



Federal Funding and Local Corruption, Not Guns, Responsible for Parkland School Shooting

In the wake of the deadly school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in the Miami suburb of Parkland, Florida, on February 14, calls for greater gun control have dominated headlines and social media posts. The shooting has been held up as an example of the failure of allowing private citizens to own certain weapons. In reality, the shooting — which left 17 dead — is actually an example of how police and school corruption fueled by federal funding endangers the lives of students.



Almost before the smoke cleared and the bodies could be counted, the Left was at their same, tired, old tricks — claiming that if there were just “common-sense gun control,” this tragedy would never have happened and that enacting that gun control now will help guarantee that it never happens again. Whereas that narrative has had limited success for the anti-gun lobby in the past, this time it seems the Left tweaked the recipe enough to get it right.

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With student groups funded by prominent Hollywood liberals, emotionally appealing hashtags to fuel social media campaigns, and non-stop mainstream and social media coverage of former gun rights supporters destroying their guns in viral videos, the push for gun control has moved forward to new ground. In a move that surprised many, President Trump even got on board with plans to ban certain types of firearms and accessories.

The reality, though, is that the lack of “common-sense gun control” is not to blame for what happened in Parkland. That blame appears to rest squarely on the shoulders of local law-enforcement agencies and school administrators who entered into an agreement in 2013 to prevent police from arresting students who break the law. This agreement — the [Collaborative Agreement on School Discipline](#) — was designed to game federal school funding programs by circumventing law and order to keep kids in school instead of in jail, even when they committed serious crimes. School enrollment essentially became a “get out of jail free” card — or more accurately, a “never even go to jail” card.

One such student, it appears, was Nikolas Cruz, who despite a long history of altercations with police, multiple social media posts of pictures of him holding guns and making threats, and multiple reports describing him to authorities as a potential “school shooter,” managed never to be charged with a crime that would have prevented his purchasing the gun that he used in the Valentine’s Day School Massacre.

Let that sink in: A troubled and violent young man who [posted at least once on social media that he was “going to be a professional school shooter”](#) was not arrested until months later when the bodies of 17 of his victims proved it was too late.

Much has been reported on the facts that the school resource officer cowered in safety outside the school while the shooting was taking place, that four Broward County Sheriff’s deputies behaved



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on March 2, 2018

similarly, and that the FBI failed to act on at least two strong tips (one of which was the “professional school shooter” post). While any and all of those derelictions of duty are without excuse and certainly contributed to the tragedy, they all happened more than four years after the signing of those 17 victims’ death warrants. Those warrants take the form of the Collaborative Agreement on School Discipline.

When Broward County Public Schools gained notoriety for having the highest number of school-related arrests statewide in the 2011-2012 school year with a total of 1,062 arrests, freshly minted School Superintendent Robert Runcie (shown) began collaborating with local law-enforcement agencies, other government agencies, and community organizations to disrupt the “schoolhouse to jailhouse pipeline.” The result was the Collaborative Agreement on School Discipline, signed by Superintendent Runcie and other Broward County School Board officials, the chief judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit, State Attorney Michael Satz, Public Defender Howard Finkelstein, Sheriff Scott Israel and his office’s general counsel, Fort Lauderdale Police Chief Franklin Adderley, and Fort Lauderdale NAACP President Marsha Ellison (who also signed as the chair of the Fort Lauderdale Juvenile Advisory Board).

The agreement has the stated purposes of using “alternatives to expulsion or referral to law enforcement agencies by addressing disruptive behavior through restitution, civil citation, teen court, neighborhood restorative justice, or similar program” and establishing “guidelines for the handling of school-based student misbehavior” that keep student out of “the Juvenile Justice System.”

The agreement was created to keep students from being arrested because “the use of arrests and referrals to the criminal justice system may decrease a student’s chance of graduation, entering higher education, joining the military, and getting a job.” It also interferes with federal funding in the form of matching grants that are based on both involvement in federally promoted programs and the size of a given school district’s student body.

Students who are expelled when they go to jail for committing crimes decrease the student body and — therefore — the district’s federal funding. Schools that participate in federal programs — such as the PROMISE (Preventing Recidivism through Opportunities, Mentoring, Interventions, Support, and Education) program, are offered higher matching grants. To know what caused the tragedy at Parkland, follow the money.

The Collaborative Agreement on School Discipline fits PROMISE like a hand in a glove.

Runcie appears to be the architect of the agreement. He is a long-time ally of former President Obama, dating back to Runcie’s days with the Chicago Public School System. His biographical profile on the Broward County School Board website states:

Superintendent Runcie knows first-hand how a high-quality education can transform a person’s life. Born in Jamaica, he moved to the United States as a young boy and became the first member of his family to attend college, graduating from Harvard University and earning an MBA from Northwestern University. He later founded a management and technology consulting company and held several strategic leadership positions with Chicago Public Schools, including serving as its Chief Information Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Area Instructional Officer and Chief of Staff to the Board of Education.

And:

To ensure all students have the ability to complete their education and to eliminate the “school house to jailhouse pipeline,” Superintendent Runcie led BCPS efforts to become a national model for ending zero tolerance policies for *non-violent offences* in schools. With the support of the School



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Board and through collaborative community efforts, BCPS has instituted new, effective practices for handling student behavior incidents, without resorting to law enforcement involvement. Student-related arrests are down by 65% since Runcie's arrival.

While he may be able to boast a 65-percent reduction in student-related arrests, that is not the same thing as a reduction in student-related crime. An agreement to stop arresting student criminals simply skews the numbers while creating a false sense of safety and encouraging more criminal behavior.

After all, the agreement that laid the groundwork for Runcie's boastful claim states:

WHEREAS, with a joint commitment to ending school-based arrests for minor misbehavior, school districts and law enforcement agencies across the country have improved school safety, school engagement and academic achievement. The parties to this agreement are confident that by working together, they can return Broward County Public Schools to a culture of common sense discipline that allows all students to enjoy a safe and effective education.

The agreement is as dishonest as it is nefarious. If "school safety, school engagement and academic achievement" could be increased by "ending school-based arrests" (of which this particularly dangerous school system had 1,062 the year before this agreement artificially lowered those numbers by 65 percent — leaving a "mere" average of 372 arrests), then perhaps these experts who were "confident" of that outcome can explain how Parkland became the "most deadly school shooting" in history. (In reality, that designation — often assigned by media to Parkland — actually belongs to the April 16, 2007 Virginia Tech shooting, with almost twice as many deaths as Parkland, but when pushing for draconian gun control, the media needs this to be the "most deadly shooting" in history to make the narrative sell.)

The agreement includes a laundry list of criminal activity that is exempt from arrest. That list includes — among other crimes — those related to alcohol, drugs, theft, vandalism, disorderly conduct, and even making threats. Criminal activity follows a predictable pattern of escalation: Very few criminals start with murder — they usually start with smaller crimes and, as they get away with it and get bolder, move on to more serious crimes. By allowing students a "crime pass," school officials, law-enforcement officials, and community "leaders" guarantee worse criminal behavior will follow.

The policies stemming from the agreement led to Cruz not being arrested for making threats against other students. In fact, an e-mail from school administrators and circulated among teachers at the school addressed his threats. The action the school took? In accordance with the agreement, rather than having Cruz arrested, they simply banned him from carrying a backpack at school.

That goes a long way toward explaining how Cruz "fell through the cracks." The cracks were designed to exempt threats, so Cruz was able to continue making them and then escalate to carrying them out. Seventeen victims later, the same people who created this situation are blaming the gun Cruz would have been unable to purchase if their idiotic policy had simply allowed him to be arrested and charged for any of his many crimes.

Because blaming others — especially an inanimate object — beats taking personal responsibility, hands down.

By entering into an agreement to artificially lower the crime stats in Broward County schools by preventing students being arrested for real crimes, the people responsible for this agreement kept the flow of federal dollars coming into those schools. They also created a situation in which criminal behavior was treated as no big deal. Students learn what they see modeled. What they are learning at



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Broward County schools is that criminal activity is acceptable.

Had Cruz been held in check by being held accountable for his actions, had he not received his education in a school system that fosters a culture of criminality, had this agreement never been created, 17 souls would likely have had little more to worry about on February 14 than whom to ask to be their Valentine. This tragedy could have been avoided, not by “common-sense gun control,” but by real law enforcement and “common-sense” school policies.

Image: Screenshot of a [YouTube video by the Miami Herald](#)



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