



Statement on School Shootings from Schlechty Center Home of the National Superintendents Roundtable

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Gun violence in the United States is out of control. A [Washington Post](#) report indicates that since 2009 there have been 232 school shootings in this country. And according to [EducationWeek](#), since 2018, there have been more than 119 school shootings; in 2022 to date, 83 people have been killed or injured. This epidemic of school slaughters is intolerable. As a comparison, throughout the rest of the G-7, the most advanced economies in the world, there were a combined total of five school shootings between 2009 and 2018. While we are saddened by the daily tally of violent death at shopping centers, hospitals, and places of worship, the Schlechty Center's primary concern is with the alarming rate of fatalities in schools such as Sandy Hook Elementary (Newtown, Connecticut), Marjory Stoneman Douglas High (Parkland, Florida), and Robb Elementary (Uvalde, Texas). The Schlechty Center is home to two nationwide superintendent networks—the Superintendents Leadership Network and the National Superintendents Roundtable. These two networks consist of 180 school superintendents from 31 states ranging from Maine to California and Florida to Washington state. Part of our mission is to leverage these collective voices in the advocacy of the safest schools possible for educators and students.

Disingenuous solutions, such as arming teachers or limiting schools to one door, are often put forth following these tragedies. Neither is an answer. If some well-armed and well-trained police officers in body armor refuse to confront shooters holding assault weapons, why would anyone expect teachers to do so? No one who has ever worked in an elementary school of 500 students or a high school of 5,000 would ever consider limiting the building to a single door.

There exists a mountain of scholarship, research, and analysis from a wide range of disciplines on how to prevent school shootings. Following the 2018 Parkland tragedy, a scholarly Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence developed a [call to action on school shootings](#). The group's recommendations, which can be divided into three major parts, are aimed at reducing gun violence while protecting citizens' Second Amendment rights. Drawing from resources such as this and others, the Schlechty Center supports and advocates the following actions:

1. **In schools:** Assess the safety climate in all schools; provide adequate staffing of school mental health services (counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers); reform school discipline to reduce exclusionary practices; mount a national program to train and maintain school-crisis intervention teams; and establish practical communication channels for individuals in the community to report their concerns to school officials.
2. **In communities:** Upgrade community-based mental health services for risk factors associated with violence; coordinate that work with school mental health workers; train and maintain community-based crisis intervention and threat assessment teams; coordinate that work with school-crisis intervention teams; and establish practical channels of communication for individuals in the community to report their concerns to local officials.
3. **At the national and state levels:** Address further common-sense regulation of firearms purchases: enact comprehensive background checks on all gun purchases; further regulate or totally eliminate the availability of assault weapons, high-capacity ammunition clips, and products that enable semi-automatic weapons to function as automatic weapons (bump stocks); enact "red flag" laws requiring law enforcement officers to recover firearms in cases where there is evidence that individuals plan on violence; and remove legal barriers to sharing safety-related information between and among education, mental health, and law enforcement agencies when individuals threaten violence.

In sum, we know what to do to reduce gun violence. The only questions that remain are these: Why have we not acted? and How have we not done everything in our power to protect our educators and children? As a society, we must prioritize what we value. At least that part of the equation should be obvious. Why is it not?