

# No evidence 'hardened' schools are safe from gun violence

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Hardening of schools seems to be a questionable endeavor, given the dearth of evidence regarding effectiveness, says a Ball State University researcher.

"School Firearm Violence Prevention Practices and Policies: Functional or Folly?," a comprehensive review of the literature from 2000 to 2018 regarding school firearm violence prevention, found no programs or practices with evidence that they reduced such gun violence.

"It could be the rarity of school shootings that makes it extremely difficult to prove that any combination of interventions in schools would be effective," said Jagdish Khubchandani, a Ball State health science professor who partnered with University of Toledo professor James Price on the [research project](#).

The paper was published a recent edition of the journal *Violence and Gender*.

"School firearm violence and school shootings have received increasing attention from school personnel, policymakers, and in the mass media," Khubchandani said. "However, little is known about prevention and reduction of school firearm violence. The purpose of this narrative review is to describe the current practices regarding school firearm violence prevention and use of the disease prevention and health promotion framework to describe current practices and policies on school firearm violence prevention measures."

Khubchandani said American schools use a variety of strategies, including monitored or locked doors to the building, security cameras, metal detectors, hiring resource officers, and random checks of lockers.

"To the extent that schools adopt ineffective firearm violence prevention measures, they are creating a false sense of security," Khubchandani said. "School systems need to engage in [collaborative research](#) for evidence-based practices and policy advocacy through coalition building to address state firearm laws. Schools also need to expand their [mental health services](#) and cost-effective educational interventions for reducing

violence."

School officials should not give in to political pressures to "do something" when that "something" is likely to be ineffective, deceptive, and wasteful of limited school resources, he warns.

The researchers also noted that more [research funding](#) is needed to pursue definitive answers regarding what is effective in substantially reducing school firearm violence and preventing youth from carrying or using guns.

**More information:** James H. Price et al. School Firearm Violence Prevention Practices and Policies: Functional or Folly?, *Violence and Gender* (2019). [DOI: 10.1089/vio.2018.0044](https://doi.org/10.1089/vio.2018.0044)

Provided by Ball State University

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