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Only one solution to gun violence

An reporter descended on Nashville earlier this week to cover another horrific school shooting. Metro Police Chief John Drake praised his officers for doing their jobs.



CYNTHIA TUCKER

"They heard gun fire and immediately ran to that," Drake said. "I was really impressed that with all that was going on — the danger — that everybody took care and went, 'Let's go! Let's go! Let's go!' and went in and took care and just tried to end this situation."

President Joe Biden called to offer condolences to Nashville officials earlier today.

Those officers were trained for doing what police officers are trained to do because Nashville police officers failed miserably in May 2020, covering nearly 50 children and teachers were slain. According to investigations, over 50 hours passed before those law enforcement agents confronted the gunman and killed him. That lapse gave the gunman time to kill 50 students and two teachers.

With a "textbook response," as one former police officer called it, by Metro Nashville police wasn't enough to protect integrity. Three adults and three children were killed at The Covenant School before police could take down the shooter.

Police intervention, no matter how timely or courageous, will never be enough to save lives after an active shooter has already started gunning down victims. There is only one solution to the plague of gun violence that is terrorizing American schools, playgrounds, churches and workplaces, but we have refused it. Other nations have severely restricted firearms, and they don't suffer as we do. But we are sliding deeper into a state of madness about guns, and there seems to be no way out. We must contend with thoughts and actions.

Though it is a small district now, school shooting victims from preschool through sixth grade. Covenant had searched every security measure to try to keep its children safe. The shooter shot through double locked glass doors to enter the building. Surveillance footage showed doors flaring and lights flashing as the heavily armed shooter stalked hallways. According to Brian Fisher, president of Oxford Systems, Covenant staff members had received active shooter training last year.

Despite security training, three adults and three children were killed. There is only one solution to the plague of gun violence.



EDITORIAL

Symbols of change

A tip of the hat — or a salute from a big furry paw — to the students of the Glens Falls City School District. They're showing us all how to turn a directive into an empowering experience.

Glens Falls is one of the districts that must retire its "Indians" name and mascot to comply with the state Education Department mandate banning Indigenous team names. As The Post-Star recently reported, a cabinet of student leaders put four new options up for a community vote: Hawks, Wolves, Knights or Black Bears. It's the culmination of a process in which the students sent out ranking surveys to gauge preferences on new symbols, held workshops to identify key values and even met with the city historian. They're scheduled to present their recommendations to the school board on Monday.

Letting students guide a community process turned it into an experience of discovery, collaboration and identity-building. It's an approach that other Capital Region schools might consider as they finally run out of appeals for

As some schools face the selection of new mascots, this district's students demonstrate how to do it right.

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keeping their own Indigenous team names.

A state Education Department advisory panel has brought that process a little closer to its end by ruling recently that names like Raiders, Braves and Warriors had to go — even if the accompanying imagery had changed.

The panel, which is tasked with vetting requests from schools that are seeking exceptions to the ban, rejected proposals from schools that have long been, say, the Warriors but had recently morphed their Native American "Warrior" into a Spartan "Warrior," or a Visigoth, or some such. Sorry, the committee said; words that have meant one thing in a community for decades are not so easily unmoored and attached to another target.

If the Department of Education,

which has the final say, upholds the panel's decision, that would mean changes for a number of Capital Region mascots, such as the Red Raiders (Mechanicville), Garnet Raiders (South Colonie), and Warriors (Lake George and Averill Park). Fonda-Fultonville sought to remain the Braves, hoping to redirect the word to point to "the Brave," as in "Land of the Free, Home of the Brave" from the national anthem: That, too, was a no.

The Education Department — which told schools 20 years ago that they *should* change their mascots, but which only last year told them that they *must* or risk their state aid — should absolutely stand behind the rulings of the panel. Its members, who are Indigenous, have taken on the responsibility of delivering to communities a difficult "no," and they deserve for the state to have their backs.

There are so many choices of imagery that can evoke strength, determination, spirit, creativity, resilience — whatever it is a community wants a mascot to represent about them and their school. Anything except reducing other human beings — human beings who are living here with us, in our cities, in our state — to violent caricatures of a stereotyped past.