

SNOWY LI / THE ROCK

Hardening measures won't increase safety

In the last five years, there have been 25 shootings at a U.S. high school that resulted in at least one fatality. RBHS's hardening policy, which mainly includes converting to a single entrance with a staff member monitoring those who come in, would have stopped none of those.

While the intention to increase student safety is noble, Columbia Public Schools (CPS) is wasting \$200,000 of taxpayer money on an ineffective policy that would prove far more valuable to spend on increasing the number of

outreach counselors.

Dr. James Price, a professor at the University of Toledo and consultant for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, conducted a review in June of the available literature on the effects of hardening from 2000 to 2018. The study failed to find any hardening programs or practices that reduced firearm violence.

"School officials should not give in to political pressures to 'do something' when that 'something' is likely to be ineffective and wasteful of limited school resources," Price

said.

Even analytically, the hardening occurring would be futile. Putting a school official at the door to determine who is and is not suspicious is utterly useless as every school shooter at a high school in the last five years has either been a current student or a former student pretending to be a current one. Additionally, all the entrances to the school are unlocked before school and after school. During lunch and passing periods, the North and Main entrances are unlocked, totaling 83 minutes during the course of the school day.

Add to that the times before and after school and practically the only shooter that would be stopped from entering the school is an adult trying to openly carry a gun into the school during third period.

Presenting such an ineffective policy as a boon to safety can create a false sense of security that discourages RBHS and CPS from adopting better protective measures. Furthermore, the entrance alteration will take up a massive amount of money the district should be spending on more outreach counselors.

The National Association of School Psychologists explained in a Feb. 2018 press release that improving mental health services within schools is a critical factor in preventing violent acts directed at schools.

"Schools play a critical and irreplaceable role in keeping students safe and supporting mental health," the statement said. "Providing ongoing access to mental health care promotes school safety."

For the entirety of the RBHS student body, there is one full-time outreach counselor: Lesley Thalhuber. Just one person for more than 2,000 students dedicated specifically to providing mental health help.

Should RBHS have kept the old parking and entrance system?

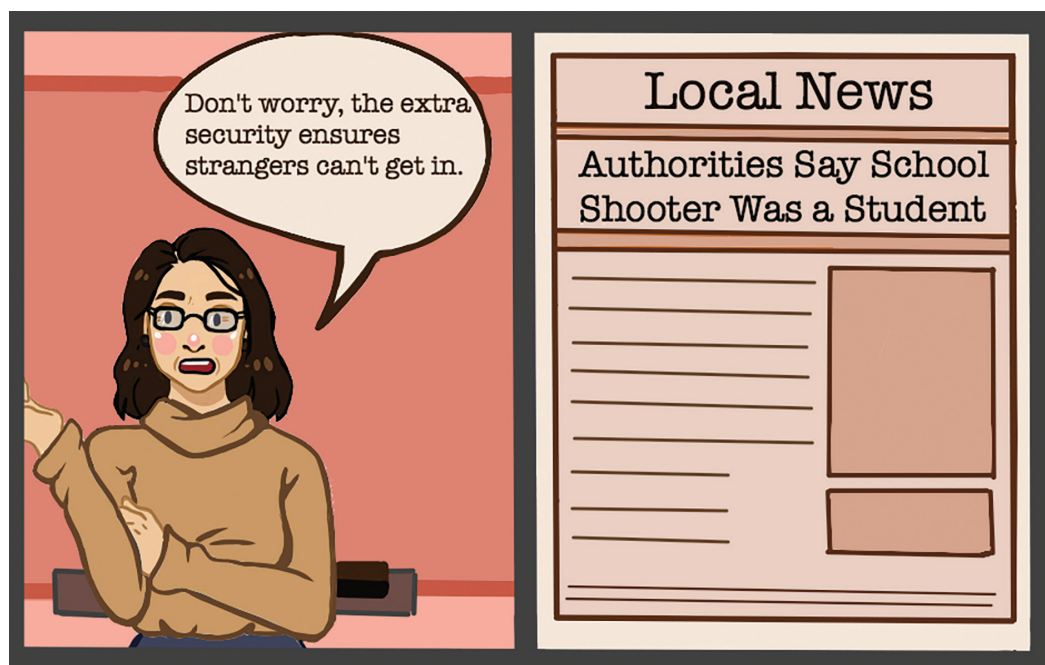
THE ROCK STAFF VOTED

YES — 20
NO — 7

er than squandering money on an entrance system, the school should invest in services that would prevent a shooting from happening in the first place.

School shootings almost always have indications. More school counselors would help identify these warning signs and address them adequately.

RBHS should take steps to prevent school shootings, but hardening is a misguided attempt; it merely lulls parents, students and the administration into a false sense of security likely preventing CPS from taking substantial further action. Instead of spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a policy that makes students no safer, the district should allocate money to improving mental health services for students and increasing the number of outreach counselors.



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Staff states policies for 'Rock,' 'Bearing News'

The Southside Media editorial board, made up of the editors of "The Rock" and "Bearing News," will review all opinion pieces prior to publication. Opinions expressed in signed works are those of the author and are not necessarily reflective of the opinions of other individual staff members or the publication.

Letters to the Editor: The paper encourages letters but reserves the right to edit or reject material based on the standards set by members of the journalism staff. Letters with grammatical errors will be printed as received. Anyone wishing to submit a letter must sign the work with a valid signature. The author of the letter will be named. If a group writes a letter, all members must present a signature.

Content: "The Rock" staff will write all stories for publication except for letters to the editor, pieces submitted by students of the Journalistic Writing class or guest writers. Every story is reviewed by the editorial board and the editor of the

story's section.

Bylines and Credits: "The Rock" assigns bylines to each published story. Staff editorials are the only articles in "The Rock" without a byline. Staff editorials reflect the opinions of the staff on particular issues. For each staff editorial, "The Rock" staff votes on the issue, and the result of the vote is published. "The Rock" will assign photo and art credits to every photo or piece of artwork that is published. Credits are the responsibility of the editor of the section in which the photo or artwork appears. Photographers are responsible for the photo and its caption. Artists are responsible for the artwork.

Death of a student or faculty member: "The Rock" will handle a student or faculty member's death as follows: a single news story reading "In Memoriam," a standard scan of the student or faculty member's current ID or a picture chosen by "The Rock" staff and a 400-500 word obituary, including the student or faculty member's date of birth

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Takedown Policy: All content appearing in "The Rock" or on "Bearing News" will not be amended following publication except on the grounds of inaccurate or untrue reporting at the time the piece first ran.

Readers' Crossword

Across

- Junior Quinn Tyler and senior Leela Cullity plan to start RBHS' first _____ team
- Last name of the Columbia girls' lacrosse club president
- Where construction is occurring in RBHS
- Song released in 1970 by Joni Mitchell
- Parent pick-up location
- The irrational fear of being without a phone or unable to use it
- The name of Bailey Stover's gift when she was three years old
- Associated with hydroflasks
- Computerized form of activism or awareness spreading
- The RBHS girls' tennis team won _____ consecutive Class 2 State Championships

Down

- The next cross country meet RBXC is attending
- Backpack weight causes physical _____
- Freedom with _____
- Changes made to the structure of this class
- Going into effect for the next school year, Missouri schools are mandated to start no sooner than _____ days before Labor Day

Visit bearingnews.org to check your answers.

JARED GEYER / THE ROCK

The Rock

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The paper's purpose is to accurately inform, educate and enlighten readers in an open forum.

The Rock is a member of the National Scho-

lastic Press Association, Columbia Scholastic Press Association and Quill & Scroll.

The Rock accepts letters to the editor from its readers regarding any possible issues of concern in the publication. If you have a letter to send, email it to contact@bearingnews.org or fill it out online.

Limit entries to 400 words. *The Rock* reserves the right to reject material based on stan-

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