

Alexandria City Council



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## **PTAC Comments to School Board: Safe Gun Storage**

**6/16/22**

Chairman Alderton, Vice Chair Greene and Distinguished Members of the School Board – Good Evening.

My name is Missy Estabrook. I'm the proud mother of rising 10<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys at ACPS, a co-founder of Parents for Safe Alexandria Schools, and the incoming President of the Alexandria PTA Council.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of your Resolution Against Gun Violence and your continuing efforts to keep our kids safe.

Tonight, I urge ACPS to provide information on safe gun storage directly to families at the start of each school year in a widely accessible, multi-lingual format, as well as to add gun violence prevention information and resources to the ACPS website.

For years, the National PTA has advocated for sensible gun safety and violence prevention policies that will help keep children safe. Just yesterday, I participated in the 2022 National PTA Capitol Hill Day visit where PTA members from across the country urged members of Congress to support public schools in their efforts to create safe and welcoming spaces for every child. At the top of our list, the passage of legislation to encourage gun safety education and the safe storage of firearms, including safety locks and other devices to prevent children from obtaining and discharging a gun.

While a tentative agreement has been made on legislation to pair new gun restrictions with mental health and security investments at the federal level, we can take action NOW at the local level to shield children from gun violence and the devastating effects it can have on their mental AND physical health through adulthood. Secure storage practices like those that could be shared with ACPS families play a vital role in reducing the risk of gun violence. And as we all know, violence - especially by firearm – not only harms children and families, but also entire school communities. Safe storage saves lives.

Our goal as PTA members is always to promote the safety and well-being of all children and ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. We believe providing information like this falls perfectly in line with that mission and we urge you to begin sharing it with back to school packets in the fall.

PTAC stands ready to support you in any way and we look forward to working with you on this – and many other issues – next year.

Thank you.