



ACTIVE ASSAILANT TRAINING FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

A BLACK CURTAIN IS NOT ENOUGH

Most likely, your accreditor already told you to train your people. ACCS and ACSI, two of the most recognized Christian school organizations, both ask for a plan supported by training, which is more than the law asks of a Christian school almost anywhere in the country. Most schools answered it with a drill. Curtain down, lights off, sit in a corner nobody has ever checked against the line of fire, be quiet. That is a death sentence the moment an attacker breaks the glass or puts a round in the door jamb. I would not trust my kids' lives to a piece of black cloth, and neither should you.

BY JASON PERRY, FOUNDER AND CEO, TRIDENT SHIELD

I have sat across from a lot of heads of school who fully intend to do this. They are not careless people. They love the children in their building and they lose sleep over exactly what you would expect.

One of them, a good administrator who had clearly thought about it, defended the black curtains to me with a fact. No attacker has ever broken through a locked classroom door. Half of that is true. No attacker in a school has ever defeated the lock itself. But in 2005, at Red Lake, Minnesota, the attacker met a locked classroom door, shot out the glass beside it, and walked in. The lock held. The glass did not. That is the lesson, and almost everybody drew the opposite one. Instead of reinforcing the door and the glass so the next attacker cannot get in either, most of the country went with smoke and mirrors, a piece of black fabric over a pane of glass that can be broken and reached through in seconds.

He is not alone. A school resource officer in a completely different state told me nearly the same sentence and said he had it from the Secret Service. This is not one administrator's opinion. It is a way of thinking that has worked its way through official channels into buildings all over the country, and it is going to get people killed.

And that is usually where it ends. The curtain goes up, a drill goes on the calendar, the box gets checked, and the training that would have made any of it work gets bumped to next year. Then something happens somewhere, or their own building has a close call, and suddenly it is urgent, and they take whatever they can get fastest. Nobody looks at it again for three years.

It is never because they do not care. It is time, it is budget, and a shortage of options worth trusting. It is dread, theirs and their people's, because everybody has sat through this done badly and almost nobody has seen it done well. And at the bottom of all of it, they simply do not know better, because nobody has ever told them clearly what to do. Not the state, not the vendor, not the officer who meant well. This guide is my attempt to bring some clarity to that.

Why do the training at all?

Two reasons, and the first one is the only one that matters.

Because you are their guardian. When a parent drops a child at your door and drives away, that child passes into your custody, and the moment it happens you are the guardian. Not a service provider. Not a bystander who happens to be in the building. Their parents handed you the most valuable thing they have on the understanding that somebody inside had already thought this through. Nobody made them trust you. They just did.

Christ drew the line himself, between two kinds of people standing with the flock.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.” JOHN

10:11-12

The hired hand is not evil. He just does not own the sheep, so when the wolf comes he is gone. A teacher who has never been taught what to do is not a hired hand by character. But on the worst day, with no training, that is the only role left to play. The Association of Classical Christian Schools put the same idea into their accreditation standard: schools have a responsibility *in loco parentis* to provide for the physical well-being of students entrusted to their care. In the place of the parent. That is not a security concept, it is a stewardship one, and it was true before anybody drew up a lockdown policy. Nehemiah prayed and set a guard in the same sentence and never apologized for the second half of it.

Because you are accountable. Here I am going to be careful with you, because almost no law in this country is going to make you do this, and I will show you exactly where it stops later in this guide. What you carry is accountability, not compulsion, and the two are easy to confuse until somebody asks you the question under oath. ACCS and ACSI both ask for training in writing. Your teachers are your employees and you owe them a workplace free of recognized hazards. And in some states, Tennessee among them, the statute reaches a private school directly, and that list gets longer every legislative session.

Will it frighten my people?

This is the question many wonder about, but few say out loud, and it is the one I want to answer before anything else, because the fear behind it is legitimate.

When this industry got started, a lot of it was shock and awe. Unannounced drills nobody was warned about. Blanks fired in a hallway to see how people reacted. Instructors who had confused terror with preparation and thought a room full of shaking adults meant the message landed. Faculty went home wrecked. Children did not sleep right for a week. And when it was over, not one of them could tell you what to do with a door.

If you have heard those stories, and most school leaders have, then you are right to be careful about who you let stand in front of your people. I would be too.

I have stood against that way of teaching since 2013 and I am still standing against it. Fear is not preparation. A room that walks out frightened was not trained. It was frightened, and charging a school for that is malpractice.

Here is how I think about it instead. **This is a life skill.** The same as CPR. The same as teaching a sixteen year old to drive defensively. The same as a fire drill.

And look at what fire drills did. The last mass-casualty school fire in this country was 1958, because we built codes and ran drills until it stopped happening. We still run them, and they do very little now, because fire is not trying to get in. An active assailant is a thinking enemy who adapts. If we drilled fire out of existence, and fire cannot think, what do we owe our people against something that can?

You do not teach a teenager to drive by showing them wreck footage until they cry. You teach them situational awareness behind the wheel, and you teach them to plan for what the other driver might do before he does it. That is defensive driving, and you practice it until it is boring, and then they are safer every day for the rest of their lives. Nobody calls that traumatizing. Everybody calls it responsible.

That is what this is, and it is what it should have been the whole time. Your people should leave knowing what their hands do in the first fifteen seconds, and then go back to teaching fractions.

And a life skill does not stay in the building. Good training makes everyone who takes it safer everywhere they go. At home. In the grocery store. At church. At a ball game. You are not buying a lockdown procedure for one building. You are giving your people something they carry for the rest of their lives, and most of them will use it in places you will never hear about. One teacher I trained walked into a pharmacy robbery a month later, shopping on a Saturday morning, and used what he had learned to get people out.

THERE IS A SECOND WAY TO GET THIS WRONG, AND IT COSTS A GREAT DEAL MORE

Somebody comes in wanting to turn your school into a prison and every teacher on your staff into a SEAL.

I can say this with more standing than almost anybody selling you security, because I was one for sixteen years. Your kindergarten teacher is not going to become one. Should not become one. And does not need to become one in order to read a room in fifteen seconds and know whether it will hold, know what to do when it will not, know where those children go instead, and know how to read a hallway before stepping into it.

The prison half is worse, because you would be paying good money to undo the thing that makes your school what it is. You built a building that says come in. Light, glass, wide doors, a lobby that welcomes a family on a tour. You built a beacon of light, a Christ-honoring school that is warm and joyful, and that is not a security flaw. It is theology poured into concrete, and a school that looks like a lockup has lost something more important than a safety rating.

Neither one is desirable and neither one is possible. You do not want your teachers holding an operator's posture through a school year, and they could not do it if you asked. You do not want a fortress, and you could not fund one if you did. So it does not hold, and when it does not hold the school quietly goes back to the curtain, now with less money and less trust than it started with. The right answer was never a prison or a SEAL team. It is training that fits the school you actually are. Teachers stay teachers. The building stays open and warm. And your people walk out knowing things that actually work, that they can keep, and that they can sustain year after year without anybody selling them a bunker.

The rest of this guide finishes the **why**, starting with your own classroom door, and then answers the four questions that come after yes. **What** good training actually looks like, so nobody dreads it again. **Who** needs it and in what order, so you are not trying to train everyone at once. **When** to do it, so it fits the calendar you really have. And **what it costs**, so it can finally get a line of its own.

PART ONE: WHY

01

Start with the door

Go stand in one of your classrooms. Pick the youngest children you have.

Look at the door.

Ask five questions about that room and answer them honestly, because nobody else is going to ask you.

What is actually holding it if somebody puts a shoulder into it? In most of the buildings I walk, the answer is a lock that cost somebody about ten dollars, seated in a wood jamb.

What is beside it, or set into it? Usually a pane of glass.

What is over that glass? In most Christian schools I walk, a black pull-down shade that somebody bought because it was on a checklist. Hold that thought. The shade gets its own pages a little further on.

Now widen out from the door to the room itself.

How many ways in are there? One door to the hallway, or two doors, or a connecting door to the classroom next to it?

What glass does it have? A ground floor window to the outside. A window onto the hallway. The window in the door.

If your answers came out different from what I described, good. You are ahead of most of the schools I see, and I would rather hear that than be right. If they came out the same, that is the plan your building is running on right now.

Then go ask the teacher who works in that room what they were told to do on the worst day. I cannot tell you what they will say. I can tell you what I hear in almost every school in this country. **Lock the door. Pull the shade. Get the children into the corner.**

So go find the corner. The one they would move twenty children to. Stand in it and turn around slowly.

If that room has two ways in, or a ground floor window, or a window onto the hallway, there is most likely **no corner in it that is out of the line of fire from all of them at once.** Not one. The corner works in a room with a single door and no glass, and those rooms are not nearly as common as we would like them to be.

In most of the rooms I walk, nobody has ever stood there with that teacher and worked this out. They were handed a word, corner, and left to pick one. Most pick the one farthest from the door, which is very often the one framed perfectly by the window beside it.

That is one of the three steps taken apart in about ninety seconds, standing in your own room, for free. The other two take longer and they matter more, and I will get to both of them before this part is over.

But first, the thing standing between most schools and a trained building, because it is not doubt.

You already believe this can happen. Every leader I meet does. That is not what is standing between a school and a trained building.

What usually stands in the way is that the school already believes it has a plan. There is a lockdown policy. There is a drill on the calendar. There is a line in the board minutes. So when active assailant training comes up, it feels like a duplicate of something already owned.

It is not the same thing. Three steps handed down by people who have never stood in that room is not a plan, and not one of the three does what the teacher standing behind that door believes it does.

Your building is helping you or it is hurting you

Something almost nobody outside this world understands, and it changes the math completely, is that a building is never neutral on the worst day. It is working for you or it is working against you, and in most of the private Christian schools I walk, it is working against you.

A lot of the public schools in this country were built in the fifties and sixties, and plenty of them were designed with civil defense in mind. Heavy masonry. Cinderblock interior walls. Long interior corridors with no exterior doors. Small windows set high. Those buildings were built, on purpose, to hold.

Now look at where private Christian schools usually meet.

Converted church space with a glass entry and an open lobby. Repurposed office or retail building with storefront windows down the whole front. Modular classrooms and trailers where every single room has its own exterior door and walls you could put a boot through. New construction full of glass, because light and openness are what you wanted.

You cannot retrofit your way out of a glass wall. Not on your budget. Not before Christmas. You can put film on it and slow somebody down by a few seconds, and you should, but you are not turning that lobby into a corridor from 1958 and nobody should pretend otherwise.

Now, the instinct is to hear that as an indictment of your building. Do not.

You built it that way on purpose, and I already said why that matters. The openness is not an oversight. It is the mission, poured into concrete.

So hold both of those facts at the same time. The building is open because the mission is open. And on the worst day, that same openness goes to work for the attacker walking in.

Which leaves the one variable that is fully yours. Not the walls. Not the glass. The adults standing in it.

That is not a consolation prize. It is the only part of this you can change inside one school year, it is the cheapest part by a wide margin, and in most buildings it is the part nobody has ever touched.

And the standard advice is usually five years late

There is a second reason the three steps went wrong, and it is bigger than whoever handed them to your teachers. The material is government curriculum, and government curriculum fixes yesterday's problem, not today's.

Watch how official guidance gets made. Something terrible happens. Agencies collect data. The data gets studied. A working group forms. People review, revise, and argue toward consensus. Eventually, guidance is published and it filters down to your state, your district, your insurance carrier, and finally to the person standing in front of your faculty.

Count the years on that. By the time the recommendation reaches your building, it is answering a problem from five years ago.

The people who mean to hurt children are not waiting on a committee. They adapt every year. Our guidance adapts every half decade, and the gap between those two numbers is where people get hurt.

What that looks like in your classroom

The clearest example I know is the one I told you I would come back to: the black pull-down shade.

Schools all over the country have installed them over classroom door windows. It looks like action. It photographs beautifully for a board meeting.

Now think about what it does on the actual day.

Start with what it gets right, because it does something. A drawn shade denies an attacker confirmation. He cannot look through that window and count children. That is a real function and I am not going to pretend otherwise.

Here are the two problems with building a plan on it.

The concealment is one pane of glass deep. It is cloth. The moment that window is broken the concealment is gone, and the door it hangs on is still being held by whatever lock somebody installed years ago, which in most of the buildings I walk is ten dollars of hardware in a wood jamb. Concealment that a single strike removes is not protection. It is a delay nobody can measure.

And applied badly it does the opposite of its job. The shade only conceals if every shade in that hallway is down. On the actual day you will have rooms on a prep period, rooms where the teacher stepped out, rooms nobody got to. Some down, some up. Now the attacker walking that hallway is not guessing anymore. He has been handed a map of which rooms have children in them. **You did not conceal that room. You marked it.**

And here is where that shade came from, and where the administrator I told you about got his fact. In 2015, the commission that studied Sandy Hook reported that there has never been an event in which an active shooter breached a locked classroom door. The finding is real. It

is also a description of what has happened so far, not a promise about what the next attacker will do. Somewhere between that finding and your hallway, it hardened into doctrine. Lock the door, pull the shade, done.

Ten years after that commission, researchers at Texas State went back through twenty-five years of school attacks, fifty-four events, sixty-six doors. Not one lock was ever defeated mechanically. Every locked door that was breached was breached through the glass, and when an attacker came to a door with a window in it or beside it, he fired through the glass about half the time. The shade is cloth. It stops nothing a smashed window will not fix. One round into the door jamb and the lock is gone. One muzzle strike through that window and a hand reaches in and opens the door from the inside. I have breached doors for a living, and I would not bet a single life on a piece of cloth and a description of the past.

And if that window has wire running through it, understand what the wire is for. Wired glass is fire glass. The mesh holds the pane together in a fire so smoke does not spread through the opening. It is not security glass. It breaks about as easily as any other pane, and the wire is there to hold the pieces in place for the fire marshal, not to keep anybody out. A police officer told me once that the wires would stop a hand. They will not. The whole pane just pushes in, and the hand reaches the handle.

And behind that shade, in almost every school I walk, the door is not barricaded. The lock is doing all the work by itself, a piece of hardware somebody else specified and installed years ago, and in most of them nobody has ever shown that teacher what to do with the furniture in the room.

So the shade is one step in a sequence. Somewhere between that finding and your hallway it quietly became the entire sequence. It cost money, it consumed the attention that was available for this problem, it checked the box, and then it stopped.

A black curtain is not enough. What is behind it is what holds.

That is what government guidance buys you. A curtain.

I would rather that teacher had spent fifteen minutes learning how to barricade the room with what is already in it. That costs nothing, it works, and no committee had to approve it.

The fair question about the window

A head of school wrote to me after reading an earlier version of this with a question I want to answer in print. If a drawn shade marks the room, and the only way around that is every shade down all day, what happens to the reason the window is there in the first place? Any adult can look into any classroom at any time. That window protects children from more than one kind of harm, and he was not willing to give that up.

Neither am I. I did not say blind the building. I said the shade cannot be the plan.

Keep the window clear on ordinary days. Accountability is a safety measure too, and it is the one that works every day of the year, against the threat your school is far more likely to face. On the worst day, the shade is one step in a sequence, not the whole thing.

Here is the standard, and it is the one line in this guide I would carve into a wall. **A locked door that is not barricaded is a fail.** Not because locks are useless. Because in most of the buildings I walk a lock is a two inch piece of metal in a wood jamb, and a determined adult can be through it in seconds, and because the teacher standing behind it has been told the lock is the answer and has never been shown that the answer is standing three feet away with a bookcase in it.

A marked room behind a barricaded door is a room an attacker does not have the time to enter. A marked room behind a cheap lock is a target.

The shade was never the difference. What is behind it is.

Am I legally required to do this?

In most of the country, no. Nobody is going to make you.

In most of the country the law that governs school safety does not reach you, and that is not an oversight. It is deliberate, and the reason behind it is one you believe in.

Florida's legislature put it in the statute: it does not intend to regulate, control, or monitor, expressly or implicitly, churches, their ministries, or religious instruction. Pennsylvania's mandate binds "school entities" and you are not one. Virginia's lockdown drill statute opens with the words "In every public school." Missouri's binds districts and charters.

Those exemptions exist to keep the state out of a Christian school's business. People fought for them and they were right to fight for them, and I am not asking you to hand a single one of them back.

I am asking you to look at what rides along with them.

Some states do reach you, and the list changes every legislative session, so check yours. Of the ones I have read closely, Tennessee, Kansas and Michigan bind private and religious schools directly, and New Jersey goes further than any of them with a security drill every single month. Tennessee is the one almost nobody there knows about. Since 2023 state law has required every accredited private school and every church-related school to run an armed intruder drill every year, along with an incident command drill and a bus drill, and to hand its building-level safety plan to every local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction by October 1, every single year. Kansas requires three unannounced crisis drills a year of public

and private schools alike. Michigan requires three lockdown drills, and because that requirement sits in the Fire Prevention Code instead of the School Code it attaches to the building rather than to a district, which is why a private school administrator there can run a school for years without hearing of it.

Now read those again and notice what is missing.

The laws and regulations change every session and they differ by state, county and city, but most of them will never require that a single adult in your building be trained.

As of this writing, every one of those states starts with a drill, only two of them mention training at all, and neither one says what the training has to be. Kansas names three crisis drills and no training. Michigan names three lockdown drills and no training on any of them. Tennessee, since January of 2025, requires you to train your whole staff once a year on exactly one procedure: how to tell whether a fire alarm is a fire or an attacker, and what everybody does once that call is made. That is the entire training requirement in the statute, and it says nothing about who teaches it, what it contains, or whether a single teacher can do anything at the end of it. New Jersey is the only state I have read closely that requires real annual safety and security training for every full-time employee of a nonpublic school, and even there the statute says the training must include instruction on the security drills and may be delivered as drills and tabletop exercises. Where the law speaks at all, it tells you to practice something, and then lets you write the practice down as the training.

IN MOST CASES THE MONEY DOES NOT REACH YOU EITHER, AND THE FEDERAL SURVEY NEVER ASKS ABOUT YOU

The Justice Department runs a program that pays to harden school buildings. It states in writing that independent schools and private schools are not eligible to apply as primary applicants. You were not overlooked. You were named.

The numbers do not reach you either. Ninety-six percent of American public schools have a written plan for an active shooter. Ninety-six percent ran a lockdown drill with their students. Ninety-seven percent control access to the building during the school day. Those are federal numbers, collected from public school principals by the Department of Education in the most recent year it asked.

There is no matching number for your school. Not a bad one. None. That survey asks public school principals and nobody else. The federal government titles the report “Safety and Security Practices at Public Schools,” and that is exactly what it means.

Almost nobody makes you. The money is not written for you. And nobody counts you.

There is no federal number that says Christian schools are the least prepared schools in America, because nobody has ever looked. I do not need the number. I have walked these buildings for thirteen years, and what I have found is that they are the least prepared schools in the country. The vast majority have never trained their students at all. They are the least required to prepare, the least funded to prepare, and the only category of school in this country whose readiness nobody has ever measured. That is what it looks like when nobody is watching.

WITH ONE EXCEPTION, AND IT IS THE ONE MOST CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS ANSWER TO

If you are accredited by ACCS or ACSI, you were already told to do this, and in most of the country nobody else has said a word.

Look at who has actually told a Christian school, in writing, to train its people. In most of the country, no legislature has. No federal agency has. Two that did are ACCS and ACSI, associations run by Christian educators, and they did it without waiting for a law to make them. Give them the credit for that, because they earned it.

Start with why ACCS says it is your job, because they put it better than I do. From the principle under Standard C.7, Health, Security, and Statutory Requirements:

“Schools have a responsibility ‘in loco parentis’ to provide for the physical well-being of students entrusted to their care.”

In the place of the parent. That is the whole argument for this work, and ACCS wrote it into the standard.

Then look at what C.7 asks you to put on the table. Among the exhibits a school must produce under C.7.c, alongside the fire inspection certificates and the vaccination records, is this:

“Security: Comprehensive written security and crisis management plans and training.”

Plans **and** training. And notice what sits directly above it in the same list of exhibits:

“Schedule of School Drills required by state or local laws for Safety Training”

Two separate lines. Your drill schedule is one exhibit. Your security and crisis management plans and training is a different one. **ACCS already draws the distinction this entire guide is built on.** Drills are what the state asks of you. Training is its own thing, and it is asked for on

its own line.

ACSI says it at greater length and names names. Standard 18, Health and Safety, is that the school operates from written policies and procedures that ensure the health and safety of staff, students, and campus visitors. The first indicator under it reads:

“A comprehensive written security and crisis management plan has been developed, implemented, regularly reviewed, and supported by appropriate training for all staff, students, and volunteers. The plan includes a strategy for communication with legal authorities and stakeholders in the event of a crisis.” **ACSI INSPIRE, INDICATOR 18.1**

Read that slowly, because it does not say what most schools think it says. It does not ask for a plan. It asks for a plan that is **supported by appropriate training**, and it names three groups: all staff, all students, all volunteers.

Here is where most schools land, and it is not neglect. They read that indicator, put the documentation in the file, ran a drill in October, and stopped. And look at what the drill was. Curtain down, lights off, everybody into a corner that nobody has ever checked against the line of fire, and stay quiet. That is a rehearsal of the three steps. It is not the training the indicator is asking for, and it never was.

The training half of that sentence is still sitting there. It stayed there because a standard can tell you training is required and cannot tell you what good training looks like, who needs it, when to schedule it, or what it should cost. That is not the accreditor's job. It is mine, and it is the rest of this guide.

So in most states, the state will not make you. The Justice Department's school hardening money is not written for you, and the federal survey does not count you. And the accreditors most Christian schools answer to asked for the exact thing almost none of them did, in writing, and if you hold either accreditation, it is sitting on your desk right now.

THE FEDERAL PIECE

Your teachers are your employees, and a Christian school that employs people is an employer under federal law like anyone else. OSHA has no active shooter standard. What it has is the General Duty Clause, which requires an employer to furnish a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious harm. OSHA has used that clause against employers who knew violence was a live risk in their workplace and did nothing, and those citations have been upheld on appeal. Whether it reaches a school that has never had an incident has not been decided by a court, and I am not going to tell you it has.

Which brings me to the part I actually care about.

If the law is what moves you, you are answering the wrong question. Compliance is a minimum standard, that standard was set by people who have never walked your hallway, and for most of you they did not bother to set one at all.

What your people have not told you

The strongest argument I know has nothing to do with statistics.

Your people are already thinking about it.

Your kindergarten teacher has already looked at that classroom door and wondered how long that lock and that glass window will last. Your art teacher has already thought about the window wall. The person at your front desk has already noticed the visitor who does not sign in.

They are running these scenarios in their heads right now and most of them have never told you, because they do not want to be the person who brings it up.

And it is not only the adults. Most of your staff and most of your students already know that what they have been handed is not training. It is a drill, and it does nothing. Ask them. Ask a teacher whether the lock and the shade and the corner will hold. Ask your students whether sitting in a corner behind a black curtain makes them feel safe. They will tell you straight: if anything happens, we are dead. We have no chance. They worked that out on their own a long time ago, and nobody has given them a better answer since.

So understand what training does to a building. **The fear is already in the room. Training is not the cause.** It is the answer. It takes the private, formless dread your staff and your students have been carrying alone and turns it into a problem they know how to solve. That kindergarten teacher stops dreading the worst day and becomes a problem solver standing in front of it. So do the students. Good training gives people a purpose and the understanding that they can make a difference. It is an incredibly empowering experience.

That is why people come out of good training lighter instead of heavier. The world did not get any safer between nine and noon. The dread just turned into a problem, and they know what to do with problems.

“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” **2 TIMOTHY 1:7**

Most people reach for that verse looking for comfort. Try reading it as a standard. Power, love, and self-control are precisely what a teacher needs in the first fifteen seconds, and every one of them can be taught. A spirit of fear is what is left when nobody bothered.

PART TWO: WHAT

02

Simple. Instinctive. Biblically grounded. Taught without fear.

Strip away the industry and what I teach is simple. A small number of tactics, techniques and strategies that work in a real building, on a real day, in the hands of a real teacher. Not an operator's playbook. Not a script. Things a kindergarten teacher can do with what is already in the room, and things a student can do without being told twice.

They are instinctive on purpose. Under stress nobody remembers a checklist. People do what their body already knows. So we build on what your people would do anyway, gathering the children, getting behind something, getting away from the threat, and we sharpen it into something that works. Read the room in fifteen seconds and know whether it will hold. Barricade it if it will. Know exactly where those children go if it will not. That is not a new set of reflexes. It is the reflexes they already have, given a job.

It is biblically grounded, and I mean the training itself, not a verse on the first slide. The whole course is taught from a biblical worldview, the same one your school teaches from, and we settle whether preparing for this is faithful before we teach a single tactic, because a teacher who is not sure it is faithful will hesitate on the day, and hesitation is the whole margin. The next section is that argument in full.

And it is delivered with some emotional intelligence, which in this business is rarer than it should be. No blanks in the hallway. No unannounced drill. Nobody made to perform in front of their peers. Adults are taught like adults and children are taught like children, and everybody walks out lighter than they walked in, because they walked in already carrying the fear and they walk out with something to do about it.

And here is the part nobody expects. People enjoy it. A training day is a good time and a morale boost for a faculty, because for once the thing sitting in the back of everybody's mind gets handled in the open, by somebody who is not afraid to laugh with them. Go read the Google reviews. A grammar school teacher who had sat through safety trainings from school districts and the local police wrote that ours was "by far the most inclusive, applicable, informative, and engaging." A teacher who also runs security for his church wrote, "Best training of my life."

First we teach. Then we walk.

You cannot assess a building you have never been taught how to analyze.

Walk a hallway you have walked ten thousand times and you will see what you have always seen. The lockers. The water fountain. The door that sticks in August. Nothing in a teacher's training, and probably nothing in yours, ever taught anybody to see that hallway the way somebody who means harm sees it. That is not a failure of intelligence. Nobody ever gave you the eyes.

So we start with what your people do not know. Three to four hours of instruction. How an attacker actually moves through a building. What a locked door does and does not do. What is sitting in an ordinary classroom right now that will barricade a door, and what will not. What in that room will stop a bullet, and what only looks like it will. What works as an improvised weapon in the hands of a teacher, and what does not. How to tell whether a classroom can hold or whether those children have to move.

Then we get up and walk, and now they are looking with new eyes and new skills. One classroom at a time, with the teacher who works in it. Which door. What holds it. What is already in there. Whether it can hold at all, and if it cannot, where those children go instead. I am there to answer questions and show them their options. The answers are theirs.

Here is why we do it in that order. If I walked your building first and handed you my findings, you would have my report. Done this way, your teachers find the answers themselves, in their own classrooms, with their own hands. One of those is a document. The other is a building full of people who can think.

Generic training teaches concepts. Our training teaches your building.

The leaders who walk it with us get more out of that day than anybody. Most do not stay and I understand why, because your afternoon was spoken for before I got there. But if you can give me that hour, you walk away knowing exactly how much your building helps you and how much it hurts you. That is the number every other decision hangs on. A building that works against you has to be compensated for somewhere, and there are only four places to get it: training, infrastructure, policy and procedure, and staffing. Until you have seen your own building honestly, you are guessing at how much of each you need, and most leaders guess low.

“For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?” **LUKE 14:28**

Christ assumes an honest count. That walk is where you get one. Most leaders have been told what their building costs to insure and have never once been told what it will actually do on the worst day.

The course is built on Scripture, not bolted onto it

There is a question worth settling before the first tactic is taught, even though almost nobody asks it.

Does preparing for this mean we do not trust God to protect us?

Most Christian schools never raise it. When it does come up, it is very rare, and almost always in one of the pacifist denominations. But if it is in your room and you leave it unanswered, you can deliver the finest tactical instruction in the country and some of your faculty will hold something back, because they are not sure the thing you are asking them to do is faithful. A teacher who is theologically uneasy about defending will hesitate on the day, and hesitation can be the difference between life and death.

So we settle it first, out of Scripture, in the room, whether anybody asked or not. Nehemiah answers it in one sentence.

“And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.” [NEHEMIAH 4:9](#)

Prayed and set a guard. One verse, no tension between the two, and no sense that posting a watch showed weak faith. The praying and the guarding were the same act of faithfulness, done by the same tired people, on the same night. He did not post professionals, either. He stationed the people by household in the gaps, priests and goldsmiths and merchants with swords on their belts, and he told frightened, exhausted people to remember the Lord and fight for their sons and daughters in the same breath.

The course is taught from a biblical worldview start to finish. That is not decoration on the front of a security class. It is load bearing. It is the difference between a faculty that complies and a faculty that commits, and it is the reason people come out of this lighter rather than heavier.

I can teach it because I am a security expert with thirty-five years at the highest levels of government and private sector work, Navy SEAL, Boston Police SWAT, executive protection, and because I am a pastor. I am not visiting your world and I am not quoting a verse somebody handed me for the Christian school version of the slides. I preach under the same constraint you run your school under: the doors have to stay as open and welcoming as God intended, and be ready anyway. A pastor I trained wrote afterward that I had taught them from Nehemiah. That is the part no national brand can ship to you, because it is not in the curriculum they licensed.

Online and in-person training are not competitors

Training can be in-person or as an online course. Which is right for you?

In-person is the training. The instruction, the walk of your own building, the drill, and the questions people only ask once they trust the person teaching them.

Online is for three situations. The year the budget, or the calendar, will not carry an in-person day. The people who missed the day, the new hire in February, the substitute, the volunteer. And the years between in-person days, so the skill does not fade. Every staff member on their own schedule, with completion tracking so you know who did it.

Most schools end up using both.

Who is teaching it decides most of what you get

Before you pick a program, look hard at who will be standing in front of your people, because that decides more than the curriculum does. There are four ways this usually gets done instead, three of them free or close to it, and I want to be fair to every one of them, because I have been the volunteer, I have been the local police, I have sat through the six minute video as the training, and I have watched the national brands work.

THE VOLUNTEER

A parent who did a tour in the Army. A board member with a carry permit. The retired officer whose kids go to your school. This is the most common answer in Christian schools, and it comes from the best place there is: somebody who loves your children offered.

Here is the problem, and it is not the volunteer's character. Being able to do a thing is not the same as being able to teach it, and being trained to fight is not the same as being trained to teach somebody else to read a room, decide in fifteen seconds whether it holds, and move twenty-two six-year-olds when it does not. Military and police training is built for people who move toward the threat with a weapon. Your kindergarten teacher is not going to do that and should not. The volunteer teaches what the volunteer knows, and what the volunteer knows is usually the wrong half of the problem.

There is usually no curriculum, no walk of the building with a stranger's eyes, and nothing your people can point back to when it is over. There is no hard conversation about the building either, because that volunteer has a child enrolled and has to keep seeing you at pickup. And there is nothing for the new hire in February, because the volunteer did it once, on a Saturday, as a favor.

THE LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT

Free, sincere, and staffed by people who will run toward the sound when it happens. I spent part of my career on that side of the line and I will not say a word against the officers who do it.

But look at what you are actually getting. The material is the government curriculum I described in Part One, years behind by the time it reaches the officer's hands. The school resource officer who tells a faculty to lock the door and pull the shade is not careless. He is teaching exactly what he was handed. And not everyone should preach, and not everyone should teach. Who wants to count on a black curtain to save their kids' lives? Not me.

The officer is trained to respond, and response is the end of your problem. Your people have to cover the beginning, the minutes before anyone arrives, and that is not what police training is built around. It is usually a lecture to the whole staff in one room, not a walk of your building, and nobody ever stands in your kindergarten room with your kindergarten teacher. Whoever taught it is on a different shift next year.

THE FREE FEDERAL VIDEO

The government is good at telling you what happened and terrible at helping you counter what will happen. The best-known video is about six minutes long, made by a city with a federal grant in 2012, and set in an office building. There are longer federal versions online that you click through in about an hour. Schools and churches use them because they are free and because a form somewhere says training was completed.

Watch one with your building in mind. It is built for an adult who is responsible for one person: himself. Run, hide, fight makes sense for an accountant. Now put your preschool teacher in it with four two-year-olds who will not walk where they are told. Which of those three verbs did that video just hand that teacher? The video does not know your doors, your glass, or which of your rooms cannot be barricaded. Nobody watches your people watch it, nobody asks a question afterward, and nobody finds out in September who never opened the link. And a video is where a script comes from. Three verbs, in order, for everybody. A script is what you get when nobody is in the room to teach judgment.

A video is better than nothing. It is not training, and the day you treat it as training is the day you stop looking for training.

THE NATIONAL BRAND

One of the biggest names in this business certifies an instructor in two days. Sixteen hours, and that person is now teaching your faculty how to survive the worst day of their lives. The instructor may be a former something, and may be good; I have met a few who are, and they

are rare. But the credential took a weekend, and the material is a licensed curriculum the instructor's job is to deliver, not to rewrite for your hallway. A script cannot read your hallway.

The business model is the other problem. A national program has to sell what it can ship: a curriculum, a certification, a door device, an app, a panic button, and in my experience the training is often the front door to the catalog. A headmaster I trained described this whole industry as overpriced training that plays on fear to keep the money coming. His exact words are in the cost section. That is not an accident. Fear sells equipment. And the same program goes to a hospital on Monday, a distribution center on Tuesday, and your Christian school on Wednesday, with the same slides, because calibrating it for you is not something that model can afford to do.

WHAT YOU GET WHEN I AM THE ONE TEACHING

I am going to say this plainly, because you deserve a straight comparison and not a brochure.

I spent thirty-five years on the other side of these doors. Sixteen as a Navy SEAL and a Special Operations medic, then Boston Police SWAT, paramedic, and executive protection. I have breached doors, cleared rooms, and worked on the wounds these weapons make. I know what an attacker can do to a lock because I have done it. That is not a line for a brochure. It is why I can look at your classroom door and tell you in one sentence what it will and will not hold.

I have been teaching Christian schools since 2013, and teaching is a separate skill I have spent thirteen years on. You run a building full of teachers. You already know that. A headmaster wrote that we are “calibrated” for classical Christian schools. Another wrote that we understand what is motivating them as Christians and can tailor the training to fit their commitments. That is not a marketing claim I can make about myself. It is the part clients keep naming without being asked.

The training day is the one I described at the top of this part. Instruction first, then the walk, one room at a time, with the teacher who works in it, and nobody is made to perform. While I am in your building, I will tell you what I see. Where a camera belongs. Which doors need hardware. Where film on the glass buys you seconds. What is worth the money and what is not. Following the training day, everyone who was in the room gets the online course at no cost for the rest of that school year, and the aide you hire in February can be added to it for his on-boarding for a small fee.

I do not teach a script. I teach decision-making, because it is all situational. What you should do in an active shooter event is the answer to a handful of questions, and the answer moves when they move. How far away is the attacker. What is he carrying. How fit and how fast are

you, and how fit and how fast are the people you are responsible for, because a kindergarten class and a varsity team are not the same problem. What have you already noticed, and what do you know right now that you did not know ten seconds ago. What do you have to fight with if it comes to that. What is the building giving you: a door that holds, a window that opens, a hallway that leads out. And how long until help arrives. Distance, weapon, fitness, awareness, your own weapon, infrastructure, response time. Put those together and you have what to do. Change one and the answer changes. A script cannot do that. A trained adult can, in seconds, and that adult is what gets children out of a building on the worst day. I do not sell equipment. I will tell you what to buy and what to skip, and I make nothing on either answer. Most of what I teach costs nothing to put into practice, and I will tell you that in the first hour. And nobody leaves frightened. That is the standard I hold myself to, and the reviews from the people I have trained are the only proof I can offer you.

It is not free. A client will tell you that himself before this guide is over, and I would rather you heard it from him. But now you know exactly what free costs.

AND HERE IS WHAT A TRAINING DAY IS NOT

ACCS and ACSI both ask for two things. A plan, and training. This guide is about the training half on purpose, because that is the half nobody explains.

I will say something about plans that does not make me popular. Most of the ones I am handed are a catastrophe. Pulled off a template built for an office park. Full of steps nobody has ever walked. Naming a reunification site nobody has ever called, run by people who have never been asked. Written by somebody who never stood in the building. A plan like that is worse than no plan at all, because it tells everyone the question has been answered.

That is its own subject and it deserves its own guide, which I am writing. If you want it when it is done, tell me on the call and I will send it.

Two tests of whether it was done right

Test one: how much of what they taught costs nothing to do?

“The training was imminently practical. Much of the training was on issues and processes that both gave our teachers confidence in what they can do and how they can behave to best protect their students and classroom and that cost nothing to implement.”

TY FISCHER, HEADMASTER, VERITAS ACADEMY

He also wrote that the world of security consultants “often leave me wondering if their job is making me even more anxious and despairing.”

If your training ends with a quote for equipment, be skeptical. Most of what protects a classroom is not a purchase.

Test two: how did your people feel walking out?

“I was dreading the training as I have been to many others before that left me feeling scared and hopeless... I left the training feeling hopeful and much more equipped.”

ALLYSON SHEFFIELD, TEACHER

“He equipped our team with actionable strategies that can be implemented right away, and he did so in a way that built confidence rather than fear.”

TRAVIS LOCKYER, HEAD OF SCHOOL

If your staff leaves frightened, it was done badly. Fear is not preparation. Fear is what people feel when they have been shown a problem and not given a job.

And the line that keeps all of this in its place

“The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the Lord.”

PROVERBS 21:31

Both halves. You make the horse ready. That is your work and nobody else is going to do it for you. But the outcome was never in your hands and it was never supposed to be.

That verse is the reason this work does not have to be frightening. You are not being asked to guarantee anything. You are being asked to be found faithful with the part that is actually yours.

PART THREE: WHO

03

Who do you train?

The wrong answer is “the security team only.”

Most schools that take this seriously start by designating somebody to be a guard. Usually it is the poor facilities guy, who is way out of his league. Or a resource officer. A parent with a background. A team. That is a good instinct, and plenty of schools never get that far, so if you have done it, you are ahead of most.

It is still not an answer to the question, and here is why. Whoever you designated is at one place in your building. Your children are in thirty places. On the worst day, the distance between those two facts is measured in seconds, and seconds are the whole event.

A guard is a good investment. But a guard is not a plan, and no guard in America can be standing in every classroom at one time.

The right answer is everybody. Every adult who works or volunteers in your building. Then every student, age appropriately. ACSI's indicator says it in five words: all staff, students, and volunteers. Not just the teachers. Not a team. Everybody.

Your entire staff first

Ask yourself one question, and ask it honestly.

If an attack started in your building right now, where would it start?

Not at the front door. When the FBI went through its active shooter incidents in schools, seventeen of the twenty middle and high school shooters were students at the school they attacked. It starts in a classroom, a hallway, a cafeteria, a locker room, next to whoever happens to be standing there.

The instinct in an untrained room is to gather the children close and hold them. Holding is love. Holding is not a plan. Somebody has to lock the door and barricade it or move them out, and know which of those options is right inside the first fifteen seconds. That knowledge is the entire difference between a guardian and a bystander who happens to be standing with the kids.

That is why the answer is all of them. Every classroom teacher and every aide. Extended care and after-school staff. Coaches. The music teacher, the art teacher, and anybody who takes a class into a room that is not their own. The front office and whoever buzzes people in. Whoever runs carpool. The facilities crew. Your administrators, who will be the ones calling it and the ones talking to parents afterward. Your security team, if you have one, though they are usually your most prepared people already and the gap is almost never them. Your substitutes, who most schools never train, and the volunteers who are in the building every week. The online course covers both for the price of a seat. All staff and faculty, because on the worst day the adult in the room is the response, and you do not get to pick which room.

Most of them will be alone in a room with children and a closed door, and for the first several minutes, they are the entire response. Nobody is coming to help them make the first decision.

Here is the math your people are carrying whether anybody has told them or not. The best published number for police response to these events is a median of three minutes, and the FBI found that six in ten active shooter incidents were over before officers arrived at all. Seven in ten were finished inside five minutes. In more than a third, everything that was going to happen had already happened inside two minutes. Those first minutes are where the casualty count gets decided, and the police are not in them. The teacher is. Massive, competent action by the adults already in the building, for three minutes, is the factor that decides the outcome.

And people are stepping in. The FBI's own recent reports count civilians intervening in one active shooter incident in 2020, six in 2021, eight in 2022 and four in 2023, and armed citizens killed six attackers in 2021 and 2022 alone. Researchers who count the cases the FBI leaves out put the share of attacks stopped by armed citizens at a third or more. Armed or unarmed, trained or not, the people who were already there are the ones ending these. Now imagine what they could do if somebody had trained them.

Nehemiah did not post professionals

Look at who actually stood watch on that wall:

“So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans, with their swords, their spears, and their bows.” **NEHEMIAH 4:13**

By their clans. By household. Not a standing army, not hired guards. The same people who built the wall, and chapter three names them: priests, goldsmiths, perfumers, merchants, posted by family in the gaps. Three verses later, every builder has a sword strapped on while he lays stone, and the burden carriers work with one hand and hold a weapon with the other.

That is your faculty. Ordinary people, stationed where the gap is, because they were the ones who were there.

Paul says the same thing a different way:

“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’” **1 CORINTHIANS 12:21**

A security team that has been trained while the teachers have not is a head telling the feet it does not need them. Your teachers are the feet. They are also the only adults who will be standing in the room when it starts.

Then the students, age appropriately

This is where leaders flinch, and ACSI already settled it. Indicator 18.1 does not say staff. It says all staff, students, and volunteers. Done well and age-appropriately, it does not frighten children. It gives them something to do with their hands, which is the opposite of frightening.

Before you decide they cannot handle it, remember what they will tell you if you ask: if anything happens, we are dead. They are already carrying the fear. The training is what takes it off them.

Now ask what it makes you, the adult who kept the training from the people you are charged to protect. They do not see that as protection. They see it as one of three things. You do not trust them, you do not know what you are doing, or you do not care. Every one of those costs you credibility, and credibility is exactly what you need to have on the day it matters.

PART FOUR: WHEN

04

If you have not done it, the time is as soon as you can

The correct time to train for an active shooter is as soon as you can, if you have not done it. The next in-service day. Not next August. As soon as you can. The best time is before the building fills, so the year starts with a trained staff. The next best time is now.

I know you are busy. Your in-service days were spoken for in June. Accreditation, curriculum, professional development, the mandated trainings you already carry. Every one of those matters. This matters more. Lives are more important than everything on that calendar except souls.

So make this important enough for a day. In-person takes an in-service day. Depending on the size of your campus, we need five to six hours for the training and the walk, and a whole day for a larger campus. **Give it the day.**

If the day truly is not there this year, do not put this off. **Start online.** The course does not need a day. Your people take it on their own schedule, at home, on a phone or a laptop, and you get completion tracking so you know who actually did it rather than who signed a sheet. It is not the in-person day, but it is a trained staff this year instead of an untrained one, and that is a far better place to be standing until you do find the day.

Train yearly, practice as often as you can

Skills decay. Staff turn over. Buildings change. Threats and tactics change. A staff trained three years ago is a different staff. People have left, new ones have come in, and the ones who stayed have not touched it since. Annual is the floor.

In-person is better, and if you can bring me back every year, do that. But here is the rotation I recommend and that most budgets can carry. In-person every other year, or every third year at the outside, with the online course in the years between. The in-person year is where your people get greater depth and understanding, because they apply it in person, in their own building. The online years teach and reinforce the tactics, skills and principles, and they catch every person who was not standing there the first time.

That rotation holds as long as your turnover stays low. If you have lost a meaningful part of your staff since the last time I was there, or added a new building or campus, you should return to an in-person session, regardless of where you are in the in-person/online rotation.

Five triggers that override your calendar

1. **New leadership.** Nobody currently in charge has ever been through the training. This is the most common gap I find and the most dangerous.
2. **A new building, wing, or campus.** Your people were trained in a building that no longer exists. New doors, new sight lines, new rooms that cannot hold.
3. **Somebody wrote you a plan.** A plan nobody has been trained on is a document, not a defense.
4. **An incident in your area or other Christian school.** Not to trade on fear, but because it is the one window when your people will genuinely engage.
5. **Meaningful staff turnover.** If a quarter of your building has never been trained, you do not have a trained building.

It gets built on an ordinary day

Nobody has ever become capable on the worst day.

The teachers who have done the right thing in these events were, almost every time, made capable on some forgettable weekday weeks or months earlier, when nothing was happening, nobody felt any urgency, and it would have been very easy to reschedule.

That is the only day this ever gets built. Preparation is always done on a day when it does not feel necessary.

Christ told a whole parable about exactly this, and it is worth reading again with your building in mind.

Ten young women waited for the bridegroom. Five brought extra oil and five did not. Notice what the parable does not say. It does not say the five foolish ones were wicked, or lazy, or careless about the wedding. They wanted to be there as much as anyone. **All ten of them fell asleep.** The difference between the two groups had already been settled hours before, in a decision so small nobody watching would have noticed it.

And when the cry came at midnight, there was no time left to go and buy more.

“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” **MATTHEW 25:13**

“The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.”

PROVERBS 27:12

Today is an ordinary day.

PART FIVE: WHAT IT COSTS

05

Nobody wants to write this section and every school leader reading wants to know. So here are the numbers.

What it starts at

Online training starts at five hundred dollars, based on number of users. That is the course for your whole staff, for the school year, on their own schedule, and it does not cost you a day of calendar.

In-person starts at twenty five hundred dollars for a local day (Tri-Cities, TN), and five thousand plus travel anywhere in the country. Two things move that number and neither one is a surprise: how many sessions you need and how many buildings I am covering. Everyone who sits in that room gets the online course included, so the two are not separate purchases.

That is the whole price structure. There is no catalog of equipment behind it. You will never get a quote from me for a door device, an app, or a panic button, because I do not sell them.

You get what you pay for, and free is the most expensive option

You can get this free. You have already been offered it free, probably more than once.

Free gets you a lecture from somebody who was never taught to teach, and a faculty that walks out more frightened than it walked in. Free gets you a six minute video made for an office building in 2012, a link half the staff never opens, and nobody tracking who did. The national brands are not free. They run from less than I charge to a good deal more, and what the money buys is a certified instructor who took a two day course and is delivering a licensed curriculum he is not permitted to change for your hallway.

And what free gets you, the vast majority of the time, is a horror show of past events and the same three steps. Lock the door. Pull the shade. Get in the corner.

That answer is what I am hired to undo. You did not save money. You bought the wrong thing, and then you built a policy on top of it and told parents you had a plan.

Here is what you are paying for when you pay me. Thirty-five years. Sixteen as a Navy SEAL and a Special Operations medic, then Boston Police SWAT, paramedic, and executive protection. Thirteen years teaching this specific material inside Christian schools. A pastor who can settle the theology in the room instead of stepping around it. And me, personally, standing in your kindergarten with your kindergarten teacher, in a building I have walked.

A headmaster put it better than I can.

"It is not cheap, but there are a few things that are valuable. In a world of overpriced training that plays on fears and anxiety in order to yield infinite and increasing investment, Trident Shield was such an encouragement." **TY FISCHER, HEADMASTER,**
VERITAS ACADEMY

And most of what it teaches costs nothing to do

Here is the part that does not end in a purchase order.

The training is a paid service and I will not pretend otherwise. But most of what your people walk out knowing how to do is free forever. Putting a door out of service with the furniture already standing in the room. Reading a space in fifteen seconds and knowing whether it will hold. Reading a hallway before stepping into it. Taking out an attacker, alone or with a team. None of it requires you to buy anything and no committee has to approve it.

Fischer said the same about his own classrooms: much of what protected them **cost nothing to implement**.

If somebody is selling you preparedness and the answer always ends in a quote for equipment, ask harder questions.

Where the money actually comes from

Three practical notes from watching a lot of boards handle this.

Make it a budget line item, not a discretionary spend. When it comes out of somebody's flexible pocket, it gets postponed the first time something else breaks. When it is a line item, it has a date attached and the date holds.

End of fiscal year is your friend. Online licenses are among the easiest things in the world to approve with money that has to be spent inside the year, and they cover every employee.

Tell me what you can commit in good conscience. If that number is smaller than the quote, we can work together on a solution. What I will not do is pretend the work is free.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." [MATTHEW 6:21](#)

A budget is a theological document whether anybody means it to be or not. It is the most honest statement your school makes about what it values.

What doing nothing costs

You have teachers who have never been taught what to do and have been thinking about it anyway. If your lockdown policy is the three steps, it does not survive contact. And you have parents who assume, every single morning, that somebody inside that building has already worked this out.

FOUR QUESTIONS TO ANSWER THIS WEEK

You do not need me for this part. Ten minutes, honestly.

One. If an attack started in your building right now, name the specific people who would be protecting the children. Do you know, by name, whether each of them has ever been trained?

Two. Name the rooms in your building that cannot be barricaded. If your children were in them right now, where would they go instead?

Three. If the worst day came tomorrow, could you stand in front of those parents and say you did everything you could? Not everything that was easy. Not everything that fit the budget. Everything you could. “I did not know any better” stopped being an answer a long time ago.

Four. If you asked your teachers tomorrow whether they have ever privately worried about this, how many would say yes? And what have you given them to do with that?

If any of those made you uncomfortable, that discomfort is the most useful thing in this guide.

A word to the leader still putting it off

You are not lazy and you are not negligent. You are overwhelmed, and that is real. Enrollment is not final, you are short-staffed, and something is on fire that was not on fire yesterday.

But being overwhelmed is not the same as being excused.

The attacker who decides to walk into your building does not check your calendar first. He does not care that you are short two teachers. He is not going to wait until things settle down in October.

Nehemiah’s builders were exhausted too. They had a wall to finish, enemies at the edge of the work, and nowhere near enough hands. They finished it like this:

“...each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other.”

NEHEMIAH 4:17

And this is what he told them when they were afraid:

“Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.”

NEHEMIAH 4:14

Remember the Lord. And fight for your children. Same sentence, same man, same God, spoken to ordinary, tired people who still had a job to do.

You are already building. This is the other hand.

TOGETHER WE SAVE LIVES.

WE MUST PROTECT
HIS CHILDREN.

NEHEMIAH 4:14



Ready to talk? Call (423) 849-1233 or book fifteen minutes at meetings.hubspot.com/jasonp3. Fifteen minutes on the phone will tell you more about where your building stands than another year of meaning to get to it.

Thirty-five years. Navy SEAL. Boston Police SWAT. Pastor. Training churches and Christian schools since 2013. tridentshield.net

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- Tenn. Code Ann. sec. 49-6-804, building-level school safety plans for private and church-related schools
- Mich. Comp. Laws sec. 29.19, fire, tornado, and school safety drills
- K.A.R. 22-18-2, fire, tornado, and crisis drills in public and private schools, as amended March 2024, Kansas Register
- N.J.S.A. 18A:41-7, provision of training on school safety and security, including nonpublic schools
- N.J.S.A. 18A:41-1, monthly fire and school security drills
- OSHA General Duty Clause, section 5(a)(1), Occupational Safety and Health Act

- Our Lady of the Angels School Fire: 50 Years Later, Fire Engineering
- Active Shooter Events from 2000 to 2012, Blair, Martaindale and Nichols, FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, January 2014 (three-minute median police response)
- A Study of Active Shooter Incidents in the United States Between 2000 and 2013, FBI, Quick Reference Guide (60 percent ended before police arrived; 69 percent ended in five minutes or less; 23 in two minutes or less)
- Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2022, FBI (eight incidents ended by citizen intervention; two shooters killed by armed citizens)
- Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2023, FBI (civilian intervention 2019 to 2023)
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- FBI Designates 61 Active Shooter Incidents in 2021 (four shooters killed by armed citizens)
- Massive Errors in FBI's Active Shooting Reports from 2014-2023, Crime Prevention Research Center, July 2024