



CHARTER

ASHA School Violence Taskforce

Background

On February 14, 2018 a lone gunman entered Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida and killed 17 members of the school community. Countless others suffered physical and emotional injury that will last a lifetime. This is just the most recent example of the unimaginable state of gun violence in the United States. The toll these events have on the social and emotional climate of schools across the country cannot be understated. On learning the tragic news from Florida, ASHA posted the following statement on its website.

This week, we are once again hearing about another tragic school shooting, this time at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. In our effort to transform all schools into places where every student learns and thrives, we cannot ignore the crippling impact of events such as these. Our thoughts and prayers are with the students, faculty, staff, and others affected, not just in Parkland, but at all schools and in all communities. Yet, we know that thoughts and prayers are not enough. We recognize the effect this news has on the social, emotional, and mental wellbeing of school communities across the country. ASHA encourages its members and all school health professionals to lead change efforts that include working closely with community leaders, elected officials, and others to create comprehensive and coordinated solutions. We support the [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child](#) model as a means to create school communities that are safe and healthy.

This was the first time ASHA has made a public statement in response to the ongoing epidemic of gun violence in our schools. ASHA's statement called on its members and all school health professionals to lead change efforts in their communities. However, we recognize leading those efforts requires guidance around evidence-based and research-informed best practices, training, professional development, and access to other resources. ASHA also recognizes that to truly realize our mission of *transforming all schools into places where every student learns and thrives*, we must lead change through advocacy and activism. As a leader in school health, it is well past time for ASHA to be proactive in addressing this problem. ASHA is inspired by the actions of student activists who have emerged from Parkland in response to the tragedy in their community. The advocacy efforts of these students should serve as a model for school health professionals and community leaders.

Taskforce Charge

The ASHA School Violence Taskforce is hereby charged with conceiving of, creating, and proposing strategies to advance a nationwide response to the epidemic of gun violence in schools. Activities this taskforce might consider include, but should not be limited to:

- Proposing one or more position statements for adoption by the ASHA Board of Directors that describe specific and detailed positions on topics such as gun control, allocation of mental health resources in schools, school violence response planning, strategies to prevent school violence, and other evidence-based solutions.
- Developing and implementing webinars and other professional development opportunities for school staff related to this topic.
- Outlining opportunities to foster discussions about gun violence at the 2018 ASHA Annual Conference in Indianapolis. This could include keynote or general session presenters, breakout sessions, pre or post conference sessions, and town hall forums.
- Exploring opportunities to amplify our message through partnerships and joint statements with other organizations that operate in our space.
- Proposing an advocacy agenda that provides for federal and state policies designed to prevent gun violence in schools and allocates funding to schools to implement evidence based solutions.
- Proposing an allocation of fiscal and staff resources from ASHA that would be appropriate to address this issue and position ASHA as a leader on this topic. This may include making financial contributions to existing programs, such as the student-led advocacy efforts emerging from Parkland Florida.
- Other such activities deemed appropriate and recommended by the Taskforce members.

The Taskforce shall document their recommendations including an action plan and timeline for implementation when necessary. All recommendations of the Taskforce are subject to approval by the ASHA Board of Directors. When necessary and appropriate, the Taskforce is encouraged to work within existing organizational infrastructure such as connecting with the Advocacy & Coalitions Committee, Professional Development Committee, Networking Communities, and the organization's contracted staff at Indiana University.

Taskforce Membership & Composition

- Sharon Murray, ASHA's current Board Secretary and immediate past president will chair the Taskforce
- Ty Oehrtman, ASHA's Board President will serve on the Taskforce in a voting, ex-officio capacity
- Jeanie Alter, ASHA's Executive Director may be invited to participate in discussions of the taskforce in an advisory capacity as her schedule allows; however, she will have a non-voting roll
- The chairpersons of other organizational committees (Wendy Sellers, Deitra Wengert, and Sean Slade) may be invited to participate in the deliberations of the Taskforce as those discussions intersect with the work of their respective committees
- The ASHA President shall send a call for volunteers to the cadre of ASHA past presidents and from within that group, in consultation with the Chairperson, appoint up to five additional at-large members to the Taskforce.
- The ASHA President, in consultation with the Chairperson, may also appoint additional members to the Taskforce from within the ASHA general membership as additional needs are identified.

Timeline

The work of this Taskforce is timely and a priority of the Association. The Taskforce shall be convened as soon as possible upon appointment of its members. The Chairperson of the Taskforce shall provide status and progress updates to the ASHA Board of Directors as part of their regular monthly meetings. As recommendations are formulated, those recommendations will be presented to the Board of Directors in writing for their review and approval. Upon approval of the Taskforce's recommendations by the Board of Directors, the Taskforce shall be disbanded provided that the recommendations of the Taskforce can be implemented on an ongoing basis through the Association's existing organizational infrastructure.