

Armed Staff in Schools

Arming staff members is a very hot topic in Ohio and around the country. It's a topic many districts, including ours, is exploring. Currently there are over 100 districts in over 63 counties in the state of Ohio with armed staff members. **I know this concept sounds scary, but as with anything new, having the correct information about an issue helps in making an informed decision.** The following information from the website listed below explains the top myths concerning this topic.

<http://cocivilliberties.org/wp-content/uploads/FASTER-Busting-the-Myths-About-Armed-Scholl-Staff.pdf>

Here are the top 8 armed school staff myths:

Myth: We shouldn't require teachers to carry a gun.

Fact: No district is requiring any school staffer to carry a concealed firearm. When a school district decides to authorize staff to carry, they ask for volunteers. And most districts get far more volunteers than they thought they would need.

Myth: Teachers don't want to carry a gun; they want to teach.

Fact: Many teachers already carry a concealed firearm in the rest of their lives with the exception of being authorized to carry on campus. They must disarm for work.

Myth: We can't train teachers to be police officers; they don't have the right mindset.

Fact: No one is suggesting they be made into police officers. Authorized school staffers are extremely well trained in stopping an active killer and in stopping the bleeding for those who have been injured. *Both of these skillsets will save lives.*

When you talk to those school staffers who have been trained and carry on campus today, they are insulted by the suggestion that they don't have the mindset to stop someone trying to kill their kids.

Myth: Cops won't know who the bad guy is if teachers also have guns.

Fact: A vast majority of these mass casualty events are over before law enforcement arrives. Staffers are trained on how to account for potential confusion in the 911 call and how to advise law enforcement who the armed defender is. Schools that have armed staff already talk to their local law enforcement to advise them just who on campus is armed.

Myth: Kids will be frightened if they see their teacher with a gun.

Fact: Kids don't see the firearms. Armed school staff conceal their weapons, and no one is talking about them open carrying. Some school children who have been interviewed actually appreciate armed staff because it makes them feel protected.

Myth: Our school has a School Resource Officer (SRO) or other armed and uniformed security. We are protected and don't need additional armed staff.

Fact: Having armed and uniformed security staff on campus is better than no one being armed. In the 2013 attack on Arapahoe High School in Centennial, CO, there was an SRO on campus. When he confronted the killer, the coward killed himself. But it was not in time to save Claire Davis. The SRO responded at full speed to the sound of gunfire, but in the 45-seconds it took him to get there, it was too late to save Claire. Had there been an armed staff member closer than 45-seconds away, he/she just may have had a chance to stop him before he was able to kill her.

In Parkland Florida, there was an SRO on campus, and that was neither a deterrent nor a guarantee against the loss of innocent life.

Myth: Based on the low “hit rate” of law enforcement when the service weapon is fired, there is no way an armed teacher can hit the killer.

Fact: Most of these killers commit suicide when confronted with an armed defender without a shot being fired. And in a situation where an armed staff member would have to engage the killer, any chance to stop him is better than no chance to stop him.

In addition, FASTER trained school staff members pass a qualification test that exceeds the test that law enforcement is required to pass in their respective states.

Myth: Schools can't afford school supplies, so how can we expect them to afford guns and training?

Fact: Groups like [FASTERSavesLives](#) in Ohio and [FASTERColorado](#) in Colorado raise private money to help schools afford the very advanced training. Schools spend a lot of money on SROs, video systems, and other school security measures. Training armed school staff is a very small expense in comparison.

I want to reiterate that we are just exploring this option. We could have the option of implementing armed staff without public notice, but we want to be transparent. I am asking you to look at the information concerning the myths and review the following website, fastersaveslives.org. We will seek public input concerning this topic on our website through our armed staff survey. Please contact me with questions and concerns at hill_dickerson@tccsa.net or by telephone at 419-368-8501.