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Lake instills fear in children by discussing arming staff

By Gary Jones
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To the Editor:

I used to teach at Lake High School in the late 1960s and was quite disturbed by the Sentinel article "Lake Debates Arming Teachers". What kind of fear does that instill in the minds of children? Sue Larimer, an interested concealed gun carrying school board member from Perrysburg School board, also sat in on discussions. Are these gun advocates? Are these schools going to be the poster child for the NRA. And Buckeye Firearms Association, who would train teachers, said "It is not OK to wait around to be murdered. Give them [teachers] any tool [guns?]" Sounds like an appeal to fear. The BFA keeps everything in secrecy so no student will know who is carrying. And the guns will react to an event, not prevent it.

Indeed, every school shooting is a horrific tragedy. But NBC News stated "school assaults and other violence have dropped by nearly half in the past decade."

And criminologist James Allen Fox of Boston's Northeastern University, who has been studying the subject since the 1980s, says, "There is no pattern, there is no increase."

The Cato Institute notes "there were shootings at only 0.009% of schools since December 2012." The Institute goes on to say, "Comparing that to [National Center for Education Statistics] enrollment statistics, about 0.000044% of public/private K-12 students were killed at school per year between 1992-93 and 2010-11. That's about one out of every 2,273,000 students per year. By contrast, 'the odds of being hit by lightning in a given year is one out of 700,000'" according to National Geographic.

So really, are the children just waiting around to be murdered? Don't let them think so. Could it happen? A slim chance.

Teacher Rick Brimmer made the most sense: Identify the danger before it happens. Identify at-risk students. Improve mental health training. Study the relationship between bullying and those who kill in schools. Stop bullying. Instruct students to report dangerous postings or bullying on social media. Time magazine suggests we "help all students develop their conflict-resolution skills, emotional awareness and self-control; design family-based programs to improve parenting and solve problems in nonviolent ways, and mentoring programs that pair a young person with an adult who can serve as a positive role model and help guide the young person's behavior."

But guns in the school? That is quite a leap. No research supports it.