

SECURITY



Patrick V. Fiel Sr. is the founder of PVF Security Consulting. He has over 40 years of experience in managing law enforcement and security organizations. He served as the Executive Director of Security for the Washington D.C. Public Schools and worked with thousands of schools to provide security services and solutions. He can be reached at (910) 789-4265 or pyfiel@gmail.com.

School shootings continue to rise



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Patrick V. Fiel

A parent's worst nightmare is a report of a shooting at their child's school. The recent shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, left nineteen young students and two teachers deceased.

Schools are generally a safe place for students and staff; however, according to data gathered by [Education Week](#), there have been 27 school shootings so far this school year, resulting in 27 deaths and 56 injuries. School incidents are happening on campuses both small and large. They have occurred in cities, suburbs, and rural areas; unfortunately, no school is immune.

It's more important than ever that school administrators, staff, and local emergency responders complete a thorough risk assessment and all-hazards assessment of schools and their campuses. The comprehensive risk assessment process is designed to reduce incidents and pinpoint critical areas of vulnerability. The report should cover the following areas: community/surrounding areas, school perimeter, school buildings and other areas on campus. These assessments result in an initial phase which develops a course of action, a strategic plan, and a budget.

Any plan must undoubtedly include security technology, but no single security implementation will protect a school; true protection comes from many layers of security protocols and processes. Current school communication/fire systems must be frequently tested (PA system, phones, radios, duress buttons, fire alarms, and other devices).

Funding and grants for schools may be available from State or Federal Government agencies. As available, these funds can be used to upgrade existing systems or implement recent technologies.

In addition to security technology, all schools should have emergency/crisis plans and lockdown procedures in place, which include: the training of staff, teachers, and students, the conducting of safety/security drills with emergency responders, and the practicing of responses to different emergency situations, such as active shooter scenarios.

All entry, exit, and classroom doors should be locked and monitored throughout the day. If doors are opened, they must be monitored by staff, teachers, or security personnel.

There is no way of predicting where the next active school shooter will occur, but school board members and school administrators can work with law enforcement to be prepared to take preventative measures now to mitigate and protect their students, staff, and visitors.

School resource officers are needed in all schools with additional counselors; however, the only way to abate the weapons coming into a school is to have a secured campus and by using today's modern security technology.

Let's be proactive rather than reactive. Together we could save children's lives.



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