



About half of teachers surveyed felt security measures at their schools, like locks and cameras, positively affected the school's climate, the report found. Getty Images

(CNN) — More than half the country's teachers believe arming themselves would make students less safe, while 1 in 5 say they would be interested in carrying a gun to school, according to a new report from the RAND Corporation.



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An estimated 550,000 of the country's 3 million K-12 teachers would choose to carry a firearm at school if allowed, the survey found.

The debate over whether to arm American schoolteachers isn't new and is often renewed after school shootings, which nationwide have tallied in the dozens in recent years. Having an armed adult on campus, however, does not always mean a swift end to carnage, as highlighted this week in the trial of the former Parkland, Florida, school resource officer facing a rare prosecution over his conduct in the 2018 massacre.

Apart from active shooters, though, bullying is the most common safety concern for about half of all teachers, the report says. After that, high school teachers were most often concerned about drug use and student fights, according to the report. Middle school teachers ranked self-harm as a top concern, and elementary teachers were more frequently concerned about violence against teachers, the data shows.

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Roughly half of teachers surveyed felt physical security measures at their schools, such as locks, ID badges, cameras and security staff, positively affected their school's climate, the report found, and only 5% of teachers felt those security measures had a negative effect.

In a separate survey conducted in the fall, 70% of school district leaders said they've increased

their investments in school safety measures in response to the May 2022 school shooting in Uvalde, Texas.



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Teachers reported more concern for their students' safety rather than their own, according to the survey.

After analyzing the survey's results, researchers noted a few areas ripe for further research, such as studying schools or districts that have adopted teacher-carry programs early on to:

- Observe how they work in practice;
- Develop approaches for school safety and security planning that might balance the frequent, lower-level forms of school violence, such as bullying with lower-probability, extreme forms of school violence, like shootings;
- And conduct a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of programs allowing teacher-carry to see what the full monetary costs to schools and states would be.

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