

Heads of Schools Speak Out Against Gun Violence

An Open Letter to the President and Our Nation's Legislative Leaders

As Heads of Independent Schools in the New York City metropolitan area and across New York State responsible for the education and physical safety of tens of thousands of children, we are heartbroken over the recent massacre in Parkland, Florida. We stand in support of the Parkland survivors and their efforts to effect change.

It was five years ago last month we wrote following the massacre at Newtown, Connecticut. Sadly, we have seen too many school shootings since cut short too many innocent lives with little to no change in gun laws. But the horrific dimensions of the Parkland tragedy are so profound that we are compelled to rise up again and say, "Never Again!" As the recent events in Parkland and the scenes of other mass shootings teach us, the easy and virtually unrestricted availability of highly lethal, semiautomatic assault weapons and ammunition places our schools, most especially our children, in jeopardy.

We implore you, Mr. President and our national legislative leaders, to do everything necessary to stem this tide of senseless gun violence. Address, and ultimately deny, unrestricted access to weapons and ammunition that have no legitimate sporting, recreational or protective purpose. Recognize that the proliferation of military-grade guns and ammunition leads to more gun violence and more gun deaths. The statistics are compelling and cannot be ignored.

The United States leads the world in the number of guns per capita; it leads in homicides, suicides and accidental deaths involving guns; and it leads the world in the number of children killed by guns, every year. In these grim statistical categories, no nation comes close to our level of violence and gun-related deaths. The United States of America can and must do better. Now is the time to take action. As educators, we believe in the United States Constitution. We also believe our country need not choose between the protection of responsible gun ownership and the prevention of gun violence and that both can be achieved through thoughtful and forceful legislation.

Never before have so many Independent School leaders in our region spoken with one voice on behalf of a single issue. We are moved to do so out of a duty to our students and all of our nation's children and we find inspiration in the voices and actions of the students who are refusing to go about business as usual. We stand ready to help in this effort, and encourage our colleagues leading schools across the country to join us. Above all, we demand that reason and compassion prevail.

We are Heads of schools serving children from nursery through high school. We are Republicans, Democrats and Independents. We are parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles. We are responsible for the education, safety and welfare of children each and every day, and we know the time for action is now.

Respectfully,

Heads of Schools (Listed Alphabetically)

John Allman, Trinity School
Concepcion Alvar, Marymount School of New York
Jessica Bagby, Ethical Culture Fieldston School
John Baldi, Vincent Smith School
Bart Baldwin, St. Luke's School
Audrius Barzdukas, Poly Prep Country Day School
Mimi Basso, West Side Montessori School
Alan Bernstein, Lawrence Woodmere Academy
John Botti, Browning School
Micaela Bracamonti, The Lang School
Susan Braun, Waldorf School of Garden City
Bodie Brizendine, The Spence School
John Buck, Long Island Lutheran
Paul Burke, Nightingale-Bamford School
Frank J. Carnabuci III, Birch Wathen Lenox School
Brian Carty, De La Salle Academy
Drew Casertano, Millbrook School
Maria Castelluccio, Léman Manhattan Preparatory School
Carrie Catapano, West End Day School
Ken Catrone, Soundview Preparatory School
Benedict Chant, Poughkeepsie Day School
Joseph J. Ciancaglini, Convent of the Sacred Heart
David S. Ciancimino, Canisius High School
Chad Cianfrani, Oakwood Friends School
John Cissel, Harbor Country Day School
Pam Clarke, Doane Stuart School
Bill Clough, Nichols School
Donna Cohen, International Preschools
Virginia Connor, St. Hilda's and St. Hugh's School
Angela Coombs, Academy of St. Joseph
Bob Cunningham, Robert Louis Stevenson School
Melissa Dan, School of the Holy Child
Laura Danforth, The Masters School
Eileen Davidson, The Ursuline School
George P. Davison, Grace Church School
James Dawson, Professional Children's School
William DeHaven, Winston Preparatory School
Andre Del Valle, George Jackson Academy
Bruce L. Dennis, Packer Collegiate Institute
Christopher Devron, Fordham Preparatory School
William Donohue, Columbia Grammar and Prep
Jesse Dougherty, The Green Vale School
Dianne Drew, Dwight School
Ariela Dubler, Abraham Joshua Heschel School
Jim Dunaway, Manilus Pebble Hill School
David Egolf, Corlears School
Caroline Erisman, Cornelia Connelly Center
Gina Farrar, Blue School
Charles Fasano, Bay Ridge Preparatory School
Anthony G. Featherston IV, The Town School
Dean S. Foster, Hoosac School
Jane Fried, Brearley School
Michael Frosch, Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School
Scott Gaynor, Stephen Gaynor School
Patricia Geyer, Long Island School for the Gifted
Ward Ghory, The Harley School
Nancy Glauberman, Barrow Street Nursery School
Evan Glazer, Avenues New York
Felicia Gordon, The Brownstone School
Laura Graceffa, Robert C. Parker School
Laura Graham, Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church Day School
Martha Haakmat, Brooklyn Heights Montessori School
Tully Harcsztark, SAR High School
Patricia T. Hayot, The Chapin School
Matthew Heard, Dutchess Day School
George Higgins, The Beekman School
David Hochschartner, North Country School
Simon Holzapfel, Darrow School
Adrian Hood, Woodstock Day School
Stuart Johnson, St. Bernard's School
Jean-Marc Juhel, Buckley Country Day School
Susan Kambrich, Woodland Hill Montessori School
Danny Karpf, Rodeph Shalom School
Phil Kassen, LREI Little Red School House and Elisabeth Irwin High School
Michael Kay, Solomon Schechter School of Westchester
Andrea Kelly, Friends Academy
Thomas M. Kelly, Horace Mann School
Donna Kennedy, Gillen Brewer School

Eve Kleger, Village Community School
Tara Christie Kinsey, The Hewitt School
William Knauer, Harvey School
Binyamin Krauss, SAR Academy
Daniel K. Lahart, Regis High School
Jonathan Lamb, Storm King School
Robert "Bo" Lauder, Friends Seminary
Christopher Lauricella, The Park School of Buffalo
Lee Levison, Collegiate School
Avi Levitt, Magen David Yeshivah High School
Sharon Lickerman, Resurrection Episcopal Day School
Jed Lippard, Bank Street School for Children
Sean Lynch, Lycée Français de New York
Colm MacMahon, Rippowam Cisqua School
Carla Jantos MacMullen, The Kew-Forest School
Timothy P. Madigan, Churchill School and Center
Helen L. Marlette, Buffalo Seminary
TreeAnne McEnery, Green Meadow Waldorf School
Albina Miller and Leslie Thorne, Parkside School
Brenda Mizel, Metropolitan Montessori School
Scott Moran, City and Country School
Kim Morcate, Rockland Country Day School
Ronnie Moskowitz, The Washington Market School
Nicole Nash, Hannah Senesh Community Day School
Eve Nealy, Westbury Friends School
Marsha K. Nelson, The Cathedral School of St. John the Divine
Scott Nelson, Rye Country Day School
Douglas North, Albany Academies
Virginia O'Brien, Notre Dame School of Manhattan
Michael O'Donoghue, Holy Child Academy
Eavan O'Driscoll, St. Ignatius School
P. David O'Halloran, Saint David's School
Greg J. O'Melia, Buckley School
Tony Oroszlany, Loyola School
Simon Owen-Williams, Portledge School
Maria Palandra, La Scuola D'Italia Guglielmo Marconi
Susan Paynter, High Meadow School
Joel Peinado, French-American School of New York
Kevin Pendergast, Kildonan School
Margaret Poggi, LearningSpring School
Dominic A. A. Randolph, Riverdale Country School
Jenny Rao, Emma Willard School
Jack Raslowsky, Xavier High School
Amani Reed, School at Columbia University
Jim Regan, Martin Luther School
Scott Reisinger, Trevor Day School
Jean Rosenberg, Chelsea Day School
Janet C. Rotter, The Studio School
John Russell, The Windward School
Carolyn Salzman, The Gateway School
Joe Santos, International School of Brooklyn
Diana Schlesinger, Greene Hill School
Susan Sheahan, Episcopal School
Karen Smith, Smith School
Michele Sola, Manhattan Country School
Steven Solnick, The Calhoun School
Jeffrey Spade, Rudolf Steiner School
Stephen Spahn, Dwight School
Lydia Spinelli, Brick Church School
Todd Stansbery, Tuxedo Park School
Ellen Stein, The Dalton School
Matthew Stuart, The Caedmon School
William W. Taylor, Trinity-Pawling School
Michael Termini, The Cooke School and Institute
Kristen Tillona-Baker, The Knox School
Barbara Tischler, The Speyer Legacy School
Vincent Tompkins, Saint Ann's School
David R. Trower, Allen-Stevenson School
Salvador Uy, United Nations International School
Jennifer Vest, All Souls School
Patti Vitale, Brown School
Bob Vitalo, Berkeley Carroll School
Daniel Vitow, North Shore Hebrew Academy High School
Larry Weiss, Brooklyn Friends School
Michael Wirtz, Hackley School
Janet Wolfe, IDEAL School
Debbie Zlotowitz, Mary McDowell Friends School