

Arming School Personnel Consensus Question Research

TOPIC 5: Perceptions of Safety

10. Given that the new lockdown drills and additional measures schools are already in use, with which statements do you agree?

- A. Having armed school personnel armed causes excess trauma for children.
- B. Having armed school personnel armed makes students feel safer.
- C. Having armed police/resource officers has already caused trauma for students.
- D. Having armed police/resource officers makes students feel safe.
- E. Arming personnel, whether teachers or safety officers, will not change the climate that has been created by the number of mass shootings.
- F. Arming school personnel should not be permitted.

Research:

The American Academy of Pediatrics recently came out strongly against all the calmest, most mild versions of active shooter drills, conducted much more like fire drills, focusing on safe movement of students through the school building. Suggesting that milder drills would be much less of a drain on both school resources and mental health reserves for the students.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/doctors-call-for-immediate-end-to-high-intensity-active-shooter-drills-in-schools_1_5f43fe1ec5b66a80ee164321

Although there are relatively few studies and surveys about how students view arming teachers, there are two surveys of teenagers that emerge. Both show that students are skeptical about how safe arming teachers are and a majority felt it would make schools more dangerous. There are not apparent studies of the views of younger students.

In addition, special considerations for the school location (urban/suburban and rural) as well as age of the students (elementary, middle school and high school) is warranted.

Sides, John. "NewPoll: Most Teenagers and Adults Think Arming Teachers is Dangerous, Favor Minimum Age for Buying Assault Rifles," <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/03/09/new-poll-most-teenagers-and-adults-think-arming-teachers-is-dangerous-favor-minimum-age-for-buying-assault-rifles/>

Several surveys indicate that both students and teachers support SRO's as a way to maintain a safe environment and enforce the law. One survey, however, revealed that this view was stronger among teachers than students and for middle school students than high school students.

Rippetoe, Sarah. (2009). "Teachers' and Students' Perceptions about the Roles of School Resource Officers in Maintaining School Safety." Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 1828. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/1828>

Chrusciel, M. M., Wolfe, S., Hansen A. J., Rojek J. J., & Kaminsk, R. (2015). "Law Enforcement Executive and Principal Perspectives on School Safety Measures: School Resource Officers and Armed School Employees." *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 38(1), 24-39.

Van Sparrentak, Murphy, Chang, Tammy, Miller, L., Nichols, Lauren P., & Sonnevill, Kendrin R. (2018). "Youth Opinions About Guns and Gun Control in the United States." *JAMA Pediatrics*, 172(9), 884-886.

Research Note: Please reference Question #2 regarding the latest SRO perceptions.

11. How does the presence of armed school personnel affect students of color?

- a. Makes students of color fearful that s/he is more likely to be mistaken for an aggressor or active shooter than white students.
- b. Makes students of color feel safer.
- c. Makes students of color feel less safe.
- d. Arming school personnel has no effect on the perceptions of students of color regarding their safety.

Research:

Black children are ten times more likely to be affected by gun violence, and often large gun reform movements like the March for Our Lives do not pay proper attention to this fact, and ignore how urban schools and schools with majority students of color populations are disproportionately affected by gun violence in schools.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/the-nation-is-focused-on-students-and-gun-violence-but-kids-in-urban-schools-want-to-know-wheres-everybody-been/2018/03/12/3a506ff4-2633-11e8-bc72-077aa4dab9ef_story.html

Non-white students are more likely to be disciplined, and more likely to receive harsher punishments for breaking school rules. This has especially been the case since several schools instated “zero-tolerance” policies in the 1990s in an attempt to reduce school-related violence. That being said, this is an important factor to consider when regarding the perceptions of students of color and how having firearms in school may affect non-white student populations differently and more negatively.

https://hollins-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1mpjqk0/TN_gale_legal137465260

<https://everytownresearch.org/reports/keeping-our-schools-safe-a-plan-to-stop-mass-shootings-and-end-all-gun-violence-in-american-schools/>

Research Note: In the wake of the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis (6/2020) and the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests around the world. The effect of armed school personnel on children of color needs to be considered and studied further.

12. Which would create a healthier and safer environment for students and school personnel?

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|--|-----|----|--------------|
| A. Creating and monitoring the safety measures related to the building design. | Yes | No | No Consensus |
| B. Adding mental health resources. | Yes | No | No Consensus |
| C. Providing Active Shooter Training for students and school personnel | Yes | No | No Consensus |
| D. Educating students and school personnel about violence prevention in schools. | Yes | No | No Consensus |
| E. Arming the Security Resource Officer | Yes | No | No Consensus |
| F. Arming school personnel | Yes | No | No Consensus |

Research:

The Association for Learning Environment’s Safe Schools Task Force has created a Risk Assessment Matrix Tool used to assess threat, vulnerability and risk, identify upgrades to the environment and re-evaluate the impact of loss and vulnerability.

This same organization outlines and defines different countermeasures (Detection, Monitoring, Prevention, Mitigation and Response) and curative measures (features of the school facilities that promote mental well-being such as natural light and smaller class sizes) that schools can use to mitigate threats.

<https://schoolsafety.a4le.org/school-facilities/>

Threat assessment teams are found to be highly effective in identifying students at risk of committing violence and getting them the help they need. Everytown, AFT, and NEA have recommended that state legislatures make funds available for these resources.

Everytown, AFT, and NEA also recommend teacher training that includes active shooter situations, lockout and evacuation procedures and emergency medical training. At the same time, given concerns raised by parents, students and medical professionals, they refrain from recommending live shooter drills for students.

<https://everytownresearch.org/reports/keeping-our-schools-safe-a-plan-to-stop-mass-shootings-and-end-all-gun-violence-in-american-schools/>

Summary Question:

13. With which statement do you most agree regarding arming school personnel?

- A. Arming school personnel creates a healthier and safer environment.
- B. Arming school personnel creates a less healthy and safe environment.
- C. Arming school personnel does not affect the health and safety of the environment.
- D. Arming school personnel should not be permitted.

Research Note: The decision to arm school personnel is multi-layered and emotional. In an effort to provide League of Women Voters Ohio a concise perspective we chose five boundary topics: Decision Making; Cost & Liability; The Armed Personnel, Checks and Training; Storage; and Perceptions of Safety. Also attached is the [Summary of Research on the School Environment](#).

Taking all these topics into consideration, what do *you* think about arming school personnel?