

ASD Families,

Providing our students and staff in the Anchorage School District (ASD) with a safe educational environment remains one of my top priorities. We are all aware of incidents of gun violence in our surrounding communities and across the nation.

We recently partnered with the [Be Smart campaign](#) to help keep our schools safe. I want to share more from the campaign and what we are doing here at ASD.

Guns continue to be a leading cause of death for our youth. A national survey found that 57% of them are concerned that there will be a shooting in their school, and the percentages of our students who reported feeling safe at school substantially decreased between 2021 and 2022.

Studies of all types of school-based gun violence across decades all point to the same significant point of intervention—addressing students' unauthorized access to guns in the home. For example, a recent study of targeted school violence incidents from 2008 to 2017 by the [Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center](#) found that 76% of the firearms in these incidents were obtained from the home of a parent or close relative. Surveys also show that 1 in 10 Alaskan adults live in a home with an unlocked and loaded firearm.

Unsecured guns in the home pose a risk to our students beyond gun violence in schools. Every year, 350 youth under the age of 18 [unintentionally shoot](#) themselves or someone else. That's roughly one unintentional shooting per day. Gun suicide among our youth has reached the highest rate in more than 20 years, and a 2019 survey found that 26% of Anchorage students said they had seriously considered suicide in the last 12 months. In most child gun suicides, the gun used was one that belonged to someone in their home.

One study found that 70% of parents believe their teen cannot access the gun(s) in their home. Yet, the study also found that half of teens said they could gain access to a loaded gun in their home in under an hour, including one-third who said they could do so in under five minutes. Research shows that secure firearm storage practices are associated with up to an 85% reduction in the risk of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens. Storing firearms securely protects any child in the home as well as students throughout the school district and community.

You can learn more and download helpful resources, including a secure storage fact sheet, guide to talking to your children about guns, and facts and resources on child firearm suicide, on our [Security and Emergency Management webpage](#).

Be smart and be safe,

Jharrett Bryantt, Ed. D.
Superintendent