

PEACE AND JUSTICE IN LINCOLN SCHOOLS

A coalition of Lincoln residents and organizations in support of nonviolent, non militarized school safety

Children should not be systematically penalized because of gun violence. We have an ethical obligation to implement fair, evidence-based policy that places the burden of gun violence not on vulnerable children but on the adults who enable and profit from it.

Background:

While no place in the United States is invulnerable to gun violence, Lincoln Public Schools are safe. Students are far less likely to be victims of violence in schools than in their homes. When schools discuss gun violence with the community, the emphasis should be placed on safe gun practices in the home, as those are most critical to protecting students and their classmates from gun violence.

1. We know school resource officers (SROs) do not prevent school shootings. Studies show that when schools are staffed with SROs—who are not required in most places to have any specialized training for dealing with children—the rate of student arrests increases. Arrests and removal from the classroom, sometimes in handcuffs, have been shown to disproportionately impact minoritized and disabled students, setting them up to enter the school-to-prison pipeline. Past research suggests that increasing the number of SROs in LPS will result in a greater proportion of minorities and disabled students entering the juvenile justice system, and potentially the adult criminal justice system rather than college or the workforce.
2. We know that it is bad science and bad ethics to respond to school shootings by implementing knee-jerk policies that sap funds from education and lead not to less violent schools but to more criminalized students.
3. We believe that more effective measures must be implemented, such as gun policy changes that a) limit availability of some weapons, b) require adults to keep guns and ammunition away from children, and c) require gun industry profits to pay for gun industry mess.
4. We believe it is unethical to ask Lincoln residents to pay for gun industry devastation through increased property taxes that will be used to fund more guns in schools.
5. We believe that safe and nurturing schools—which we already have in Lincoln—can be made stronger with increased educational, counseling, and extracurricular services, and not by placing armed adults in the school.

We support:

- Making schools nurturing, welcoming environments for all children
- Policy built on evidence-based research
- Funding education, teachers, mental health experts, and extracurricular activities
- Expanding Community Learning Centers to all schools
- Laws requiring the people who profit from guns and introduce them into our communities to have heightened responsibility
- Laws limiting or banning consumer products designed to kill people

We oppose:

- Treating children and teachers like criminals
- Policies that increase negative outcomes for minoritized and disabled students
- Paying for school policing and guns with education funds or property taxes
- Asking teachers or other school personnel to be prepared to put a bullet in a student

Our Policy Proposals:

1. City ordinance requiring homes with minor children to store guns unloaded and locked separately from ammunition. Child access prevention (CAP) laws help prevent child accidental shootings, suicide, school shootings, and theft.
2. City ordinance banning semi automatic rifles (“assault weapons”).
3. Tax on gun and ammunition sales to fund school security.
4. Increase counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and after-school programs.
5. A study involving focus groups of teachers to determine what is working in LPS and what needs more support.

READING

Nebraska Supreme Court, 298 Neb. 436, IN RE INTEREST OF ELAINNA R.

Nebraska Supreme Court ruled that a Lincoln school security officer has standing as a victim in a disturbing the peace conviction of a Lincoln Southeast High School student who started a school fight. The SRO arrested the Native American student for disturbing his own peace after she started a fight with another girl at school. Nineteen percent of Native American students drop out of Lincoln Public Schools before graduating.

Kerrin C. Wold, “Booking Students: An Analysis of School Arrests and Court Outcomes,” *Northwestern Journal of Law and Social Policy* (Fall 2013).

“While the “school-to-prison pipeline” has recently received an increased amount of attention from policy makers interested in improving public education, the recent shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut led to renewed calls for the heightened security measures that helped give rise to the pipeline. This article provides clear evidence that heightened disciplinary and security measures in schools are faulty policy responses, as they have adverse impacts on the students they intend to protect and siphon resources away from policies that more effectively ensure student safety and success. More specifically, the article analyzes a unique statewide database that contains all school arrests that occurred during a recent school year in Delaware, including individual-level variables such as age, race, gender, offense, adjudication result, and disposition result. The analysis reveals three troubling trends that have important policy implications. First, the use of arrests in response to student misbehavior has resulted in a great number of students being arrested for minor misbehaviors. Second, a highly disproportionate rate of black students faced arrests for their behavior in school, and female students seemed to experience differential treatment. Third, the juvenile justice system is forced to devote its scarce resources to processing a high volume of minor school arrests, a plurality of which lead to diversionary services that could have been offered directly through schools in a much more efficient manner.”

Evie Blad and Alex Harwin, “Black Students More Likely to Be Arrested at School,” *Education Week* (January 24, 2017).

“In 43 states and the District of Columbia, black students are arrested at school at disproportionately high levels, an analysis of federal data by the Education Week Research Center finds. And one reason may be that black students are more likely than students in any other racial or ethnic group to attend schools with police, according to the analysis of 2013-14 civil rights data, the most recent collected by the U.S. Department of Education.”

Tamar Lewin, “Black Students Face More Discipline, Data Suggests,” *New York Times* (March 6, 2012).

“Black students, especially boys, face much harsher discipline in public schools than other students, according to new data from the Department of Education.”

New York Civil Liberties Union, “City School Safety Data Shows Handcuffs Used Disproportionately on Black and Latino Children,” (May 8, 2017).

“Data shows that students of color are far more likely to be handcuffed, including in cases where the incident appeared to be based on emotional distress. A “child in crisis” incident is one where a student “displaying signs of emotional distress” is removed from the classroom and taken to a hospital for a psychological evaluation. In 2016, there were 262 “child in crisis” incidents where handcuffs were used – and 99 percent of those incidents involved Black or Latino children.”

There has never been a school shooting stopped by an armed teacher or a citizen conceal-carry owner

Article Compiled by Mary Beth Baxter from New Yorkers Against Gun Violence

The closest case I ever found was of a school staff member (and Army reservist commander) who went out to their car and got a gun, but the shooting was over by that point, the shooter was out of ammo and was driving out of the parking lot (the only reason he was stopped was that the shooter crashed his car, allowing the staff member to get to him and hold him under arrest).

However, there HAVE been plenty of cases where gun owners, legally carrying guns on school grounds, have CAUSED incidents on campus, including incidents that wound children, other adults, or themselves.

Here is a list of those incidents that I have found, which will be updated as I find more. So far, it is up to TWENTY TWO incidents, resulting in the wounding of five children and five adults. Fourteen incidents were caused by police officers or security guards.

March 13, 2018: A teacher and reserve police officer was giving a class on gun safety in his high school classroom in Seaside, CA, when he unintentionally fired his gun toward the ceiling. Bullet fragments wounded a 17-year old boy in the neck. Other students were injured by debris falling from the ceiling.

March 13, 2018: A school resource officer unintentionally discharged his handgun inside an Alexandria, VA, middle school. Luckily no one was injured.

February 28, 2018: A high school social studies teacher in Dalton, Georgia, barricaded himself in a classroom and fired a shot from a handgun. Luckily, no one was injured, and he was taken into custody. He had a history of mental problems and violent behavior that had led, at one time, of having his guns removed.

February 5, 2018: A police officer was at an elementary school in Maplewood, MN, "building relationships" with 3rd and 4th graders when one little boy reached over and pulled the trigger on the officer's holstered handgun. The gun fired into the floor. Luckily, no one was injured.

September 13, 2016: A school teacher at Cumberland Christian School, in Chambersburg, PA, left a loaded, unsecured handgun on a toilet in a bathroom. Four children, ages 6 to 8, went in the bathroom before one of the children reported the gun. Luckily, none of them fired the gun.

February 19, 2015: A school resource officer at Western Wayne School District in Pennsylvania unintentionally fired his handgun in the school. Luckily, no one was injured.

September 11, 2014: A teacher was in the bathroom of a school in Taylorsville, Utah, when she unintentionally shot herself in the leg with her own handgun.

January 18, 2014: An armed security guard left his weapon unattended in the bathroom, fully accessible to K-8 students, despite being a retired police weapons instructor.

January 18, 2014: Two police officers serving as school resource officers decided to clean their guns while on the grounds of an Akron, Ohio, high school. One of them unintentionally discharged his gun. Luckily, no one was injured.

October 24, 2013: A police officer left his loaded AR-15 assault rifle strapped to his motorcycle while visiting an elementary school. A boy pulled the trigger, firing the weapon and leading to a shrapnel injury of three kids.

August 24, 2013: A SWAT police officer was giving a presentation at an elementary school in Lodi, California, when a 6-8 year old boy fired the officer's holstered gun, hitting the officer in the leg.

May 15, 2013: A Winchester, PA, police officer boarded a special needs school bus to calm a student. After the officer sat next to him, the child reached over and pulled the trigger on the officer's handgun, discharging a round into the bus seat and floor. Luckily, no one was injured.

May 14, 2013: A school staffer with a conceal carry permit was offering a ride to a student, in the parking lot of a high school in Aurora, Colorado, when he unintentionally fired his legally concealed handgun, hitting the student in the leg.

April 16, 2013: A Boy Scout troop leader, who was also a retired police officer and conceal carry permit holder, dropped a fanny pack containing his gun while attending a scout meeting inside a Des Plaines, Illinois, grade school. The gun discharged, striking him in the leg. No one else was injured.

March 6, 2013: A recently-started armed resource officer program at schools in Highland, New York, was suspended after one of the security guards unintentionally fired his weapon in school. Children were present, but luckily no one was injured.

March 1, 2013: During a conceal carry training class, on school grounds, which was part of a new program to arm school staff, a school maintenance worker who was a student in the class unintentionally fired his weapon, wounding himself in the leg.

January 17, 2013: A charter school in Lapeer, Michigan, decided to start having an armed guard on campus. Three days after hiring a guard, the man left his weapon in a school bathroom where kids could have found it.

October 8, 2012: A man with a concealed handgun visited an elementary school classroom in Moore, Oklahoma, to help the teacher with her computer. His gun fell out and he left without it, only realizing it was missing after the media reported it. Small children were present in the room at the time.

March 22, 2012: A volunteer track coach at John Mall High School in Walsenburg, Colorado, unintentionally shot himself in the leg with his new .40 caliber Glock handgun, nearly bleeding to death. He was in his vehicle in the parking lot of the school sports complex.

December 8, 2011: A janitor with a conceal carry permit was working on ceiling tiles in a preschool classroom in Waterbury, Connecticut, when he took off his gun belt. He then left the loaded gun in the classroom and forgot about it. Monday morning, teachers came in the room and found the gun, only moments before 3- and 4-year olds entered the room.

September 12, 2011: An armed security guard, patrolling schools at night in Salem, Oregon, unintentionally lost his loaded firearm somewhere during his rounds. The gun was never found.

May 12, 2011: A school resource officer was cleaning his gun, while in the school building, and unintentionally fired the gun. The round went through the wall and into the nurse's room where there were two student, the nurse, and another adult. Luckily, no one was injured.

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Is the school district going to be responsible for liability, neglect, and loss of life if a child is injured or killed by an armed guard?

What will the insurance costs be associated with armed guards in schools?

Who will pay for training armed guards?