

TALKING POINTS | When talking to ELECTED OFFICIALS

Hundreds of thousands of students have been exposed to gun violence since Columbine and it is getting worse, not better. Studies show that most parents are concerned about their child's safety in school.

While many political leaders are working on the implementation of long-lasting solutions, eradicating gun violence and improving mental health in America will take time. But our country and community leaders need to have a bias toward action now. We cannot expect teachers to continue to face active shooters bare-handed with only their courage. Defensive measures such as Emergency Response Shields can protect teachers and students immediately.

Remember the days when fire was fought with buckets of water and a line of humans? Then someone invented the fire extinguisher, the smoke detector, and Smokey the Bear to promote fire prevention. That time is here for active shooter prevention.

An Emergency Response Shield is armor designed to be hung on the wall in an easily accessible location, much like a fire extinguisher. The shield is the fire extinguisher for gunfire, and should be placed with other emergency tools for ease of access.

In the event of an active shooter situation, able-bodied faculty, staff, and students can protect and defend themselves using the shield. It provides a critical layer of protection when escape is not an option and first responders have not yet arrived. Additionally, the shields are a critical tool for first responders who may or may not have ballistic shields available upon their arrival at the active shooter event.

The shields stop ammunition from assault rifles (including green tip rounds), shotguns, and handguns, and will also protect against blades and blunt force weapons.

These defensive measures work with the Department of Homeland Security's Active Shooter Preparedness Program recommendation to "Run, Hide, Fight" and the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) to "Avoid, Deny, Defend."

In school lockdown or evacuation situations, armor products – coupled with training – empower able-bodied faculty, staff, and students to defend themselves from a threat with added confidence and a greater chance of survival. Armor stops bullets and saves lives.

The technology used in these bulletproof measures is derived from armor technologies developed for Department of Defense Programs and fielded on United States military vehicles and used in federal law enforcement body armor.

Years of implementation in schools and other public facilities have shown the shields provide significant benefits to mental health, as students and staff feel empowered and protected. Armor can also deter an attack. Predators prefer to attack soft targets and will shy away from a well protected and armored school. Products such as this create a renewed sense of security and confidence in both our teachers and students that they can be safe in school.

The time is now for leadership to step up and provide the needed tools for our school communities.

More information is available at www.hardwirellc.com or feel free to contact us at 1.800.HARDWIRE.