



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on August 20, 2018

## As the New School Year Begins, Teachers Are Being Armed and Trained to Stop Shootings

As the new school year begins, districts across the country are deciding to arm teachers, hoping that such policies will prove a deterrent to any madman with plans on shooting schoolchildren.

In the wake of the massacre of students attending the Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, on February 14 of this year, local school boards have found room in the budget to buy firearms for their educators, promising to train the teachers to protect their young charges with weapons capable of stopping any would-be gunman before he kills an innocent, young scholar.



Teachers and students of the Thorndale, Texas, Independent School District were greeted on the first day of school by signs announcing the new normal for the nearly 600 students attending the school three districts included in the program.

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“Attention,” the sign reads, “Please be aware that the staff at the Thorndale ISD are armed and may use whatever force whatever force is necessary to protect our students.”

Over the summer, the school district’s Board of Trustees created a “School Guardian” program which selects faculty members at the district’s schools to carry firearms and to be trained in their effective use.

According to the Thorndale Independent School District’s Facebook page, the teachers have received “extensive” training and will continue their training throughout the school year.

As for the identities of the armed teachers and staff, the school board will keep that information private.

“While there is no way to be completely prepared for any type of catastrophic event we want to be as ready as possible. We pray that we NEVER have the need to use our Guardian program,” the school district posted on its Facebook page.

The Thorndale District isn’t the only district in the Lone Star State welcoming armed staff this year. According to a report published by PEW, “At least 227 school districts, more than 20 percent of the state’s 1,031 districts, had authorized the guardian program by mid-August.”

Texas was the scene of another massacre committed in May when a shooter killed eight students and two teachers at a high school in Santa Fe, Texas.

“There’s a need out there,” says Craig Bessent of the Wylie Independent School District, a former bull rider turned “guardian,” the title given to the armed staff members.

While the standard procedure is to keep the names of the marshalls secret, Bessent was selected to be a



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spokesman for the new policy.

“A school marshal’s responsibility is to isolate, distract and neutralize the threat. If they’re shooting at the school marshal, they’re not shooting at the kids and teachers,” Bessent explained.

Naturally, not everyone is pleased with the plan to put guns in the hands of teachers and staff.

“We just absolutely do not agree with gun lobbyists that turning janitors and librarians into sharpshooters is effective,” said Shannon Watts, founder of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, a group of activists working to keep similar proposals from getting passed in other states.

In Florida, under a new law enacted earlier this year, state legislators left to the individual districts the decision of whether or not to arm school staff. The state legislature set aside \$67 million to pay for the arms, ammunition, and training of school personnel through the “marshal” program, though in the Sunshine State, full-time teachers are not eligible to serve as guardians.

In Colorado, the state that was the location of the Columbine massacre in 1999, an organization called FASTER (Faculty/Administrator Safety Training and Emergency Response) is working to save the lives of the state’s students by providing extensive training that includes simulated live-shooter tests.

“I’m a decades-long gun owner and have always believed that a well-trained and armed citizen — an ordinary citizen — can help save kids’ lives inside a school and outside a school,” explained Laura Carno, the creator of the training program.

Carno reports that FASTER has provided training to at least 25 of Colorado’s 181 school districts.

Finally, in the Laurens County, Georgia, School District, students there saw new signs proclaiming: “Staff members are ARMED and TRAINED. Any attempt to harm children will be met with Deadly Force.”

According to Laurens County School District Superintendent Dr. Dan Brigman, the signs tell the truth and all nine of the districts’ schools have armed teachers and staff ready to protect their young charges from an armed intruder.

From gun-free school zones to armed teachers, the response to the threat of armed violence perpetrated on innocent school children has come from government: local, state, and federal.

While there are disarmament advocates working around the country to keep guns not only out of schools but also out of homes, there is undeniable widespread support for training and arming teachers.

But although schools should be able to protect their students, there is one problem with the armed teacher policy as now being implemented: The solution is statist.

Why must the answer to the tragedy of school shootings be planned and executed by government? Why can’t the people, exercising their natural right of self-defense, choose to carry or not to carry arms? Why must government insinuate itself into every problem, promoting itself as the source of all solutions?

This is the precise point made by Tom Mullen writing for Foundation for Economic Education (FEE):

The conservative answer to liberal prohibition (oxymoron?) is to “arm and train the teachers.” While no one has come out and suggested mandating teachers carry firearms or be trained in using them, every suggestion seems to suggest “we” (i.e., the government) need to do the arming and



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training.

Here's a little newsflash for both sides: the teachers are already armed.

It's not a matter of arming teachers, but rather to cease disarming them when they report to work.

No, not every teacher carries firearms and perhaps not as high a percentage of teachers do so as the percentage of the general population that carries. But there are over three million teachers in public schools and some percentage of them have concealed carry permits. It would be unlikely that there aren't at least some members of every faculty in America that have a concealed carry permit.

And there we have it. As "conservatives" and certainly as constitutionalists, we believe the answer to all of society's ills — economic and social — lies in the power of the people to act in ways conducive to their own safety and their own liberty.

Arming teachers is a step in the right direction, but removing government from the equation is the only constitutional and free-market solution.

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