

# EDUCATION WEEK

Published Online: April 12, 2013

## COMMENTARY

### A 'Memo' to Staff on Arming All Teachers

#### Imagining 'What If's'

By Thomas P. Johnson

*Below, consultant Thomas P. Johnson imagines the memo a superintendent might write if Congress were to pass legislation mandating that all teachers be armed.*

[← Back to Story](#)

#### Memorandum

**To:** Director of Personnel  
**From:** Superintendent of Schools-XYZ School District  
**Re:** Arming All Teachers  
**Date:** TBD

Pursuant to new regulations first proposed by the National Rifle Association and passed by Congress recently, all teaching staff will be required to be armed while teaching. In anticipation of this new requirement, the personnel department must immediately draw up plans to:

- Assure that all applicants for employment and new hires submit certificates of marksmanship competencies with the several weapons we will be purchasing this year. (*See district business manager for listing of weapons to be purchased.*) Please update our employment-application form accordingly.
- Develop an amendment to our collective bargaining contracts and add new competencies in our performance-evaluation protocols that mandate high levels of accuracy in weapons use by unit members. Tie these competencies to the contracts' provisions on discipline and discharge. Assess the impact of these changes on all bargaining agreements with union officials immediately.
- Rewrite appropriate school board policies to include required marksmanship levels for various job categories as a condition of continued employment.
- Liaison with the district's risk-management contacts to guarantee indemnification



**THE FULL  
EDUCATION  
PICTURE...**  
...for up to 60% less

**+ Click here for more info**

of our staff in case a teacher kills a child or other staff member with an errant or accidental shot.

- Liaison with the local Department of Youth Services to establish protocols such as grief counseling if a staff member, parent, or child is killed accidentally by an armed teacher.
- Develop rules and regulations to mandate that ammunition for all district weapons be available in easy-to-access locations near teacher workstations.
- Develop regulations for issuance of weapons before school each day and retrieval of such at the end of the day. Teachers who coach may keep their weapons on their person while on the practice field or at athletic events. Check with other districts to ensure that our coaches can be armed on their campuses during away games.
- Amend district professional-development plans to accommodate annual weapons qualification so that each teacher reaches high competency in marksmanship. In addition, update plans to include language on gun safety, stating standards for operational understanding of each district weapon, so that all staff members reach high levels of competency with their assigned weapons.
- Contract with a local gun club to use its range(s) for practice.
- Meet with the curriculum director to determine how we can release teachers during the school day to practice their marksmanship or complete their annual weapons-qualification requirement on school time. Find substitute teachers to cover their classes.
- Meet with the head custodian to ensure that an in-district armory be established with appropriate 24-hour security to store excess weapons and ammunition.

Additionally, although it is not in the new regulations, please investigate arming cafeteria workers, custodians, and bus drivers who come in contact with students outside of class.

I realize that this will keep you busy, but I expect that you will brief me on your progress within 30 days. We will discuss your progress on the above during your annual review, which I will schedule for the same time period.

Good luck.

*Your Superintendent*

---

*Thomas P. Johnson is a senior consultant at HR Associates, which provides human-resource consulting to school districts, in Harwich Port, Mass.*