

Article Name: The Technology Schools Are Using to Keep Students Safe from Shootings

URL: <http://fortune.com/2018/08/20/schools-students-technology-safety-shootings/>

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August 20, 2018

Today marks the start of a new school year for many students around the country. Alongside the anticipation of class schedules and forays into Office Depot for the back-to-school supplies, this 2018-2019 school year brings with it the weight of a year plagued by school shootings and marked by demands for stricter gun control legislation from teenaged school shooting survivors.

To date, 2018 has seen 25 school shootings.

As parents send their children to school, they're likely met with a pang of fear; the unpredictability of the next school year is massacre is unsettling. A recent poll found 34% of parents fear for their child's physical safety at school—almost triple the number of parents from 2013. Schools across the country are trying to settle the nerves of parents, students, and employees alike by introducing new safety protocols and preventative technology. From high-tech pepper spray to panic buttons, administrators aren't leaving any safety measure untested. Here are a few of the schools and districts implementing innovative safety measures this year to keep their students safe.

### **Columbiana School District, Ohio**

One aspect of the Ohio district's multi-faceted approach to increase safety measures this year is gaining national attention. The Threat Extinguisher—a non-lethal defense system—piqued the interest of the district a few months ago. Threat Extinguisher is an Ohio-based company that provides tactical pepper spray canisters that look like fire extinguishers. When removed from their base, the extinguisher immediately sends out an emergency alert to authorities and school staff, as well as students and even parents. The alert provides the location of the activated Threat Extinguisher to ensure that responders know where the threat is located and to alert others to stay away. Threat Extinguishers will be located throughout the school district in glass cases, portable bases, as well as individual lanyards worn by school staff and students.

### **Branson School District, Missouri**

Branson, Mo. campuses will see some entry process changes this year. A new buzzer system provides more security by screening each visitor before entry. Paired with a new live camera system, the safety measure allows for school staff to control who comes in and who goes out. In addition, the district is partnering with the City of Branson to place police officers on every campus, not just the middle and high schools. "It's not always common to put SROs on an elementary campus but I think that's again going to the day in time in which we live," Branson Schools Superintendent Dr. Brad Swofford told KY3.

### **Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Florida**

Students who arrived for their first school year since a gunman opened fire and killed 17 people on Valentine's Day were met with a beefed up security system including guards, locks, and 52 new security cameras. Now, there is only one entrance for visitors who are all screened via a video intercom system. As for staff and students, they must wear ID's to pass through fences and gate surveyed by security specialists. But the changes don't stop there. All classroom doors have been fitted with new hardware that automatically locks when doors are pulled shut. Previously, the doors required relocking from the outside.

### **Santa Fe District, New Mexico**

After May's deadly mass shooting, the district has implemented several changes and programs for the new school year, including panic buttons in every classroom. With a press of a button, help is on the way. Officials say they will allow responders to make better use of their resources. "911 and school officials can have instant access to information like what building that call is coming from, GPS location who's making the call what the emergency type is," Todd Miller with Rave Mobile Safety told KRQE. Additionally, each entrance of the school will be staffed with officers and metal detectors and all students and staff will be required to wear ID badges at all time.