



## Association of Metropolitan School Districts

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# Position on School Safety

**State policymakers must prioritize school safety by providing necessary funding for staff training and support, specialized mental health services, and secure facilities. In addition, state policymakers should pass legislation, such as universal background checks, red flag laws, and requiring secure firearm storage, to reduce gun violence and make our schools safer.**

## AMSD BELIEVES

- A safe and welcoming learning and work environment is an essential characteristic of an effective school.
- Keeping students, teachers and staff safe from the threat of gun violence is the joint responsibility of educators, parents, law enforcement, community leaders, and state policymakers.
- School safety is a collaborative community endeavor situated in the local context through ongoing communication and training across schools, law enforcement, and community organizations.
- School districts must be given the resources needed to provide safe learning environments for students and staff.
- It is critical to reduce stigma and increase knowledge of mental health problems and ensure access to high quality mental health treatment.

## BACKGROUND

- Public schools have become the de facto mental health system for children and youth.
- According to the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey:<sup>1</sup>
  - 29 percent of students reported long-term mental health problems, compared to 23 percent in 2019 and 18 percent in 2016.
  - 28 percent of 11th graders have seriously considered suicide at some point in their life, and at significantly higher rates for our LGBTQ+ students.
  - 21 percent of students reported being bullied or harassed weekly in at least one way during the 30 days preceding the survey; the results are higher for students from low income backgrounds (40 percent) and LGBTQ+ students (31 percent).
- An estimated 4.6 million American children live in households with at least one loaded, unlocked firearm.
- Evidence shows that secure firearm storage is an essential component to keep schools and students safe.
- Every year roughly 350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else and another 1,200 children and teens die by gun suicide each year, most often using guns belonging to a family member.
- In incidents of gun violence on school grounds, 75 percent of active shooters are current students or recent graduates, and up to 80 percent of shooters under the age of 18 obtained the gun from their own home, a relative's home, or from friends.<sup>2</sup>

### References:

<sup>1</sup> [The 2022 Minnesota Student Survey](#), Minnesota Department of Education

<sup>2</sup> [The Violence Project: How To Stop A Mass Shooting Epidemic](#) by Jillian Peterson, PhD and James Densley, PhD