

Interim Committee on School Safety  
Public Comments 8/20/2019

Name	City	Organization	Comment
O'Brien, Sean	Littleton	0	It has been shown time and time again, that gun free zones are having the opposite effect that the public and the establishments of government are desiring in protecting people. Schools are "Gun Free Zones" that are repeatedly the scenes of shootings. It is well past time to provide some legitimate protection for our children at our schools and no longer allow them to be soft targets for evil minded people who don't care that a school is a gun free zone. To me that is all the more inviting for someone who has evil in their heart and mind to get to the point they're going to inflict harm on people. It goes unreported how many more lives a law abiding armed citizen or law enforcement truly thwarts saves as opposed to the lives that are lost when these acts of violence occur. We can no longer allow our schools to be soft targets for evil to prey upon.
Chittenden, Kate	Lafayette	0	0
Whitworth, Amanda	Denver	0	My biggest concern as to school safety is the idea of arming teachers, which I do not and would never support. I have four kids in DPS middle and elementary schools and I would home school them before I would send them to any campus that allows teachers and other (non-security) staff to carry weapons. We have chosen to raise our children in a gun-free environment and any measure to arm teachers undercuts our parental authority on a matter of life and death. I prefer evidence-based measures when it comes to school safety, and arming teachers falls short of this standard. When I think of more guns in schools, I think of guns being inadvertently left out and then falling into the wrong hands. I think of thefts, again leading to guns falling into the wrong hands. I think of bias (subconscious or otherwise) provoking a teacher to shoot a perceived "threatening" student or a responding officer to shoot a teacher of color who was armed by his district. When I think of more guns in schools, I think of all the younger students who will be frightened by the gun-toting staff member. Why would we want to set the stage for these dreadful scenarios to play out in front of such a vulnerable audience? One person dying on school property is one person too many, and the idea of arming teachers and staff feels more like a knee jerk reaction (copout!) which does not address the root of the problem or try to prevent such attacks from occurring. As a parent with literally EVERYTHING to lose, I deserve a school safety plan that incorporates prevention and addresses the circumstances that form the backdrop to these school attacks. As a parent, I want a school safety plan that aims to stop the attack from ever happening in the first place, and I reject any ideology which proposes that I blindly buy into the notion that my "kids are 'safer' at school because the teachers have guns." I want a plan that is data-driven and has evidentiary support. I am asking you to consider the data on these school attacks and assess the who and the how and the why and the where and the what. I believe you will be able to come up with a variety of non-lethal improvements to make in the name of school safety: update building security; update classroom locks; threat assessment tools available at each school; emotional support for students widely available during the school day; parent education which highlights gun safety/safe gun storage and teen signs of distress; and updated common sense gun legislation.
Morales, Michele	Denver	0	I am and Denver resident, parent, and teacher. Too many of our kids are being harmed physically and mentally in schools. We are not keeping enough of them safe. We need to improve our community support and consciousness To support them.
Tomlinson, Sharon	Dacono	0	Our children/grandchildren must be protected from gun violence. The only way to do this is to allow teachers, administration and other school employees to be trained and armed on a voluntary basis to protect our students and themselves. No longer should we allow our children to be sitting ducks in "gun free zones"

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Emerson, Keith	Denver	0	<p>1. According to today's (Wednesday, July 10) Denver Post a recent FBI study of mass murders shows that 2/3 of the killers are mentally ill. The committee needs to look at providing more resources to schools to identify and help students who need mental health help. In addition more monitoring is needed for students taking psychotropic medications. While these drugs may be of great help to the large majority of those prescribed them, a small percentage can have very negative consequences. Take a look at the fine print on contraindications for the drugs and you'll see what has shown up in manufacturer's studies!</p> <p>2. As the recent STEM school shooting in Colorado shows, killers seek out soft targets and the sooner they are confronted the more lives are saved. FASTER Colorado, <a href="https://fastersaveslives.org/">https://fastersaveslives.org/</a> , has been training willing teaching staff here in Colorado to carry a concealed weapon and to be able to give first aid. I have heard of no incidents of a problem with these screened and trained Colorado teachers. The organization's advice should be sought by the Committee.</p> <p>3. The NRA School Shield program, <a href="https://www.nraschoolshield.org/">https://www.nraschoolshield.org/</a> , is also available to train security personnel in identifying and recommending security procedures for schools. This is another resource the committee can call on to get the latest best practice advice in school security.</p>
Suyat, Emily	Parker	0	<p>Thank you for your work in keeping students safe at school. Research on school shootings show that the following measures work: threat assessment programs, strict universal background checks, and safe storage laws, as many shooters get their guns from their parents at home. So much can be done before a shooter ever even approaches the school, which is why I am opposed to arming teachers. They won't have adequate training (i.e. what law enforcement has), and judging from the STEM shooting, it will create more risk instead of less. I am also opposed to metal detectors; it will create a cluster of students waiting--essentially just moving the target from outside to inside.</p>
Leonard, Paige	Littleton	0	<p>As a parent of a 7 and 4 year old in Littleton, school safety is my top concern. This past year has been incredibly difficult on our family, neighbors and community, feeling terrorized in our own backyard and where our kids should feel the most safe, at school. My child and I both have had to go to counseling to work through anxiety related to the incidents of the past year. Thank you for forming this committee and taking time to research and listen to evidence based solutions and plans to keep our kids safe.</p> <p>I ask the committee to take time to read the report titled "Keeping Our Schools Safe: A Plan to Stop Mass Shootings and End Gun Violence in American Schools" that was published by The American Federation of Teachers, The National Education Association and Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund. This detailed report outlines an evidence-based, proactive plan to prevent active shooter incidents and address gun violence in American schools. LINK: <a href="https://everytownresearch.org/reports/keeping-schools-safe-plan-stop-mass-shootings-end-gun-violence-american-schools/">https://everytownresearch.org/reports/keeping-schools-safe-plan-stop-mass-shootings-end-gun-violence-american-schools/</a></p> <p>In summary, sensible laws including Red Flag Laws, responsible firearm storage laws, raising the age to purchase firearms to 21 and requiring background checks on ALL gun sales (including gun shows and online) can prevent shooters from getting their hands on guns. Actions schools can take include: establishing threat assessment programs in schools, implementing security upgrades to prevent access to schools and classrooms, emergency planning with local officials and establishing safe and equitable schools. These actions are dependent on proper funding and support from the state.</p> <p>Arming teachers is not the answer and research proves that allowing teachers to carry guns in schools increases the risk to our children.</p> <p>Thank you again for dedicating time on this critical issue. As a voter, tax payer, resident and parent in Colorado, there is no greater issue than the safety of our children.</p>
Tyagi, Tanya	Aurora	0	0
Shah, Ria	Centennial	0	0

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Sopkin, Tanya	Aurora	0	0
Whitaker, Emma	Aurora	0	0
Schwartz, Emma	Aurora	0	we live in a world where school shootings are being normalized and that is not okay, nobody expects it to happen to your school but when it does we have to be prepared. i know that my school isn't prepared and that scares me. our school has had multiple threats and it makes me wonder maybe next time there won't be a threat just action. i try to be nice to everyone so that i am not the reason our school gets shot yo. i am angered by the fact that i have to live in fear and walk around on eggshells so i don't risk my safety. something needs to be done and it can't be left to the students alone
Hogrefe, Will	Colorado Springs	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- school safety: "gun free zone" signs have not prevented a mass shooting, ever... trained, armed personnel on the site have...</li> <li>- emergency response planning: this is going in a much more effective direction and needs to include identifying armed school personnel to LE responders</li> <li>- threat prevention: armed school personnel will reduce target vulnerability short term; parents teaching kids responsibility and consequences of their actions long term</li> <li>- identifying and monitoring students in crisis: mental health professionals must develop guidelines that do not create an atmosphere of "big brother watching you"</li> </ul>
Allison, Denise	Denver	0	I am concerned about easy access to guns by children. As a hospital social worker, I have met many families of teenagers, who have impulsively grabbed a gun and attempted suicide. I believe that parents should be responsible for their children's access to guns and be held accountable for any lack of safety. I would like the schools to provide mental health education and open discussion about suicide prevention. This should include an action plan for students, to know where to reach out for help and strategies for coping with impulsivity.
Dannwolf, Amy	Golden	0	<p>As a parent of two young children (ages 5 and almost 1), I'm dreading sending them to elementary school. In fact, the prevalence of gun violence in schools, and a high concentration of public gun violence in our area, has weighed in on our decision to keep our oldest child out of school for another year. We want him to be a little older, a little more mature, a little more able to handle the heavy subject of death and violence in school, and its place as a real concern in our society. I want nothing more than my kids, and all kids, to view school as a safe place for learning, playing, and making friends. How can we expect our children to thrive when they are worried about dying at school? What kind of implications does this have for our society in the future? Learning has to suffer when lockdown drills take its place. Learning has to suffer when kids are worried they might die at school. Learning has to suffer when teachers are expected to monitor the safety of the class in addition to provide lessons and guidance. What happens when learning suffers? Our economy will suffer too. Those kids won't be able to contribute as much to society. They will grow up to be scared and scarred.</p> <p>And what about implications on our society, and economy now? What's the toll of parents staying home due to missed school days? Lack of productivity in the workplace knowing your child is at school and is at risk there? Surely I can't be the only parent who watches the clock tick to 12:30 and releases a sigh of relief -- my son is out of preschool and is on his way home.</p> <p>We need a middle of the road policy -- not extremism from either side. Don't add more guns to schools by allowing teachers to carry. Let's enact waiting periods. Let's place serious restrictions on automatic and semi automatic weapons. Let's maintain gun rights for those who desire them, but don't let those gun rights impede my right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.</p>
Day, Zoe	Aurora	0	0

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Miller, Cameron	Alamosa	0	<p>Hello, Please escape from the emotions of the situation for a moment and define the problem. Law abiding firearm owners and their "big boy toys" are not the problem. Defending students in an easily approached public building, a target rich environment, is the problem. Those who wish to do great harm would find other means if every firearm and firearm owner were removed from the planet. Refer to the Bath School massacre or Franklin High stabbing as proof. Stop vilifying your fellow law abiding citizens who take seriously their responsibility to protect themselves, family, property, and country as scary potential mass murderers, simply because they own and know how to use firearms. Quick response such as the heroic actions of the students who defended their colleagues in the most recent tragedy is one very reasonable solution and the effectiveness has already been demonstrated. A proactive suggestion is to make schools harder targets, make potential criminals look for an easier mark. Stop being soft on crime and student misbehavior. Drug usage, property crime, bullying, truancy, and other misbehavior by these and other young people is given a pass, and they often go on to do worse things, despite the high number of school counselors in today's school system. Single parent households, in particular with the absence of a father, are well known to produce troubled youth more likely to engage in criminal activity, a hard truth that should not be ignored. There are no easy answers, but a good first step is to define the actual problem, or problems, rather than focusing on an irrational fear of inanimate objects.</p> <p>Thanks, - Cameron Miller</p>
Diaz, Lisa	Denver	0	0
Partowmah, Jafar	Aurora	American Muslim Gun Owners Association	<p>Discussing improving school safety I call attention to gun free zones being a major factor contributing to school shootings. I encourage a full repeal of all gun free school zones which prohibit parents from exercising responsibility securing their personal safety by prohibiting carrying personal protection while attending their child's school functions.</p> <p>I am opposed to installing metal detectors as this is cost prohibiting and detracts from an enjoyable school experience.</p> <p>We are all our own 1st responders and many Coloradans take responsibility for the safety of themselves and their loved ones and state laws should not limit our ability to do so.</p>
Shiple, Ella	Denver	0	0
Wolfer, Joshua	Denver	0	0
Hester, Zac	Colorado Springs	0	<p>Modern America faces many societal changes. Even in the 21st century, we struggle to provide adequate help to people in desperate need of mental health care. When society fails to provide health care to those in need, we find ourselves in these situations. The safety of our schools, the staff, the students, and MY children is in jeopardy because we fail to address the root causes of these issues. We take short-term emotional measures to make us feel like we're making a difference. But, the statistics say that we're not going to make violent people less violent by taking away their implements of destruction (even if we could). It may be counter-intuitive to some, but when you remove the ability of people to protect themselves from immediate threats, you make those people much more appealing targets to someone who is willing to do such devastating levels of harm. Without unprecedented changes to law enforcement budgets and staffing, it is physically impossible to rely on them to protect our schools from the first three minutes of a violent attack. Continuing to limit the ability of teachers and staff to protect my children while they are at school is a perfect example of institutional neglect.</p>
Miller, Sara	Superior	0	<p>School safety = gun safety. I believe that is what we are really talking about here. I was in school volunteering when our school went into an unplanned code locked down. All the teacher did what they needed to do and so did the students, however it was SCARY and traumatic. Colorado needs to have better gun laws. It's not a coincidence that CO has had so many mass shootings (starting with the first one in Columbine), because it has such slack gun laws. Colorado has been ground zero for mass shootings and needs to be ground zero for smarter gun regulations/legislation, starting with a ban on semi-automatic weapons, a reasonable waiting time to purchase a gun, or making person take a class before they can purchase a gun. Be bold! Be brave! Stop the bleed!</p>

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Shiple, Claire	Denver	0	<p>I think my school is pretty safe and on top of things when it comes to the safety of it's students, but whenever there's a lockdown or when all the schools got shutdown due to the lady, people are still scared and don't feel very safe when going to school.</p>
Roe, Jessica	Centennial	Arapahoe High School Community Coalition	<p>This committee will succeed if it delivers a solution for a STATEWIDE UNIFORM POLICY FOR ALL DISTRICTS, not just the ones working feverishly after a tragedy on one of their campuses.</p> <p>Both my husband and I attended Arapahoe High School where Claire Davis was murdered, and we now have one - soon to be two - teenagers attending there now.</p> <p>Many recommendations came out of that investigation. Not all have been put in place many years later.</p> <p>In the case of each shooting, investigations by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, the nation's foremost law enforcement school shooting expert found that just like at Arapahoe, inaccurate threat assessments of the perpetrator - or of campus vulnerabilities - all of which could have played a role and possibly prevented the loss of those lives.</p> <p>We learned each killer has four things in common:</p> <p>First - there is a track record of the assailant having been themselves, a victim of bullying. Prolific in some cases. Starting in elementary school.</p> <p>Second, each of those killers have viewed themselves as either real - or perceived - victims of injustice.</p> <p>Third, they have one or two violent, graphic movies that they have watched - such as Natural Born Killers - in some cases - 50- to-100 times.</p> <p>And fourth, the most disturbing, is that they have planned their kill on violent video games- even mocked up the precise campus with the insecure entry points demonstrating how they will enter.</p> <p>As far as preventative, achievable measures - did you know - that</p> <p>-A simple room number on a piece of paper on the inside and outside of the classroom windows speeds law enforcement's efforts.</p>
Roe, Jessica (Cont.)			<p>-A can of spray paint - used on the school roof to label classrooms - is helpful to SWAT and the lack there-of has been cited as a hinderance in the past.</p> <p>-Janitors are our best eyes and ears. THEY are the ones who first notice things out of the ordinary. They deserve training.</p> <p>-And Wrapping classroom doors and the window panels next to them with a bulletproof laminate - would have stopped many shooters, such as the product offered by clear-armor.com which Regis is getting ASAP.</p> <p>More... but the characters are limited.</p>
Sommer, Elyse	Aurora	0	0
Miller, Sasha	Erie	0	<p>Guns need to be controlled and mental health help needs to be put in. I'm sick of losing my friends to bullets and mental disorders.</p>

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Kolupke, Barbara	Alamosa	0	<p>I'm responding as a 40-year plus teaching veteran who lives in a part of Colorado where using guns is commonplace for families hunting for food and for sport. At no time during my years of service did a student bring a gun to class or into the school building. I know we currently have a huge problem with school shootings, but arming teachers and training them to use guns to protect a class by threatening or by shooting an armed intruder is a huge mistake. I am temperamentally and morally opposed to gun use for this purpose. I would not participate in the training nor would I keep a gun in my classroom. This practice would make me even more afraid of school violence. Any funds expended to initiate this practice would be a loss and worse. Introducing more guns into the hands of the public only increases the risk we all share. Kindly find another solution.</p> <p>Respectfully, Barbara Kolupke</p>
Neufeld, Klaudia	Thornton	University of Denver, Adams 12 Five Star School District, Malley Drive Elementary	<p>As both a Colorado native and an educator here for over 15 years, I am ecstatic that this committee is having these hard conversations about school safety. I am a teacher, former administrator and current Social and Emotional Learning Specialist. I am also a doctoral student at the University of Denver, within the Educational Leadership and Policy program. My focus is upon Restorative Practices and shifting our punitive model to one that builds relationships and connection between our schools and our community. You are the drivers. Please take time to listen to me. Dr. Bruce Perry stated that, "Relationships matter: the currency for systemic change was trust, and trust comes through forming healthy working relationships. People, not programs, change people". I understand that we have the physical structures to address in terms of safety, but I do believe that a system that values restorative practices and building relationships with students, teachers, family members and community is a system that will produce healthy and happy and thriving students. It would be a distinct honor to speak with the committee or any members about my ideas around school safety, and the data driven decisions we are making in our building and district. There must be wrap around services and data tracked to ensure our actions are impacting kids' lives. Programs won't do it. People will. You will make decisions that will either prevent future tragedy or prolong the event from occurring. I know this dialogue is important to you as parents, like myself, and professionals, like myself. We cannot continue to do the same thing and expect different results. Colorado has the opportunity to really drive change and lead in this work. I believe we can be a model for school safety and district unity regarding safety for the entire country. Thank you.</p> <p>Klaudia Neufeld</p>
Harris, Floyd	Greeley	0	<p>The "true" root causes need to be identified, researched and studied. Use true common sense and not knee jerk reaction to fix the problem. Schools should be a secure place to teach and learn. The "No Gun Zone" approach does not make our schools a safe place. Using properly trained and willing personnel who want to be armed is the second line of defense from attackers. The first line is secure entries and minimal access points. There are those who are strongly against this approach. There opinions are often based on fears, non based stats and political posturing. There are plenty of proven use of these in Colorado, the US and world wide.</p> <p>Things that should also be looked are the bullying and how students and teachers treat each other. The STEM school is a good example of this based on the reported statements the attackers had. Schools and teachers are suppose to be politically non biased but there are many examples of them not being so. This political bias does and can separate/divide students who are not raised with those biases.</p> <p>I also noticed during this first open discussion there were members in attendance that were wearing what could be considered political statement clothing and pins. It is my understanding that non of this is allowed in these types of proceedings. It was also brought to my attention this was raised/pointed out to the sergeant of arms . and others and nothing was done.</p>
Sell, Irl	Longmont	0	<p>Regarding school safety, specifically gun violence threats, I strongly suggest that you allow any teacher or on-site school official who desires, and is qualified to carry (or have access to a firearm) be allow to do so. I have 4 grand children in public schools and without such protection in a gun free zone, they are sitting ducks. I believe this is the only solution to this problem. The lawmakers of Colorado should allow this in addition to the (possibly ineffective) firearms laws they have and are considering.</p>

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Glenn, Robert	Windsor	0	<p>As a 22-year Colorado resident, the best in most expediant way to have a positive impact on the issues you intend to discuss are to allow those who are willing and trained to carry a firearm to do so in public schools. If you want to stop it TODAY, you need to do this first.</p>
Lundgren, Brooke	Littleton	0	<p>In light of this year's Stem School tragedy, please please PLEASE work with Congress and the Senate to pass the strongest control laws in the country. My children live in fear of going to school and gun violence every day. With a Democratic House and Senate, please don't let this opportunity pass by and take a stand to change the laws. Increase the age with which to buy guns, make semi-automatic guns illegal, lengthen the time of a new license to be issued....please take action.</p> <p>I am a teacher, and yes I know that mental-health and safety officers are needed at each and every school. I know that security doors and cameras can make a difference. I also know that there is not a single teacher who supports carrying a weapon. My husband is a USMC Veteran of the Iraqi War. He is also a teacher, and even he doesn't agree with teachers carrying guns. Finally, I cannot stress the importance of offering mental health services not only to students who are struggling but to their family as a unit. So many times, families cannot afford counseling or therapy and their needs are limited by what the school can provide. While tackling mental health, we need to ensure that resources are available for all who need it, not just those who can afford it.</p> <p>In light of everything that has happened to our poor children this spring, please work together and pass legislation that will make a difference.</p> <p>As a mom, wife and educated citizen, I support gun-control and school safety. Because as a mom and a teacher, I never forget a school shooting. I remember them every morning as I say goodbye to my children and every morning as I say hello to my students.</p> <p>Please make gun-control a priority.</p> <p>I would love to attend one of your July Saftey Commitee Meetings. Thank you! I look forward to hearing from you.</p>
Garcia, Susan	Erie	0	<p>I worked for School Districts for 29 years and I do not believe school personnel are capable of fighting off an armed person. Their job is to educate not carry a deadly weapon and shot at people. They are not trained throughly enough to provide protection, they most likely shot an innocent person instead of the threat.</p>
Brown, Randall B	Littleton	0	<p>Please notify me about the next meeting. I would like to speak.</p> <p>Randy Brown 303-888-1994</p>

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Lundgren, Lars	Littleton	0	<p>Greetings, I'm a parent of 2 Middle School kiddos and a teacher at a large Elementary School in Jeffco. First off, we need to take this beyond serious. This isn't just a "let's get me elected" issue. I really like that there is training for emergency response teams across our county to involve Police and Fire and to get them on the same page while responding. There need to be armed officers at every building during school hours while students are present. We also need to have stricter penalties and consequences for students who make any kind of threats to others. Most of the time we just do a threat assessment and send the kiddo on their way, their needs to be training that are required by the court when a student makes any kind of threat that both the student and parent need to attend prior to the student coming back to school. Too often we just sweep it under the rug and say it won't happen to us, wrong. Also, schools need to be more vigilant about going on lockdown when something is going on in the surrounding community. Also, if there is a threat we need to cancel school. I once saw a quote on Facebook from a Principal in regards to going to school on treacherous roads, they said: "I'd rather go to school an extra day in June, then a Funeral in February". We need to take this same approach with credible threats in, at and around our school. Trust me, there is money somewhere in the state budget to have armed officers in the schools, we just don't see it as a priority, but we see a small pothole in our roads as one. We need to shift our thinking and value our kiddos lives if we want to them to have any kind of future in this world. Thank you for taking the time to read this and please give consideration in implementing my thoughts. Sincerely, Lars Lundgren</p>
Walker, Megan	Evergreen	0	<p>As a Jeffco teacher I would like to be as clear as possible in saying that asking teachers to carry weapons is NOT the answer. If the NYPD is only 32% accurate, asking me to make the choice to take the life of someone is not an option I am willing to make. Therefore, you can be sure if teachers are asked to carry I will be resigning from my position as will many other educators.</p> <p>Thank you for the work you are doing.</p>
Pabst, Thora	Greeley	0	<p>As a retired educator who also has a concealed carry permit, I would vehemently discourage educational professionals from carrying firearms. Of course, our schools must be safe, but a teacher's role is to educate students while maintain classroom discipline. Professional development can address strategies that will encourage appropriate and practical handling of difficult situations as educators. However, allowing teachers to possess guns in school settings is yet another way to "provide" weaponry to emotionally unhealthy students, not to mention affording authority figures opportunities to make mistakes while handling a crisis. I believe that as institutions we would be climbing another rung higher on a ladder that focuses on extreme responses to awful situations rather than moving down a few steps to address problems at the lowest possible level. I suggest we invest in sincere community and educational reform that opens opportunities for students to receive positive mentoring and support, that buoys struggling parents, that welcomes diversity, and includes all in a nurturing environment.</p>



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Steyaert, Barb	Denver	0	<p>I am a retired teacher, an adjunct professor working with professional educators in their classrooms, a parent to two elementary students in DPS, and a volunteer with Moms Demand Action. I am and have been in schools consistently for the last 20 years and I am scared of the state of our schools, the mental health, wellness, safety and security of our children AND our teachers. Not only is it important to focus on providing more accessible mental health and threat assessment resources to ALL students, but we need to look at what we are currently doing and what is and isn't really working. What is the root cause of the violence? Is it access to weapons? Is it mental health? Is it school security? Is it the lack of safe storage laws? I believe it is a combination of all the factors and we must evaluate them all.</p> <p>I believe in the research done by Everytown that emphasizes the importance of threat assessment programs in place. This involves training and placement of teams of professionals that can intervene at the onset of any warning signs. With that being said, I believe it is important to put people and teams on the ground, in the schools working directly with schools not in an office off campus where they don't interact consistently. If money is allocated towards supporting students, teachers, and schools, it must be directly impacting them daily.</p> <p>Asking teachers to carry weapons is not the way to solve this problem. I don't believe they could turn on one of their students. We have seen trained professionals hired for this role unable to fulfill this duty. School security departments are working directly with law enforcement and streamlining policies and procedures which is a great start and must continue for prevention and fast response during a crisis. The placement of cameras, buzzers, and secure locks is also a great step without creating a scary prison-like environment. For many students, school is their one safe place. We need to provide funding for these mental health professionals, training for the teachers, and time to allow for mental health and wellness during the school day. We need to improve communication to parents during a crisis and do more community training for warning signs, threat assessments, and safe gun storage.</p>
Larson, Brian	Lafayette	0	<p>I think it is clear that more mental health supports are needed for students before it reaches this point. Making our schools an armed camp won't solve this problem. Getting reasonable caseloads for school psychologists and counsellors will be much more effective. Could we see special additional funding in these areas so that we have a school psychologist or counsellor for middle and high schools?</p>
Wire, Rachael	Aurora	0	<p>I really hope some true evidence based policy comes out of this committee and it is not just another waste. When talking about school safety you have to talk about guns...it's not just mental health. Other countries have just as many at-risk students or students who struggle with bullying, violent video games/movies.. What makes us so unique is our easy access to guns. That's it. 80%+ of shooters got their firearms from their home or a family members. Responsible gun owners need to lock up their guns. I would like to see individuals punished if they don't and their gun is used in a crime. I believe schools do need more mental health professionals and maybe even threat assessment teams but let's not blame this all on mental health. People with mental health issues are more likely to be victims of violence than the perpetrator. And I will fight until I my last breath to make sure we don't arm teachers. That is not the solution. This FASTER program is dangerous and I will never send my kids to a school who has armed teachers. Thank you all for taking the time to listening and act to keep our students (and staff) safe.</p>
Dowdy, Glenn	Fort Collins	0	<p>The best deterrence and resistance to a school shooter is armed staff; whether that is School Resource Officers, trained armed Security or select volunteer, well-trained school staff would be up to the school district.</p> <p>Hardening schools is also very important. Teachers and administrators need to be able to isolate their classrooms and offices from intrusion.</p>
Piowaty, Kevin	Pueblo West	0	<p>Aside from a real look at the glaring mental health issues, and how to deal with them, the single best thing that can be done to make schools safer is to stop disarming legal concealed carry permit holders in schools that do not have metal detectors and armed security. It isn't right to "arm" teachers or anyone else, nor to disarm anyone in such schools. Such a decision is a serious voluntary decision each individual has the right to make.</p> <p>The people that lawfully carry, do so responsibly, and it is wrong to disarm them anywhere there are not metal detectors AND armed security. A gun in a glovebox is a lot less safe than a gun concealed in a holster.</p>

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Zebrowski, Greg	Arvada	0	<p>It is time to change things up. In 1990, Senator Joe Biden introduced a bill that we ultimately called the Gun Free School Zone Act. Since it's implementation, we have seen every single school / mass shooter ignore that law. Gun free zones DO NOT WORK. Many school districts in Texas have allowed staff to carry firearms without incident. That's right, not a single noted incident that the left and groups such as Moms demand, every town for gun safety, or any other fanatical anti 2A group scare tactics claims would happen has. NOT ONE! It is time to remove the gun free zones act and enable staff and the public to PROTECT our students should the unthinkable happen again.</p> <p>No one is suggesting that every teacher be armed. That is utterly false and a blatant lie by every opponent that brings it up. We only want teachers or staff armed that are willing to, and have trained to carry. Having the mindset to carry a weapon, and use it should the need arise is not for everyone. And pro2A folks would NEVER force anyone who is morally or physically incapable of doing so safely.</p>
Williams, Mark	Aurora	0	<p>More laws is not the answer. The only solution is to allow teachers who choose to conceal carry and be able to defend themselves and their students. The stem school incident should be a clear indication that the laws already in place had no effect what so ever on the ability of someone to illegally acquire a firearm and walk into a gun free zone and kill people who have no men's to defend themselves. The 2nd amendment is a fundamental right protected by our constitution. Politicians and police cannot guarantee our safety that is our God given right and we require no one's permission to exercise that right . Some of you need to be reminded we are not subjects bit free people. Get it right.</p>
Schwartz, Joyce	Pueblo West	0	<p>Please allow teachers to be armed at school. No one should be forced to but I have several teacher friends who would be more than willing to be trained and be allowed to carry a weapon while at school. Install bullet proof glass in doors and windows. Limit access to the school with locked foyers with buzz in only access. Employ therapy dogs as well as protection dogs. Decrease class size by hiring more teachers. Give the teachers classroom Aides that are trained in self-defense and have concealed carry permits. Tolerate no bullying. Require parents to attend school with their child instead of suspending the child if their child bullies or threatens another student or teacher.</p>
Akerley, Cherlyn	Loveland	0	<p>If we protect our money at banks &amp; other places with armed guards, why don't we protect our precious children with armed guards? I am pro armed guards, or even more favorably, armed veterans at our schools.</p>
Garcia, Anthony	Hudson	0	<p>Allowing teachers to carry, if they choose to, is an EXCELLENT idea. I support it 100%. My wife is a middle school teacher with a ccw who also supports the idea. This is how we keep our kids safe. If they want to carry then let them.</p>
Acevedo, Mario	Denver	0	<p>The committee should make sure that it reviews the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission report on the Parkland, Florida, shooting. That report shows that Florida had an extensive mechanism for identifying and processing youth-at-risk and a substantial school safety plan (much like what we have in Colorado). Yet the day of the shooting, the entire system collapsed and there was no accountability for the many failures. Though the shooter was well known as a troubled youth and even stated that he wanted to be the next school shooter, he fell through cracks in the system. He could have been stopped many times along the way had anyone in authority stepped up and done their job. What are we doing in the state to make sure that the authorities do their job to protect public safety? The MSDHS report can be found here: <a href="http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MSDHS/CommissionReport.pdf">http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MSDHS/CommissionReport.pdf</a></p>

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Roubi, Zelma	Highlands Ranch	Moms Demand Action	<p>Dear Committee Members,</p> <p>I was born and raised in Texas, and have spent the last 6 years living and working in Ontario, Canada. When deciding where to raise our family when coming back to the US last year my husband and I chose Highlands Ranch Colorado, and we chose to send our daughter to STEM school based on recommendations and research.</p> <p>As I am sure you can imagine the shock and horror we experienced on May 7th, when my husband was waiting with other parents in driveline only to hear gun shots and witness children running from the school. With no information and no where else to go he came home and we had to wait hours to find out if our daughter was okay. Since this day I have made it my personal mission to ensure Gun Violence Prevention is on the front burner of every representative's mind, no matter which party he or she belongs to. As someone new to this community it was even more troubling to hear numerous people refer to arming teachers as a reasonable solution to this problem. There is a wealth of research available that shows allowing teachers to carry guns in schools increases the risk to children and places an unrealistic expectation on the teacher. Even police officers with years of training and experience only have an 18% hit rate during an active shooting situation.</p> <p>I am asking that the committee take a comprehensive and proven approach to prevent gun violence in schools by enacting sensible laws including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Red flag laws (that are proven to save lives) such as the one passed earlier this year that is supported by our sheriff, and that is still being fought against by extremist groups as well as our County Commissioners.</li><li>Responsible firearm storage laws</li><li>Raising the age to purchase semiautomatic firearms to 21</li><li>Requiring background checks on all gun sales</li></ul> <p>Please keep these items in mind as you work within this committee.</p> <p>Sincerely, Zelma Roubi</p>
Chessman, Kyle	Johnstown	0	<p>No school shooting has ever occurred during school hours at a school that allows teachers to carry guns. Period.</p> <p><a href="https://crimeresearch.org/2019/05/major-new-research-on-school-safety-schools-that-allow-teachers-to-carry-guns-havent-seen-school-shootings-during-school-hours/">https://crimeresearch.org/2019/05/major-new-research-on-school-safety-schools-that-allow-teachers-to-carry-guns-havent-seen-school-shootings-during-school-hours/</a></p> <p>And we should stop disarming law abiding concealed carry permit holders inside of schools. If they're safe enough to concealed carry out in public, they're safe enough to be allowed to do it inside schools, too. In the state of Colorado, the person has already been vetted by the FBI and their local sheriff to be safe to carry a weapon. That should be enough for schools too. Disarming law abiding citizens in schools only creates soft targets.</p> <p>Please stop forcing people to be defenseless in schools. Thank you for reading.</p> <p>Kyle Chessman</p>

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Townend, William	Aurora	0	<p>I believe that there are fundamental problems with the educational structure that are contributing factors for many of the problems we see in school including school safety issues. While modifying educational structure is beyond the scope of this committee, recognition of factors that may contribute to problems is a first step in preventing some problems, as well as, helping treat problems.</p> <p>We currently have a situation where problems exist so measures such as increasing mental health services which increases budgets, teaching better coping skills which if properly integrated will have little budgetary impact, and having nonlethal situation controls that are designed to have minimal psychological impact on students.</p> <p>A major concern of school safety is reducing self-destructive behaviors such as suicide or crime. The extremes of these behaviors such as mass attacks or gang violence will likely be significantly reduced when the more common behaviors are reduced. Many other destructive behaviors happen such as suicide attempts, cutting, drugs, and antisocial behavior. A study, High/Scope Perry Preschool study, is good longitudinal study that found behaviors were modified by quality preschool that reduced things like crime and divorce. This study is an example of long term influence of school on destructive behavior. Outcomes and methods of similar studies along with what is known in programs that are working like suicide prevention need to be a major part of the findings of the committee with legislative recommendations based on the findings.</p>
Barzdukas, Robert	Greeley	Northern CO. Retired Education Assoc.	<p>Having retired because of Columbine, I implore the committee to reject arming teachers. The shooting at STEM where an armed "security guard" shot at a sheriff's deputy and wounded a student should be reason enough to not arm staff members. Thank you for giving your time to thoughtfully study this vital issue. Bob Barzdukas, retired educator of 33 years</p>
Grote, Gregory	Fort Collins	0	<p>I work as the director for the Thompson and Estes Park Education Associations. Part of my job is to learn of the concerns of educators and advocate for them. I have also spent 20 years in the elementary classroom.</p> <p>Over the past few years, student violent and disruptive behavior has become the most prevalent issue I have dealt with. The issue of school safety is complex. Students come to school with the trauma and emotional challenges. The most impactful thing schools and districts can do is to provide the educators the time and resources to develop relationships with their students. So often, now, teachers feel a pressure to get test scores up. This pressure has been a significant factor related to student stress.</p> <p>I recommend that the committee look into how adjusting expectations for test scores could allow educators to focus on developing relationships and thus helping students learn to manage their emotional states.</p> <p>Make the students emotional well being a priority...the priority!</p> <p>Thanks for this opportunity!</p>
Stouder, Gwen	Longmont	Silver Creek High School Education Foundation	<p>I tried sending my response...but was over by 400 characters. I have emailed the person at this email address: dafna.michaelson.jenet.house@state.co.us, my response. I was only over by a little but it's worth reading and hearing me out. Thank you, Gwen Stouder concerned parent</p>
Kirkpatrick, Jenny	Centennial	0	<p>The shooting at STEM was the tipping point for me as a teacher and mom. I was trying to keep my head about me to put my students at ease all the while wondering if my own kids were terrified. I worry that your committee will also see STEM and do something knee jerk like arming teachers. Please do not put this unwelcome responsibility on my job. We will quit. En masse. Instead we need to make our schools smaller- feeling so our students feel they have an adult in the building that knows and loves them. Here's a radical idea: reduce class size. Add more counselors to schools. Trust that we as educators know what our kids need to build empathy back into our schools (and the world). Thank you</p> <p>Like we</p> <p>.</p>

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Rossow, Marla	Englewood	Moms Demand Action	As a parent of 2 children and a Moms Demand Action member I am concerned for overall student safety. Our schools need more programs that will help evaluate students who are at risk for not only harming others but harming themselves. Identifying mental health issues early would hopefully deescalate crisis before they occur.
Vratny-Smith, Smith	Aurora	Moms Demand Action	As a parent and member of Moms Demand Action I appreciate the time you are taking to address the issue of school safety. I believe that our schools should be safe, welcoming environments for our students and staff. Any action you take must enhance the positive quality of the school environment, address the social emotional and mental health needs of students, and provide adequate funding to support implementation of new laws, policies, and procedures. School safety is a community wide effort, so your lens needs to involve all aspects of mental health and common sense gun safety including prevention, early intervention, and effective responses to threats of violence from anyone. Neither violence nor safety occur in a vacuum. We must pass laws that support all members of our community in living safe and productive lives. Thank you for your time and consideration.
Steirn, Marsha	Aurora	0	I believe there should be no guns in schools. There should be mental health provided in every school.
McCoy, Kathleen	Aurora	0	As a retired teacher, & grandparent of three children in public schools, I believe that there should be no guns in schools so as to keep children & teachers safe, support mental health for students & staff, and make sure schools are more secure so children can succeed!
Atwood, Nancy	Denver	Moms Demand Action	<p>I retired from teaching in Aurora Public Schools a couple of months ago. I taught in secondary schools where there was a preponderance of students in areas and classrooms which they did not belong, as they were skipping class. One day during the last week of school, a wandering student entered a classroom to hangout with his friends and attacked one of our students with disabilities.</p> <p>Students' families are not made aware until the end of the day when they receive an automated call notifying them that their student was tardy or absent for one or more classes. Because of our responsibility for the safety of children when their parents are absent, I would like to suggest legislation that requires schools to immediately notify parents when their kids are not where they are supposed to be.</p> <p>This basic security upgrade to control access to schools and classrooms, while not making schools feel like a prison, is common sense approach to keep kids safe.</p>
Price, Christine	Aurora	MOMS DEMAND ACTION	A law needs to hold the gun owner (parent) liable if their gun is used in a school shooting. The parents need to be notified by the school that if their child brings a gun to school the student will be expelled and the parent will be charged with a crime. Parents also need to be talked to as a group about what to look for in their child's behavior that raises red flags and given resources on how to handle it. Read Susan Klebold's book. If she had learned what to do to help her son Dylan, perhaps columbine could have been prevented. I also recommend mental health workers in schools that meet with high risk kids as a class (seminar) to help them deal with their issues and make a good connection with the mental help professional. Also the mental health worker should be able to file an ERPO! He or she already has to report to the police if somebody is a danger to themselves or others so why not ERPO?

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Ronquillo, John	Aurora	Moms Demand Action	While I chose "parent" as my primary identity for the purpose of commenting to this committee—because I do have great concerns for the safety of my and all children in our schools—I also do so as a professor and researcher who believes strongly in evidence based decision making. For more than 20 years, federal funds have not been available for use in research as it relates to responsible gun ownership due to the Dickey Amendment. However, some research has been conducted and should be employed when it comes to these matters. Colorado has the opportunity to be a leader by using research to curtail the harm that firearms can cause when mishandled or are placed in the hands of individuals who pose a risk to others. Some of the research tells us that most shooters, for example, have a connection to the school, and in many cases are students. Guns that are used in school grounds typically come from the home of the shooter, or from those of family or friends. Additionally, shooters tend to exhibit warning signs of potential violence either through behavior or confiding in a friend by telling them their plans. These are but a few of the findings that have been employed through research, but I would encourage and implore the committee to dig deeper into what the research tells us and to better utilize it for the safety of Colorado students.
Magno, Alison	Aurora	Moms demand action	I am writing as a parent, teacher, and moms demand action member. I feel that more attention needs to be put towards mental health in schools. Schools need to establish assessment programs which understand and, more importantly, intervene when a student is at risk to themselves or others.
Mayes, Sharon	Aurora	Moms Demand Action	We need to make sure that we do a thoroughly background check. Our children need to be safe at home, school. Mom's Demand Action is doing a excellent job in educating the public and taking action.
Wolf, Laura	Golden	0	0
Logan, Jamie	Aurora	Moms Demand Action	We have to make sure that students, especially those in crisis, DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO GUNS. Guns that are used on school grounds usually come from the home of the shooter or the home of their family or friends. We should be implementing our Be SMART educational programs in every school. All parents should be required to go through a small training that provides the tools and awareness necessary to make good decisions on gun storage. EVERY PARENT with a child in school should be educated on this. In the Be SMART training, we encourage parents to ASK the families of their kids' friends if they have firearms in the home and if so, are they locked up separately from the ammunition. This kind of communication must become our new "normal" so that more people are educated about gun safety.;As a teacher in cherry creek public schools, and as a mother of four bi-racial, school-age children who identify as African-American, school safety is my number one priority. I say it to my students every year- their safety means more to me than any grades they get on any test. By safety, I mean their physical, mental, and emotional health. When I heard that it might be a possibility to arm teachers with guns, I was in shock. I urge you to not go down this road. It is a slippery and dangerous slope that will be very hard to come back from. I want to state publicly that if teachers are ever given guns to carry in the school I teach, not only will I stop teaching altogether, but I will pull my children from their schools and teach them in the safety of my home. Schools are NO place for guns. If more guns meant more safety, then our country should be the safest place in the world. Yet, it is not. PLEASE do not consider arming teachers.; I am the mother of a fifth-grader in cherry creek public schools. My son attends an elementary school with two, center-based, behavioral development programs (K-2, and 3-5 programs) In his school, there is one principal and there are two part-time mental health providers/social workers. With monthly "mandatory" administrative meetings, the principal is out of the building for most, in not all of the day, (many days per month) which leaves all administrative duties on the social worker and mental health provider, if they are working that day. On some days, when there are multiple district meetings, there is no administrator or mental health care providers in the building at all. If you want to keep our schools safe, a great place to start is funding our districts to have enough money to make sure that our school social workers and mental health care workers are in schools to do their jobs which is to serve our students. It is not their jobs to constantly be pulled and asked to support the front office with behavior issues and administrative duties when they are supposed to be working with the students on their caseloads. This is not an isolated issue and is happening in multiple schools. Specifically, however, as I mentioned at my son's school, there is so much more mental health support that is needed EVERY day to support the two, center-based behavior development programs, in addition to the other 475 elementary students. How can we make any progress with our students who need mental health support when their providers are constantly being pulled in other directions? PLEASE do something to help make sure our

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Logan, Jamie (cont.)				students are getting access to the support they need in school. If the principal is gone at meetings all the time and handling administrative duties, and the mental health providers are servicing students on their caseloads, please make sure there is a Dean or Assistant Principal at our school (and other schools like it) to handle behavior issues that arise, including school safety concerns. THIS IS A REALITY.
Anderson, Angela	Littleton		0	Please invest in counselors, not cops. Cops in schools are not saving lives and pull resources away from investing in mental health.
Dye, Tara	Silverthorne		0	Identifying students in crisis is largely impossible when schools do not have full time counselors on campus. Counselors can help provide special emotional lessons and work to identify students in crisis. It is also important that all people (teachers, bus drivers, custodians, etc) employed by a district have some sort of training on suicide and threat management even if it is just things to say and not say and signs to look for. Every district should have a clear plan to deal with threats and all staff should know the process. It's important that efforts are also made to help parents find connections to support and information they need as well. The number one priority though is counselors in ratios that they can actually have an impact on the school environment.
rris-Van Keuren, Christi	Aurora	Moms Demand Action		Research tells us three critical things about gun violence in schools: 1) The vast majority of shooters have a connection to the school, and often are students; 2) Guns that are used on school grounds usually come from the home of the shooter or the home of their family or friends; and 3) Shooters often exhibit warning signs of potential violence-- either through their behavior or by telling someone about their plans.
Barry, Denise	Centennial		CEA	0
Bone, Lauren	Aurora		0	We need more tools in schools to QUICKLY help children with severe behavioral and mental health issues. This should not rest only on the classroom teacher or having the struggling student be supervised by the front office staff when the child is removed from the classroom. We badly need the funds for more full time mental health support staff as well as ways to get children who need help beyond what the school can provide. All too often at the elementary level, children struggle for years without the proper support and the bar to get kids into behavior support classrooms is very high--in many cases moving to a support classroom only happens after an interaction with law enforcement. This needs to be fixed!
Heymans, Maria	Denver		0	I think we need more mental health professionals in schools. I don't think adding armed police officers or guards will help prevent threats.
Walsh, Stephanie	Aurora		0	0
Swain, Erin	Commerce City		0	0
Randol, Judy	Windsor		0	I'm a retired teacher and grandparent. I support armed security in schools with very rigid qualifications, such as current law enforcement or law enforcement experience with ongoing training. Arming teachers and individuals without rigid qualifications is a disaster in the making.
Ellis, Kemberlea	Aurora		0	Abundant mental health support is needed for students. With mental health professionals ,working with teachers and parents, students who are struggling to fit in or feel included can be identified earlier and receive the help they need. More guns in school is not the answer to this issue. Colorado, as a state, has a lack of adequate mental health support in general for students and adults.

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July 22, 2019

Submitted via <http://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/cslFrontPages.nsf/SS.xsp>  
School Safety Committee  
Colorado General Assembly  
200 E. Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203

Chair Michaelson Jenet and Committee Members:

The Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the School Safety Committee's request for comment regarding statutes governing school safety, emergency response planning, prevention of threats, and methods for identifying and monitoring students in crisis. The health and safety of our children, our schools and our communities is of the utmost importance to the work of TCHD and the residents we serve and we appreciate the General Assembly's efforts in this area.

Douglas, John      Greenwood Village      Tri-County Health Department

TCHD is the largest local health department here in Colorado, serving over 1.5 million people in Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas Counties. The agency's jurisdiction includes 26 municipalities, 3 counties, and 15 school districts with more than 360 public schools serving the 271,556 (2017-2018 school year) children in the Tri-County area.

TCHD strives to support the school and community partners who have and continue to improve collaboration across community organizations, developing community driven approaches to address these complex issues. Schools and communities are working to improve access to mental health services, decrease youth violence, and promote early intervention. Our 15 school districts are using the following programs and curriculum to prevent school violence: Colorado Crisis Services, Colorado's Trauma Informed System of Care (COACT), Mental Health First Aid Colorado, Random Acts of Kindness, Safe2Tell, Signs of Suicide (SOS), Sources of Strength, Positive Behavior and Intervention Support, Botvin Life Skills, CASEL curriculum, Second Step, ACT, HEART, Steps to Respect, Speak Now Colorado, and Youth Education and Safety in Schools (YESS). While there is great work already occurring, families and communities are increasingly looking toward



schools for help dealing with youth and adolescent mental health issues. Both schools and communities need additional supports to address youth violence prevention

As the School Safety Committee begins gathering information and pursuing policy solutions, TCHD asks that you consider the following: Understanding the risk and Protective factors within Colorado Schools

Risk factors are characteristics linked with youth violence, but are not direct causes of youth violence. A combination of individual, relationship, community, and societal factors contribute to the risk of youth violence. Research on youth violence has increased our understanding of factors that make some populations more vulnerable to victimization and perpetration like exposure to trauma, involvement with drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, exposure to violence and conflict in the family, and poor family functioning. Protective factors like feeling connected to a trusted adult in your life, commitment to school, and clear behavior rules, may lessen the likelihood of youth violence victimization or perpetration. Identifying and understanding protective factors are equally as important as researching risk factors.

Fostering School Connectedness

Community and school connectedness is the belief held by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals and is a strong indicator of community health. Providing opportunities for youth to connect with trusted adults in school and providing meaningful opportunities for youth to engage in school can help students feel valued and cared for by adults in school and can foster school connectedness. Research has shown that young people who feel connected to their school are less likely to engage in many risk behaviors, including early sexual initiation, alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, and violence and gang involvement.

Encouraging School Design to Foster Safe Spaces

The physical environment of schools can encourage prosocial behavior while reducing fear and violence. The Safe Communities Safe Schools (SCSS) model is a comprehensive public health approach designed to help schools create a safe and positive school climate by putting what we know works into practice. The SCSS model addresses the key risk and protective factors that are linked to reductions in violence, improved mental health, and increased prosocial behavior.

Hotspot mapping is another evidence informed tool used to improve the physical environment of for students. It is used to not only pinpoint where students feel safe or unsafe, but also propose recommendations for change. Identifying spaces

Douglas, John (cont.)

as “hot” or “cold” is the first step in a community shifting their environment through policy, physical, and norm changes. Hotspot mapping is an ongoing process to build capacity in communities, allowing them to continue assessing and improving safety overtime.

#### Encouraging Restorative Justice Practices within Schools

Schools are seeking ways to create a safe environment for their students, but incidences of bullying and violence still pervade. Student suspension rates are still high and many argue that forbidding students from coming to school exacerbates, rather than remediates, the problem. Restorative justice practices build peer relationships as well as relationships between students and adults, creating a more positive school environment. With an increased sense of safety born of knowledge about each other, students are better able to focus on learning. Restorative justice practices also provide a set of approaches that address student misconduct when it occurs, provide a means for resolution and repair of the harms, and address the underlying circumstances.

Douglas, John (cont.)

Restorative Practices in Schools, practices that approach behavior issues as a learning opportunity, have been shown not only to decrease suspension rates anywhere from 40% to 80%, but have also resulted in a nearly 50% drop in absenteeism and a 60% decrease in tardiness. Restorative Practices in Schools have the potential to offer negative leaders reason and structure to step into positive leadership roles inside and outside of the classroom. Administrators in charge of discipline are in contact and have support from mental health professionals

#### Promoting Comprehensive Health Education, Including Mental Health and Social Emotional Curriculum

Social and emotional learning (SEL) programs that develop soft skills such as self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision making, and self-awareness are an important tool in establishing a healthy school environment that promotes safety. Effective SEL programs provide a foundation for academic success by promoting positive student behavior and reducing emotional distress. Inclusive school environments and emotionally grounded students make for safer schools.

#### Mental Health Awareness, Including Mental Health Resources and Suicide Prevention Work Within Schools

Youth safety is directly correlated to youth health, especially youth mental health. Because children and teens spend a

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<p>Douglas, John (cont.)</p>	<p>significant amount of time in school, teachers and others who interact with students daily are in a prime position to recognize the signs of mental health issues, suicide risk, and to make appropriate referrals.</p> <p>School personnel need effective training to help them build the skills and confidence to identify and assist vulnerable youth in seeking help. School policies that address suicide prevention, intervention and post-intervention help to eliminate confusion over educator roles and the referral process and making intervention more likely to occur. These policies empower and support school personnel to better support students and families at risk and those who are affected by suicide. Effective suicide and violence prevention is integrated with supportive mental health services, engages the entire school community, and is imbedded in a positive school climate through student behavioral expectations and a caring and trusting student/adult relationship. Therefore, it is crucial for all school staff members to be familiar with, and watchful for, risk factors and warning signs of suicidal behavior. The entire school staff should work to create an environment where students feel safe sharing sensitive information.</p> <p>School psychologists and other crisis response team personnel, including the school counselor and school administrator, are trained to intervene when a student is identified at risk for suicide. These individuals conduct suicide risk assessment, warn/inform parents, provide recommendations and referrals to community services, and often provide follow up counseling and support at school. Empowering staff to identify those students in need makes it more likely that students will be connected with personnel trained to intervene and provide support.</p> <p>The Tri-County Health Department is happy to provide additional information on any of the approaches outlined above as well as detailed information on available data as it relates to understanding and improving school safety. This is a very important issue for us here at TCHD and we hope you will use us as a resource as you begin work in this area. Sincerely,</p> <p>John M. Douglas, Jr., MD Executive Director Tri-County Health Department</p>
<p>Rankin, Joe                      Fort Collins                      0</p>	<p>I am a high school teacher in the Poudre School District. This coming year will be my 10th as a public school teacher in Colorado. In my time I have had hundreds of students who suffer from mental health problems. We are severely short on resources, help, and expertise to help these students navigate this difficult time in their lives, especially given the contentious social and political climate that they are coming of age in. LGBTQ students, in particular, face enormous challenges. Please help us meet the needs of our students for their sake - and for society at large.</p>
<p>Laudenslager, Kari                      Aurora                      0</p>	<p>I hope the committee will prioritize mental health care for youth along with gun control. Class/school size and engagement also impacts prevention of threats. Thank you for taking this seriously.</p>
<p>Lammers, Karri                      Aurora                      0                      0</p>	
<p>Ortiz-Capozzolo, Megar                      Aurora                      APS                      0</p>	
<p>Johnson, Margaret                      boulder                      MJ Galleries</p>	<p>I am pleased to learn that Mental Health Colorado is advocating for meditation instead of detention to improve school safety. This recommendation is undoubtedly a step in the right direction to help kids learn to self regulate their emotions and could prevent impulsive behavior.</p>

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I recently learned about these preliminary meetings regarding safety in Colorado schools, and I wanted to have some input. I'll be touching on several topics.

First and foremost is the concept of arming teachers against school shooters. Few teachers want to learn to shoot during their training. Their love is for teaching, and for the students. They don't want to potentially have to shoot one of their own. Additionally, if improperly stored, arming teachers is an easy way for a student to get ahold of a gun and harm themselves or others. There are also teachers who think more on themselves and could use the presence of a gun as a threat to get a class to behave. Some teachers might also get emotional and irrational, assuming danger where there's none. On this topic as well is the police. If a cop comes to address a school shooting and an armed teacher comes in to talk about the situation, who do you think is getting shot? By arming teachers, officers can no longer assume the person with a gun is a shooter. If a teacher ended up being a shooter, this would also allow them easy access to a gun and an easy excuse.

Lynn, Juliette

Colorado Springs

0

Once, someone brought a gun to a school that a friend of mine goes to. This person was allowed to do so. Someone broke into the locker, took the gun, and was caught with it. Said person tried to pass it as a portable charger. It worked. The school said that anyone who talked about it outside of school would get suspended. I'm leaving out my friend's name for obvious reasons.

Still on the topic of shooters is the lockdown drills and fire drills practiced in schools. A friend of mine had no lockdown drills at all last year. If a threat had come to the school, no one would know what to do. On the flipside, my school had an active shooter drill every month. That being said, one of those months made me very concerned. In my school's art room, the active shooter drill consists of gathering in a small, open room with no door and an active strobe light. It gives us as much shelter as if we halfheartedly crouched under our desks. Some classrooms are better than others, but these drills showed me that even though we practice safety, we aren't very safe.

Because these drills are practiced one-by-one, no one knows what drill will supersede the other. Will we stay in during an active shooter threat and risk burning to death when the fire alarm goes off? Or will we venture out and risk getting shot by someone with a gun who pulled the alarm to lure everyone

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Lynn, Juliette (cont.)

out? We practice these drills once a month, and over half of them had me turning to a friend and joking about “someone with a machine gun driving past and shooting everyone as we wait for the all clear.” I resolutely don’t think about the all too possible reality of that happening.

This is made worse by the fact that my school is downtown. We have two threats a year, minimum. The drills aren’t very good for the campus as well. Palmer- the school I go to- has an open campus. Anyone can leave and come back anytime they want. A friend of mine went to lunch last year, and while they were gone, the school had a lock-out. This means that all outer doors get locked- no one in or out- but it’s business as usual inside. My friend got locked out for three hours. They missed three classes and had to call their mother to excuse them. Standing outside, alone, during a possible threat or drill, they felt very exposed and unsafe. While I understand the theory, they missed very important classes and felt very much in danger because they had gone out to get food. There was danger outside, and my friend was stuck outside with it. With no idea what the danger might’ve been. The school is trying to make steps towards safety. It’s just making the wrong steps. Every school issues ID cards and ours requires them to get in or out of the building. If you arrive at the wrong time, you will be late to class because of the line from the bus rush. Over 2000 kids have to scan their cards. We have two doors. Not only is this (yet another) threat for easy school shooter pickings, but it’s bad for students in general. The same friend who got locked out forgot their card at their dad’s house. They we’re stuck using their phone to scan until they could switch houses again. When they lost their phone, they weren’t allowed in at all.

Another wrong step my school has made is alarming doors. If you open a certain door, a shrill alarm will ring for 20 seconds and whoever tripped the alarm will get suspended. No questions asked. That being said, the alarms would get tripped multiple times every day. I had a schedule. I’d go to Biology. I’d leave and come up for lunch. I’d comment, “oh, someone opened the door,” and I’d go on my way. In this way, the doors were ineffective and punished more students than it helped. We’d also have to wait for teachers to open these doors during fire drills.

These drills that I’m mentioning didn’t always have the names they do now. Last year, they changed what they call every drill. There’s now lock-out, lock-down, and lock-up. When the announcements announce a threat or drill, there’s three minutes of confusion as we wonder, “do we keep learning with a locked door or turn the lights out and huddle in a corner? That’s assuming we hear the announcement at all. I heard the announcements maybe once a month last year. They happen

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Lynn, Juliette (cont.)	<p>every day. This is bad. The mandatory school safety sheet that everyone has to fill out? They announce that the sheets are in the office and leave it there. No care to whether the students actually heard or not. They can say, "yeah, we did that sheet," when most students didn't even know it was happening. It's a bare-minimum effort to say they did it.</p> <p>I also feel that schools are very hyper-fixated on dress code for the wrong reasons. We're not allowed to wear hats because they obscure our faces from the security cameras but over the course of the year, I had one teacher call me out on the beanies I like to wear. On the other side, another friend of mine was standing next to someone in a tube top (not allowed to show midriff, not allowed to see bra straps) but my friend was dress-coded because their shirt said, "My Chemical Romance." If you don't know, that's the name of an old band that broke up several years ago.</p> <p>Palmer is in the D11 district. This district has taken to putting safety ratings in their schools. They go from green (good) to yellow (eh) to red (terrible) and rate things like the roof, ceiling, air conditioning, and tiles. I haven't been in a single school that's had more than five green bubbles. This is out of about twenty. Palmer has really good floors and air conditioning. Almost everything else is red, with few yellows. Palmer is the only school in the entire district that's had the elevator closed down for student safety. Students on crutches or wheelchairs have to use the staff elevator. It's been like this for years and only now is anything being done about it. This is because all the funding is going towards small repairs. Last year, someone stole all the chairs off of the lunch tables. Most tables had three chairs and getting the one with the full eight was an event to celebrate. The security guards did nothing to stop the destruction of school property. I understand my school is old, but it's falling apart and that's not safe; both for students and staff.</p> <p>I'd like to talk for a bit on school counselors as well. The counselors in my school are assigned by alphabetical order. If you don't feel comfortable around your counselor, tough luck. That's not much of an issue though, when the only counselor anyone felt safe to talk to retired last year. If you don't feel okay talking to your counselor, you'll be left to fester in your thoughts alone. This leads to self-harm, harm of others, panic attacks, feelings of hopelessness, and even suicidal thoughts or actions.</p> <p>A friend of mine tried to kill himself multiple times. The most recent attempt was in the school auditorium. Instead of guiding him towards therapy and mental counseling, they expelled him, successfully cutting him off from the only place he</p>		
Lynn, Juliette (cont.)	<p>ever felt safe in. The work loads of schools are insane. The average high schooler has to handle 8 hours of school, 4 hours of work, 3 hours of homework, 1 hour of family time, and 1 hour of chores. This only leaves 7 hours of sleep for teenagers who not only need more sleep than the average person, but also wake up way earlier than the average teenage body is meant to. This actually has many unintended effects, including bringing test scores and memory down, and increasing the rate of depression and anxiety in teenagers. This leads to many cases like my friend, who started his suicide attempts in middle school.</p> <p>One last topic I'd like to talk about is the lunch debts that have started to go viral. Students can't pay for their lunch and are being threatened with expulsion unless their debts are paid. I understand that this isn't as extreme in Colorado, but it still happens. Parents barely scrape the income to get reduced lunch prices and can't pay as a result.</p> <p>Every topic I've gone into detail about poses some threat to student or faculty safety. They make me and my peers hesitant about going to school and make us tense and uneasy while we're there. I understand that some of these problems are only fixable on a district or school specific level but knowing the opinions and situations may be the different between a safe vote and a terrifying vote. Keep this in mind as you discuss school safety and please, help to make schools safer than they've become.</p> <p>-Juliette</p>		
Esser, Christopher	Lakewood	0	Please define a safe harbor.

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Iacopi, Amy	boulder	0	Please consider stricter gun laws in Colorado such as restricting rights for convicted felons and anyone with a domestic violence record. I have two young children and am very concerned about the lax gun laws here in CO.
Heidenfelder, Walter	Denver	0	Since the Columbine tragedy 20 years ago, we've been searching for ways to deal with mass shooting incidents - without much success. The reason for failure is that we have allowed the gun lobby to influence our debate on the issue. The NRA and other gun lobbyists are pleased as punch to see people wrangle about causes and remedies that deflect attention from the core issue of gun availability. We need to focus on the elimination of assault weapons such as the AK-47. Until we tackle the problem at the core, we're on a treadmill. Talk about mental problems, suicide, lack of resources, etc. is not pertinent to the real issue of elimination of weapons that are used only for mass murder. Confront the gun lobby. 1.) a 6-month voluntary turn-in of assault weapons; 2.) then, government confiscation of these weapons; 3.) after that, serious jail time for possession.
Katsaros, Jenna	Denver	0	I serve as liaison to the Aurora Youth Commission but I am responding as a caring adult who oversees youth programming in Aurora, not as a city representative.
Freudig, Teresa	Lakewood	0	<p>Dear Rep. Jenet-</p> <p>I am a nurse and have a suggestion that I believe will eliminate violence (specifically gun violence) in schools. I will first share the idea as a list of steps, address the minimal financial resources needed and then explain why it will work. Lastly, I will leave you with the benefits that will result for ALL stakeholders.</p> <p>Step #1. Establish a relationship with a research group (local university) to define the proper screening tool to utilize on 7th-12th graders to identify students that are at risk for demonstrating violent behavior and can identify students that have access to weapons. After performing a quick literature review I found multiple tools through the CDC and Colorado Resources.</p> <p>Step #2 Reach out to all local Universities that are accredited to graduate mental health professionals (preferably Masters or above) including but not limited to, Licensed Professional Counselors, Psychologists, Mental health Nurse Practitioners, etc. (As a nurse who helps students find clinical placement sites there is high demand for clinical hours thus a free resource with safeguards) In addition, I have another idea I will propose at the end of this for more man power!</p> <p>Step#3 University chosen to define screening tool should also create documentation tools (preferably electronic) to be utilized by all participants in the program and define a clear path for reporting any at risk signs. Most schools have clinical coordinators that should be included in the decision making for required documentation and reporting from Mental Health Students.</p> <p>Step#4 Mental Health Students trained on screening tool, assigned schools and timeline defined for mental health students to conduct Screening Assessment of ALL 7th-12th graders. (First year ONLY; second and following years will just be 7th graders)</p> <p>Step#5 Review data and strategically place students on teams of 5 where there are low risk students placed with higher risk students. Any students determined to be immediate threats to self or others should receive support following the schools current process but still be assigned to a team. The reporting structure for these situations should be outlined prior to screening.</p> <p>Step#6 Each Mental Health Student will be assigned a team of 5 students and begin performing Team Based Education (TBE) monthly and all schools will allocate one hour a month (perhaps more) for TBE. So, if you have a school of 1000 students the program will need 200 Mental Health Students. (This is possible if we utilize ALL academic programs for mental health) Teams should be formed of students in the same grade level to provide continuity of team building until graduation.</p> <p>Side note: I think the first TBE should include team building, tools for supporting team members, information on how to</p>

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Freudig, Teresa (cont.)

report unsafe behaviors, etc. I am not sure if the monthly trainings should be standardized across the program or if Mental Health students should be responsible for researching and conducting individualized trainings (group therapy) based on the team. For example, if you connect with Naropa University we may find that Art Therapy works best for teams with 2 high risk students, etc. If the data is collected and reviewed appropriately this may lead to evidence based practice for the future.  
Step #7 Review all data collected prior to the last month of school and determine if the teams should be required to meet once a month during the summer months and determine what changes needed to be made for the upcoming school year.  
Step #8 Repeat process for following school year, assign new Mental Health depending on graduations and require Mental Health Students to do a healthy hand off with the teams.

Financial considerations:

- Any supplies needed for TBE (drawing materials, mental health tools, etc)
- Possible electronic records needed to ensure standardization, tracking and reporting.
- Clinical instructors and professors, etc. should already be payed for by schools but perhaps there should be a discussion of whether or not the program is requiring additional time from these players. - Time out of classroom for student to participate in TBE
- Task force time to review, define and implement program

This will work because it fosters commitment to community. How many times do we here from students that they need mental health support or that "they knew he was going to do something like this"? Although we have become accustomed to blaming politicians (and yes, I agree the action and accountability of our political leaders is something that needs to be addressed) we cannot wait for them to solve the problem. Our youth wants this problem solved so let's empower them to do it!!!

The benefits are not limited to just identifying high risk students early and stopping mass shootings in schools. The TBE program will foster education of our mental health professionals, education to our youth on how to perform and support their team members thus preparing them for the future workforce and life! Perhaps it will create an environment that leads to less drop outs and increased collaboration and healthy behaviors.

Freudig, Teresa (cont.)

One last idea for the workforce that could be free. My wife graduated from Naropa University with her masters in therapy. She is registered with DORA as a psychotherapist but in order to become a licensed professional counselor (LPC) she must provide 2000 hours of therapy and for every 10 hours she pays another therapist (supervision) \$35-100/hour to sign off on her hours. After paying \$60,000 for her masters she is now paying additional thousands of dollars to prove she is trained! Perhaps Colorado could reach out to recent graduates and offer clinical hours for creating the trainings, facilitating or offering other supports.

After reviewing the length of this letter I am sure others will say it should have been written as a business plan! Quite frankly, I just wanted to share in hopes of this idea being shared as a possibility. As I mentioned I help schools do clinical placements at my hospital, mostly for nursing and advanced practice nurses. If I can be of any assistance connecting with schools or anything at all please do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for your time and for taking on this problem that must be solved NOW!!!



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Tiggelaar, Diana	Parker	0	<p>I agree with the idea below - just would want to see a clear communication method on how to report out concerns from the group. We want to make sure the students are educated on how to utilize Safe To Tell. Would need to determine how to screen new students and acclimate them into a new group</p> <p>I am a nurse and have a suggestion that I believe will eliminate violence (specifically gun violence) in schools. I will first share the idea as a list of steps, address the minimal financial resources needed and then explain why it will work. Lastly, I will leave you with the benefits that will result for ALL stakeholders.</p> <p>Step #1 Establish a relationship with a research group (local university) to define the proper screening tool to utilize on 7th-12th graders to identify students that are at risk for demonstrating violent behavior and can identify students that have access to weapons. After performing a quick literature review I found multiple tools through the CDC and Colorado Resources.</p> <p>Step #2 Reach out to all local Universities that are accredited to graduate mental health professionals (preferably Masters or above) including but not limited to, Licensed Professional Counselors, Psychologists, Mental health Nurse Practitioners, etc. (As a nurse who helps students find clinical placement sites there is high demand for clinical hours thus a free resource with safeguards) In addition, I have another idea I will propose at the end of this for more man power!</p> <p>Step#3 University chosen to define screening tool should also create documentation tools (preferably electronic) to be utilized by all participants in the program and define a clear path for reporting any at risk signs. Most schools have clinical coordinators that should be included in the decision making for required documentation and reporting from Mental Health Students.</p> <p>Step#4 Mental Health Students trained on screening tool, assigned schools and timeline defined for mental health students to conduct Screening Assessment of ALL 7th-12th graders. (First year ONLY; second and following years will just be 7th graders)</p> <p>Step#5 Review data and strategically place students on teams of 5 where there are low risk students placed with higher risk students. Any students determined to be immediate threats to self or others should receive support following the schools current process but still be assigned to a team. The reporting structure for these situations should be outlined prior to screening.</p> <p>Step#6 Each Mental Health Student will be assigned a team of 5 students and begin performing Team Based Education (TBE) monthly and all schools will allocate one hour a month (perhaps more) for TBE. So, if you have a school of 1000</p>
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Side note: I think the first TBE should include team building, tools for supporting team members, information on how to report unsafe behaviors, etc. I am not sure if the monthly trainings should be standardized across the program or if Mental Health students should be responsible for researching and conducting individualized tradings (group therapy) based on the team. For example, if you connect with Naropa University we may find that Art Therapy works best for teams with 2 high risk students, etc. If the data is collected and reviewed appropriately this may lead to evidence based practice for the future.

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Tiggelaar, Diana (cont.)

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Alpert, Maggie	Aurora	0	<p>My name is Maggie Alpert. I am a 16-year-old, soon to be, Junior in the Cherry Creek School District.</p> <p>I used to love going to school and learning. Today, I dread going to school. I don't feel safe with the fact anyone can walk in my school with a gun.</p> <p>There have been multiple times where my fear and anxiety have gotten the best of me, and I physically could not make myself go to school. When I am at school, every noise startles me, my hands sweat and my whole body shakes just sitting at my desk.</p> <p>Every time there is another shooting on the news, it only gets worse. I look at every class period and every day I get done with as another day I survived at school, just anticipating a shooting to happen.</p> <p>There has been more than enough times where people were able to guns that shouldn't have been able to. It's very simple, if there is physically no guns to be purchased, a shooting can't possibly happen.</p> <p>I'm begging you, I just want to feel safe at school again. I can't go through another 2 years of high school in constant fear. My education is very important to me, but my safety is more.</p> <p>The fact is guns don't protect people they harm them. They are machines made to kill people, and I don't feel safe not only going to school but living my life with guns all around our world and I know I'm not the only student that feels this way.</p> <p>Thank you for your time, Maggie Alpert</p>
Freudig, Merissa	Lakewood	0	<p>I am Teresa Freudig's wife and want to add on to her idea. After my experiences as a grad student I think it is feasible for students to be assigned to schools and lead 5-6 groups. Perhaps one 7th grade team, one 8th, etc. This would save on resources needed and also provide continuity with feedback from the mental health students on the schools process, the program and how it works for the different age groups.</p> <p>Also, please know that all of the community members, parents, nurses and recent therapy graduates that have been adding on to Teresa's idea are willing to help if needed. Please let me and the others know if you need help!!!</p>

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Altmann, Nara	0	0	<p>While we don't understand all contributing variables to a school shooting there seems to be some consensus among gun violence researchers that are two major actions are needed at a first level (see Call for Action Letter to Prevent Gun Violence in the a United States of America by Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence, <a href="https://curry.virginia.edu/prevent-gun-violence">https://curry.virginia.edu/prevent-gun-violence</a>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A national requirement for all schools to assess school climate and maintain physically and emotionally safe conditions and positive school environments that protect all students and adults from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and assault;</li><li>2. A ban on assault-style weapons, high-capacity ammunition clips, and products that modify semi-automatic firearms to enable them to function like automatic firearms.</li></ol> <p>My personal perception is that we are sending the message to our kids, and specially to our boys, that our problems are solved by converting our frustration into anger towards others (hate speech) and using guns to solve it. Arming teachers will only enhance that message. It will not make us safe. It only provides an illusion of safety to those that believe guns keep us safe. That message, that guns keep us safe, is part of the problem, not the solution. Arming teachers would make the problem worse, not better.</p> <p>I ask you to please work towards the two bullet points in this Call for Action Letter. I am available to volunteer my time if there's anyway I can help.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and your work on this committee.</p>
Zaleski, Kathryn	Arvada	0	<p>As an educator, my job objective is to provide a standards-based education to students. This objective is majority of my job, along with working with students on language acquisition, communication skills, providing support and guidance to students on mental health issues, and now, a human shield in case an active shooter comes into the building. I find myself feeling more and more jaded when we have to do lockdown and lockout drills, in complete disbelief and disappointment that this is the country I live in. When I consider who is coming into public spaces to hurt people, there is a pretty clear trend i.e. white male who is feeling isolated, disgruntled, and angry - no instances of "mental health disease." What I would love to see, building wide as well as district wide, is an authentic and real push to implement restorative practices. This would require in-depth training, a culture shift from punitive and zero tolerance to restorative, and training from groups that actually know how to do RJ in schools. This would include teachers using classroom connection circles, 1-1 restorative conversations; counselors and admin facilitating informal conferences between students, between teachers and students, colleagues, and even with caregivers and students. This is a practice that is focused on being inclusive of all people and finding ways to repair harms and reintegrate back into society. I read about the (majority) men who have committed these shootings and I always think about how these are people who feel pushed out, who are looking for any community that will take them, and how they need opportunities to reintegrate back into society.</p> <p>Another idea is to not arm teachers. This is counter productive and dangerous to students, especially students of color. As a teacher, I have to do so much professional training around my content, literacy, and classroom management. Arming teachers would require even more training on top of what we do. Next point: Black men are already being killed at higher rates than any other group of people by police officers. I am terrified at the thought of a teacher having a gun in a classroom, where learning is the goal, and then using that gun on a student, when all that student is doing is reaching for Skittles or something that is completely innocuous, like a pencil. Students of color are already targets of implicit bias, higher rates of suspension and expulsion; carrying a gun in the classroom puts them at risk of dying in schools.</p>

