

September 6, 2024

The National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY) is united in offering our deepest love and sympathy to the students, families and educators of Apalachee High School in Georgia where nine were injured and four tragically lost their lives in yesterday's shooting.

As there have been numerous school shootings in 2024, we continue to reel for our students, educators and others who live in fear each day as they, or their loved ones enter the school building. As educators, we know this fear does not allow for a conducive teaching or learning environment. Moreover, this type of tragedy does not just affect Apalachee, the lasting impact of gun violence at schools permeates throughout our society. It is a reminder to every student, family member, educator and administrator that we are all vulnerable.

Whenever we learn of an event such as this, we ask ourselves what we can do to end this horrible cycle. We know that amid this tragedy, neighbors of Apalachee High School began to bring food and beverages to the building in support of the school community. NNSTOY stands united with our fellow educators across the nation to support, and advocate for an end to this senseless violence and stand in support of the safety of our children and educators. We ask our fellow educators to consider the following:

- For our students: Every student feels the impact of a school shooting. Regardless of age, students understand what's happening around them. Honor their feelings, their fears and help them process their trauma. The American School Counselor Association provides resources on how to support students after a school shooting. You can find [the information here](#).
- For our educators: As the number of school shootings continue to rise, teachers are left with a tremendous responsibility to manage the emotions and safety of their students under these circumstances. This responsibility should also position them as leaders in the discussion on behalf of school children and safe schools. Working together with colleagues, friends, and community leaders, demand action from school boards and other elected officials and seek to find long-term solutions to ensure students and educators are safe in schools.
- For our communities: Seek to understand the school safety concerns of communities and foster community partnerships that allow for disagreements while focusing on the issues that unite us – an environment where students and educators feel safe and free from harm.

Having a conversation with students about gun violence, conducting active shooter drills, or mourning yet another senseless school shooting is devastating, and impact will be felt for a lifetime by both students and educators. While we can't change the past, we can make the future safer for our students and educators. Let us work together as teacher leaders to advocate for changes that keep us safe.

In solidarity,

The National Network of State Teachers of the Year