

*(Please find attached public comment from nearly 666 Portland Public School parents and students asking the Portland School Board to support the banning all guns from school grounds. I sent a copy of this letter on May 30th, prior to the Policy Committee Meeting, with 390 signers. Since then, we have added 276 new signers.*

Thank you,  
Amie Wexler)



June 13, 2022

Portland Public School Board of Directors  
Michelle DePass, Board Chair

Dear Members of the Board and Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero,

We are parents and students in the Portland School District who volunteer with local chapters of Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. We are writing to ask you to use your power under Oregon’s new gun safety law to keep the school community safer from gun violence.

Senate Bill 554, which went into effect September 2021, allows universities and K-12 schools to prohibit firearms on school property, regardless of whether someone has a concealed handgun license (CHL). Under current law, firearms are already prohibited on school property, but there is an exception for individuals with CHLs. Now that SB 554 is in effect, districts can choose to adopt a new policy prohibiting all firearms on school property — regardless of who carries them. Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action volunteers advocated for this bill in the legislature, alongside stakeholders like the Oregon Education Association and the Oregon School Boards Association. OSBA has released policy language (KGBB) as guidance for local school boards.

Studies have shown that the presence of guns in schools does not make anyone safer; to the contrary, it puts teachers, students and staff at greater risk. Oregon is one of only eight states that allow individuals with concealed handgun licenses to possess a firearm in K-12 schools. While gun violence is rare, it occurs with enough frequency that school districts should address this concern. In 2018, according to the Associated Press, more than 30 publicly reported mishaps were reported involving firearms brought onto school grounds. Guns went off by mistake; were fired by “curious or unruly students”; or were left unattended in bathroom stalls, locker rooms, and elsewhere on school grounds.<sup>1</sup>

The new law also requires gun owners to store their firearms securely while not under their control. Since 2019, dozens of school districts across the country have passed resolutions and adopted school district policies to require that information be sent home with students to educate parents on their responsibility under existing state laws that require gun owners to securely store any firearms they own. Schools are uniquely positioned to build awareness for secure firearm storage practices at home to keep students and school communities safe.

We urge the Portland School Board to use their ability under the new law to enact a policy prohibiting guns on school property. We also urge the district to notify parents of the new policy, and include information about the importance of secure gun storage and the requirements of Oregon’s new secure storage law. After Oregon saw record-breaking gun sales in 2020 — nearly twice the number sold in 2019<sup>2</sup> — Now is

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<sup>1</sup> [OregonLive.com](https://www.oregonlive.com/news/Adults-misplaced-mistakenly-fired-guns-taken-to-school-AP-finds/), May 5, 2018: “Adults misplaced, mistakenly fired guns taken to school, AP finds”

<sup>2</sup> [Bend Bulletin](https://www.bendbulletin.com/news/gun-sales-break-records-in-oregon/), Feb. 21, 2021: “Gun Sales Break Records in Oregon”

the time for the district to use all available tools at their disposal to keep the school community safer as we return to full-time in-person instruction.

Sincerely,

Amie Wexler, (volunteer) State Legislative Lead, Moms Demand Action

Rep. Lisa Reynolds

Babs Vanelli

Rep. Dacia Graber

Geri Berg

Tom Ramsden

Peggy Padden

Matthew E. Laas

Colleen Naughtin

Terri Preeg Riggsby

Geoffrey Abraham

Emily Sahler

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Wandschneider Alison

Cheryl McDowell

Rachel Allen

Laura Mertens

Rebecca Ames

Bethany Wofford

Sarah Anderson

Laura Bower

Joyce Arend

Liz Gatti

Carrie Arnal

Maria Aron

Devon Arndt

Mary Erhart

Lesley Atlansky

Angela Martin

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Casey Fast

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Alayna Vincent Baird

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Katelyn Baker

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Mary Cecchini

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Christina Chang

Gisella Barbaray

Gillian Charles

Jamie Barnes-Hoyt

Katharine Charles

Kelly Barrett

Michael Charles

Jen Barth

Kristen Chase

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