



## ***Urge Your School Board to Keep Communities and Schools Safe***

Evidence strongly suggests that secure firearm storage is an essential component to any effective strategy to keep schools, students, and communities safe. All concerned adults in the community can contribute to school safety in their district or individual school by following these steps to demand their school board passes a secure storage resolution and sends letters about secure storage home to parents. Read more about how to keep schools safe in Everytown's School Safety [Fact Sheet](#) and [Report](#).

### **Steps to Pass the Resolution**

**Present the idea to your association, group of friends, or network of parents.** Advocating for your district or school to pass a secure storage resolution is a great project in which everyone in your community can participate. At a group meeting, share some information about the campaign and gauge your group's interest in putting it into action. Through the campaign you'll empower your group members to learn about the impacts and importance of secure storage, to contact and gain support from relevant stakeholders, and to speak in front of the school board.

**Learn your school or district's process.** Every school and school district has a different system for enacting resolutions. Teachers and administrators should be knowledgeable about your specific school's processes for enacting change. Some schools follow a two meeting process, where your group will present at one meeting and the board will vote on the next, while others may hear arguments and vote on the same day. Make sure your group understands the process of passing resolutions and the structure of the meetings in advance of your turn to advocate for change.

**Get on the agenda.** After your group understands the processes in which change occurs, contact the necessary parties to secure a spot on the upcoming agenda. Your faculty guide may be able to connect you to your individual school's committee that votes on resolutions or the district school board.

**Know the facts.** In the time leading up to the school board meeting, educate yourself (and group, if applicable) about the impact and importance of secure firearm storage as it relates to school safety, firearm suicide, and unintentional shootings.

Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund's [Be SMART campaign](#) raises awareness that responsible gun storage can save children's lives. The five steps of the program are:

- S**ecure all guns in your home and vehicles;
- M**odel responsible behavior around guns;
- A**sk about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes;
- R**ecognize the role of guns in suicide; and
- T**ell your peers to be SMART.



Use the [School Safety and Responsible Firearm Storage Fact Sheet](#) to support your claim that secure storage reduces the risk of gun violence in schools and increases safety at home for children. Provide the [Be SMART flier about secure storage practices](#) to show just how simple potentially life-saving measures can be. As of April 2023, [more than 10 million students nationwide attend schools with firearm storage awareness policies](#).

**Do the research and present the correct resolution.** This toolkit contains two resolutions, [one for states without pre-existing secure storage laws](#) and [one \(which has three versions\) for states with differing degrees of secure storage laws](#). Both resolutions list the states for which they are applicable at the top. Make sure you present the correct resolution for your state in your meeting. You can email [besmart@everytown.org](mailto:besmart@everytown.org) if you have any questions about which resolution to use.

**Identify Stakeholders.** As local concerned advocates, you are key stakeholders in the fight to pass secure storage resolutions. It may be helpful to identify additional credible messengers who are able to speak at the school board meeting to support your point of view. Some examples of key stakeholders may be survivors of gun violence, [students](#), school faculty, child psychologists, and pediatricians who share information about secure storage with their patients.

**Make your case.** There are different ways to present your case to the school or district's governing body, including individual verbal testimonies, group testimony, distributing fact sheets to the board, or a group presentation with a slide deck of the facts and your argument. In advance of the meeting, your group should be well prepared and all students who are presenting should know their role.

**If the resolution passes:** Great job! You and your group will have played a huge part in keeping students, your community, and your school safe!

Next Steps:

Provide your school or the governing body that passed the resolution with the [sample Secure Storage Notification Acknowledgement Letter](#) to distribute to each household. You can edit this letter to make it more relevant to your state or community using resources such as [EveryStat](#), the [#NotAnAccident Index](#), and EveryStat's [Firearm Suicide Congressional District Index](#). When modifying the letter, you can also include relevant information about the time of year the letter is being sent home. Once you've edited your letter, make sure to send it back to [besmart@everytown.org](mailto:besmart@everytown.org) for a quick fact check and review before sending it to the school for distribution. Additionally, here is a template letter for your Superintendent or School Leader to use to



Offer to help distribute the final letters. Your role in distribution can range from stuffing envelopes to passing the correct number of letters to each classroom. This can be a time-consuming job, especially at a big school, and they should appreciate any help you or a group you can coordinate can give!

**If the resolution doesn't pass:** KEEP GOING! Maybe there's a different governing body you can influence. If you didn't succeed at the district level, try your individual school or vice versa. Sometimes, school boards will be open to sending a letter home one time, without passing the resolution, and you can try to pass the resolution again the next semester. If the resolution doesn't pass and you want help brainstorming next steps in making an impact at the local level, email [besmart@everytown.org](mailto:besmart@everytown.org).

**Keep your local Be SMART Team updated.** We are so impressed with your commitment to enacting change. Share your hard work by logging all of your efforts in the [create an event form](#) and posting updates on social media, tagging @everytown and using #BeSMART.

## **Resources**

[School Safety and Responsible Firearm Storage Fact Sheet](#)

[Be SMART Flier](#)

[School Districts with Secure Storage Resolutions](#)

[Secure Storage Resolution for States with Safe Storage or Child Access Prevention Laws](#)

[Secure Storage Resolution for States without Secure Storage or Child Access Prevention Laws](#)

[Sample Secure Storage Notification Acknowledgement Letter](#)