

Arms Around Schools

Arms Around Schools is a volunteer, low cost program that can potentially provide an on the spot armed response to an armed school intrusion (active shooter). The precious minutes before police can respond to armed violence at schools can be sometimes up to 10 minutes. The program can be put in place relatively quickly, and will buy schools safer time in the immediate short term. This could also buy time for school and town budgets to make decisions on things like hiring a State Police Student Resource Officer(SRO's) or a private security company. Time also to allow schools to individually access their options, train their personnel, install security systems specific to their needs in a timely and orderly fashion. All the while, building an updated awareness of the world around us.

The Arms Around Schools Program will require Superintendents and Principals to distribute a volunteer poll, to all faculty and school employees including subs, janitors and non-certified personnel.

1)Do you have a current CT pistol permit? If yes, continue to #2?

2)Would you be willing to voluntarily participate in a (modified blue card training course) for the purpose of voluntarily carrying a weapon at school. The course trains people for armed security and private investigation work. The Principal would have your name on record as a possible person to turn to in the event of a need for assistance. It is very similar to a teacher for example that is a volunteer EMT, the staff knows who that person is and can turn to them if the need arises.

The state could easily modify the current blue card training course to include the most current training available to reflect the special needs of school security scenarios. Training should include heavy emphasis on weapon security and retention and be continuously updated to ensure current information is available on the evolving new program. Perhaps instituting a train the trainer model.

The school should provide a safe and secure yet quickly accessible storage area for the volunteer weapons. So that if a teacher chooses to not carry all day for any reason they must have access to safe storage of their weapons. A volunteer may choose to only carry at sporting events or during cooler months or lunch periods. The accommodations could be as simple as a safe in an office.

Volunteers must also furnish proof of weapon security at home. A receipt of a gun safe and maybe even a local law enforcement home safety check. If you agree to participate in the program you agree to be asked and checked for proof of safe storage of all guns. The state police and local law enforcement would also have the names of the volunteers that are registered at the schools.

The State would need to modify the blue card course to include the most current training to reflect the special needs of school security. The course itself could also benefit CT security companies that may be hired in the future by schools who chose to hire a private armed security company. Potentially creating CT jobs. Our own returning veterans would be a huge source of trained professionals to be certified to guard our own schools.

The initial application should include a) background check, b) mental health questionnaire and c) 6 letters of recommendation. I suggest that recertification should be annual.

It would also be my suggestion for the state to relax or change the current law that restricts a citizen with a CT pistol permit to carry on school property .These (Gun Free Zones) are Potential Kill Zones. These legally armed citizens could potentially be of assistance as well as a deterrent to school violence. The volunteers names could also be registered with the principal office.

If we look at some of the reasons why people choose to exercise the priviledge to own and carry a hand gun and the process that they go through to get pistol permits. Then look further into the why some people actually choose to carry their concealed weapons, how often, where they choose to carry and

why. These are prepared people, who are active participants in a sometimes dangerous world. Some carry to be prepared to defend themselves and maybe even help to defend another. Most people made their choice after careful thought and have thought about the responsibility they take on to choose to carry a weapon.

I do not expect nor should any one expect that this responsibility will be taken lightly by the potential volunteers or the leaders of our schools. I actually think that very few would be willing to accept the responsibility and actually be capable of going through the training. I do believe that some capable people will, and that they can make a difference. We all hope they will never have to employ their weapons and we can strive to create that world. It is also known that sometimes the mere presence of a weapon is enough to deter someone bent on evil intent.

One newspaper front page cartoon picturing an older female teacher being handed a hand gun for the first time and asked to defend her students. I suggest that the picture be that of a gym teacher who may even be a veteran who has been around guns for many years and has already made the personal choices put him or her where they are today. Very much like the science teacher who chooses to be an EMT or the history teacher volunteer fireman, faculty know who these special people are, and when a situation arises they are confident and comforted knowing that they are there and can be turned to if the need arises.

