



I Want to Be Armed with Teaching Tools, Not a Gun

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This week, a school shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas ended the lives of 2 adults and 19 children. As a Black woman, I am still feeling despair in my heart over the shooting in Buffalo, New York where Black people were targeted and killed. As I work to find a way to process these emotions as both a parent and a Black woman, I hear foolery being offered as a solution to combating school shootings ... arm teachers.

When I left Purdue University after graduating with a degree in English education, I had no intention of being trained to fire a weapon in a school setting. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton suggested that arming teachers will help prevent school shootings. When I read about this, I thought about a tweet a few years ago from Dr. Jennifer McCormick who was the Indiana Superintendent of Instruction at the time.

Asking educators to do 'one more thing' without removing anything from their plate is not helping the profession, purpose or kids.

[#bemindful](#)



This tweet used to be McCormick's pinned tweet. Although no longer visible, the media that was linked to the tweet showed a coin with liquid that would clearly fall off if one more drop was added. Teachers have way too much to do to add learning how to load and fire a weapon to the list. I want to be clear; I am not suggesting removing a teacher task to add learning how to use a weapon. I am simply asserting that teachers are taxed and even hearing this idea again, even if not implemented, is harmful to teachers.

Teachers are asked to supply school supplies, have extra snacks to feed hungry kids, have hygiene products available, be aware of any signs of mental health issues, complete state mandated training, district mandated training, school mandated training and/or department or grade level training, be data-driven, create engaging lesson plans, grade and provide thoughtful feedback, administer standardized test, district assessments, their own assessments, connect struggling parents to resources, help students manage their behavior,

accept low pay, and of course squeeze in actually teaching the engaging lesson plans. On top of all of this, this individual decided to get up one bright morning and spit these words from his lips suggesting that teachers should know how to use a firearm. Miss me with that.

It is already exhausting practicing lockdown drills. It is even scarier when teachers don't know if it is a drill, but must also try to be the calm in the center of the storm. I remember attending an ALICE training. Alice stands for alert, lockdown, inform, counter, and evacuate. Some of the information bothered me, and I talked about it with my dad. The presenter explained that if I heard a child yelling for help to not open the door after we had closed it because opening that door could result in more casualties. Logically, I can hear the math ... one child versus an entire class. Then, my dad told me that in the Marines he was taught to complete the objective despite how you feel in the moment or would feel after it was over. He told me, in my case, the objective was to keep as many children alive as possible and to keep myself alive because I am a mother. How do you sleep at night and live the rest of your life if you did not try to help protect every single kid?

I want a day to come when teachers do not have to have these conversations with loved ones or internally. Luckily, the experts who have researched school shootings do not support arming teachers. I want less debate about whether we should or should not arm teachers. I want actions to take place to eliminate the need for this conversation.