come to share and support common goals and values for children and to see and treat each child as a whole person” (Haynes, N. M. 1996).

I decided to pick this article because the focus placed in it on building strong relationships within the school community is essential to establishing a secure and nurturing atmosphere for kids. This feature is consistent with studies that demonstrate how children's sense of safety and well-being is greatly influenced by their relationships with peers and adults. This is something very important when it comes to creating a safe environment for children in the classroom and at home.

In the third article, Caven, M. (2022). School safety for all students. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 104(4), 6–11. The Phi Delta Kappan article "School Safety for All Students" highlights how crucial it is to establish a secure and encouraging learning environment for every student. It covers several topics related to school safety, such as the need for cooperation between teachers,

parents, students, and the community, as well as physical safety precautions, emotional and psychological support, bullying prevention strategies, mental health resources, and equity and inclusion programs. The article emphasizes the necessity of an all-encompassing strategy to successfully address safety concerns and advance the well-being of every student in the school community. One piece of evidence that blew my mind from the article is the following, "While school shootings are relatively rare, other forms of physical violence in schools are more common. Sixty percent of schools reported at least one physical fight or attack without a weapon during the 2019-20 school year (Wang, Kemp, & Burr, 2022). Many accounts suggest that physical violence in schools has worsened with the return to in-person learning in fall 2021 (Sawchuk, 2021).

I chose this article because it emphasizes how important it is for educators, parents, students, and the community to work together to ensure children's safety. This is in line with child safety best practices, which frequently call for a multi-stakeholder strategy.

People who can assist stakeholders in tackling the issues of gun control and school safety are part of the target audience. Law enforcement agencies, advocacy organizations, legislators, community leaders, and mental health specialists are examples of this. Mayors, members of the city council, and community activists can sway local laws and galvanize support for measures about school safety and gun control. Expert testimony and support can be provided by pediatricians, psychologists, and public health authorities who comprehend the effects of violence on children's mental and physical health. Reporters and news organizations can help raise public awareness about the issue of school safety and the necessity for gun control legislation. Mayors, members of the city council, and community activists can sway local laws

and galvanize support for measures about school safety and gun control. Expert testimony and support can be provided by pediatricians.

I support the enactment of comprehensive gun control laws, such as those that prohibit assault weapons, limit the use of magazines with a large capacity, and require background checks for all purchases. Furthermore, I'm advocating for improved procedures for school safety, such as building more secure facilities, supporting more mental health services, and giving teachers and students crisis response and conflict resolution training.

Small Advocacy Plan

I will engage with neighborhood advocacy organizations and educational institutions to plan several community events and seminars aimed at bringing attention to the problems of gun control and school safety. These gatherings will feature educational talks about the frequency of firearm-related incidents in schools, the effects on kids and families, and possible remedies. To reach a larger audience, I will also make use of social media channels to offer statistics, instructional materials, and personal narratives. Furthermore, I intend to have talks with legislators and community leaders to emphasize the pressing need to address this matter and secure backing for all-encompassing gun control legislation as well as improved school safety procedures.

Large Advocacy Plan

To implement the advocated intervention of comprehensive gun control measures and enhanced school safety protocols, I will collaborate closely with my target audience, including policymakers, educators, community leaders, and advocacy groups. Together, we will develop a coordinated approach that addresses both legislative and practical aspects of the issue. We will start by forming a coalition comprising representatives from each stakeholder group, convening

regular meetings to strategize and plan actions. Our first step will be to draft a comprehensive policy proposal outlining the specific measures needed to improve school safety and enact stricter gun control laws. This proposal will be presented to lawmakers at local, state, and national levels, accompanied by a grassroots advocacy campaign to mobilize public support.

In tandem with legislative efforts, educators and school administrators will work collaboratively to implement practical measures within schools. This includes conducting safety assessments, investing in security infrastructure, and providing training for staff and students on crisis response and conflict resolution. Families will be actively involved in supporting these initiatives by participating in parent-teacher associations, advocating for safer school environments, and engaging in discussions with their children about gun safety and mental health awareness. Parental Involvement and Teamwork: The program emphasizes the importance of parental participation and teamwork among school staff to create a supportive and safe educational environment (Haynes, 1996). Additionally, children will play a crucial role in advocating for their safety, participating in safety drills, and accessing support services when needed. Community members will support these efforts by attending town hall meetings, organizing rallies, and amplifying the message through social media and local outreach efforts. "The broader political efforts to mitigate gun violence through stricter gun control laws are addressed, underscoring the importance of legislative actions aimed at reducing the availability of firearms to ensure the safety of educational environments" (Hill & Adesanya, 2019, p. 88). Lawmakers will be instrumental in enacting legislative reforms and allocating resources to fund school safety initiatives, responding to the collective voice of the community and the evidence-based recommendations put forth by stakeholders.

I chose the subject of gun regulation and school safety because it tackles a vital issue that impacts the security and welfare of kids, families, and communities. Being an early childhood educator means that you have to put children's safety and security first, and the issue of gun violence in schools needs to be addressed head-on. I find this topic to be important since it has a direct bearing on the lives of families and children. Every child has the right to develop in a supportive and safe environment free from the fear of gun violence. Encouraging comprehensive gun control laws and improved school safety procedures will help us create safer communities where kids may grow up fearless. As stated by Hill & Adesanya (2019), "various safety measures implemented in schools to protect children from violence, including the installation of metal detectors and the presence of security guards. These measures are designed to create a safer school environment by preventing the entry of weapons and ensuring immediate response to any threats" (p. 86). This issue will influence me as an early childhood professional by influencing how I design secure and encouraging learning settings for young children. It emphasizes how crucial it is to put in place efficient safety measures, promote an inclusive and respectful culture, and deal with the larger social issues that lead to violence. I can help to promote great outcomes for the kids and families I interact with in educational settings and the larger community by remaining informed and actively pushing for change.

E.P.I.C Message On Gun Control

Dear President Biden,

E. What are some of the similarities between Sandy Hook Elementary and Uvalde Elementary?

Beside them both being elementary schools. They were both part of a school shooting where 20 plus young children were slain. Every incidence leaves a path of destruction in its wake, destroying the sanctity of educational settings and permanently changing lives.

P. The topic I want to talk about is how anyone may obtain firearms since there are lax gun laws and regulations. It is not appropriate to regulate gun ownership by allowing access to firearms everywhere.

I. More stringent gun control legislation is the change I support. This action is necessary right now because current gun regulations need to be changed in order to prevent school shootings and mass shootings in general in the future.

C- Mr. President, let's unite to build a future in which school shootings are a thing of the past. It's time to put our shared sorrow into action. Furthermore, it is imperative that you continue to advocate in Congress for meaningful gun control legislation. Making these actions publicly known can have a big impact on public opinion and help get support for the adjustments that are required.

Thank you !

With all due respect,

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