



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on February 19, 2018

A Common-Sense Strategy for Protecting Schools

As emotionally charged calls continue for stricter gun control in the aftermath of the latest school shooting, a number of school districts are being highlighted for their common-sense strategy of training and arming teachers and staff to protect students against such attacks.

In West Texas, the local school districts in the communities of Harrold and Holliday “have been allowing members of their staffs to conceal carry handguns for years,” reported KFDX television news in Wichita Falls. In fact, the tiny community of Harrold was the first to arm its teachers, voting to do so in August 2008.



Faculty members are selected by the school board to be trained to carry a concealed firearm on school grounds, and only the superintendent and a few others know who those teachers are.

“They keep it on them at all times,” said Harrold Superintendent David Thweatt of the armed-and-ready faculty. “Folks who come in, if they are coming in to do something like just happened, then they don’t know where they are going to meet resistance and that is very critical to our plan.” He added that the strategy is “very simple: train the individuals and keep them here. Make sure people know that is exactly what we will do to answer an intruder.”

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Thweatt recalled that when the plan was first implemented, some community members were not convinced that the strategy was right. “It was iffy as it was for the first several years,” he said. However, “that all changed in December 2012 after Sandy Hook. Suddenly it took on a whole new meaning.”

In nearby Holliday, Texas, superintendent Kevin Dyes said the response by parents to armed faculty has been positive. “They have expressed that they feel better,” he said, knowing their children are safe from armed intruders. “If there has been any response to my knowledge the vast majority has been positive.”

The sentiments are similar in Claude, Texas, where a number of unidentified staff members carry concealed firearms. In fact, signs at the entrances of Claude schools warn potential intruders: “ATTENTION: Please be aware that the staff at Claude ISD is armed and may use whatever force is necessary to protect our students.”

Parents with children who attend school in Claude say they feel good knowing that there are responsible teachers and staff who are armed and able to protect their students. “It makes me feel really, really safe that we have staff on hand if anything happened,” said one parent. “It brings me peace of mind.”

Claude ISD staffers who conceal-carry on school grounds are required to practice shooting every month and train with local law enforcement.



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“I don’t know who carries” said one Claude parent, “but I do know that if they’ve taken that dedication, they’re going to do everything in their power to keep our kids safe, even if they’re in harm’s way.”

In 2016, Colorado’s Hanover School District voted to allow teachers and staff to be armed on school grounds. The district, 30 miles southeast of Colorado Springs, has two schools and nearly 300 students and available law enforcement officers must drive at least 20 minutes to answer a call in the district.

Also since 2016, [Texas state law](#) has allowed citizens with conceal-carry permits to be armed on the state’s college and university campuses.

Since the tragic mass shooting in Florida February 12, calls have increased around the nation to allow teachers and staff to be armed. In North Carolina, Republican State Representative Larry Pittman told fellow legislators that he believes “many lives could have been saved” had teachers and staff been armed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. “We have to get over this useless hysteria about guns and allow school personnel to have a chance to defend their lives and those of their students,” Pittman told his fellow lawmakers.

And, as reported by [Townhall.com](#), in Ohio, Butler County Sheriff Richard Jones “announced that he will be offering an opportunity for educators to learn how to defend themselves and potentially protect the lives of their students. Sheriff Jones tweeted that he will offer free concealed carry classes to teachers in Butler County, Ohio. Jones emphasized that there will be a limited number.”

In a Facebook post Jones wrote that “the current way we do things in the school system needs to be changed.” Additionally, he called for “armed guards in the schools, [and] we need to look at metal detectors. This is not going to stop or go away, but we need to be prepared and not have our heads in the sand.”

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