

# Counter-argument essay

Sociology, Violence



The recent increase of violence at schools has proved the inconsistency of previous preventive measures. There is a persistent need to find a new solution for the existing problem of school shooting. The number of school shooting victims increases with each day, this is why the newly designed preventive measures should be fast, effective, and should not cause any side effects to those who study and work at schools. In this situation metal detectors at schools remain the only promising perspective which will minimize the incidence of violence against teenagers and their teachers.

Metal detectors should be installed at schools because they would detect weapons that could be used to commit violent crimes, even though many people think that this would not stop crimes. Metal detectors at schools There is no official statistics as for the number of victims and incidents of school violence through the period between 2005 and 2008. However, it is not difficult to create the timeline of the major school shootings in the U. S. for the last three years.

“ March 21, 2005 (Red Lake, Minnesota): Jeff Weise, 16, killed grandfather and companion, then arrived at school where he killed a teacher, a security guard, 5 students, and finally himself. November 5, 2005 (Jacksboro, Tennessee): One 15-year-old shot and killed an assistant principal at Campbell County High School and seriously wounded two other administrators. September 26, 2006 (Bailey, Colorado): adult male held six students hostage at Platte Canyon High School and then shot and killed Emily Keyes, 16, and himself” (InfoPlease).

This list can be further expanded, and there is no visible tendency towards the decrease of school crimes. The problem is aggravated by the fact that

only few schools use metal detectors as a security measure: “ in 2005, nearly all (99 percent) students ages 12-18 observed the use of at least one of the selected security measures at their school. [...] Metal detectors were the least observed of the selected safety and security measures: 11 percent of students reported the use of metal detectors in their school. ” (Indicator 21)

Of course, it is difficult to argue that metal detectors are expensive, but is it ethical to speak about financial costs when it comes to protecting lives and health of children? For example, the Cleveland City Council had to invest \$2.5 million of state money into equipping its schools with metal detectors (Wagner). For many people this sum sounds as viable justification of why metal detectors should not be installed at schools. Simultaneously, this sum becomes meaningless against the value of students and teachers' safety.

Moreover, metal detectors are presented in several different forms, and each school may choose the product to suit its needs and budget. When parents feel that their children are not safe, they start looking for other alternatives which would secure their children from being involved into tragic accidents at school. This is why metal detectors should be installed at schools to detect the weapons, and ultimately, to keep children from leaving to another school. Despite the high price of metal detectors, they have already proved to be an efficient instrument in decreasing violence and preventing shooting and other related accidents at schools.

Five public schools of New York were participating in the experiment, which was aimed at determining the effectiveness of metal detectors. “ In a report to the Board of Education, the Chancellor said that 820 weapons had been

found on students or near the search areas at five schools. Only five weapons were firearms” (Gootman A3). It is possible to state that the experiment was successful: metal detectors not only helped find weapons, but discouraged pupils and students from bringing weapons to school.

The discussion of metal detectors’ benefits will be incomplete if we do not analyze the successes of certain schools which already use metal detectors. The example of John F. Kennedy High School in Bronx is very illustrative due to the fact that it was traditionally one of the most problematic educational entities in Bronx area. After one of the students was stabbed to death by a school companion, the principal directed significant resources at reviving school safety. The metal detector has helped detect numerous box-cutters before they were carried inside the school building; the fights in the hallway have remained in the past.

This is what the students and teachers said about the new metal detecting guard: “ In terms of security, it’s been a blessing. [...] I feel a lot safer. I was very afraid” (Gootman, A3). To be honest, it is not very clear why so many people vote against the use of metal detectors at schools. It seems that the high price of these useful devices is the only justification for those who refuse to recognize the benefits of metal detectors. For some reason, parents think that THIS will never happen to THEIR children.

Simultaneously, metal detectors are extremely effective in preventing the incidence of violence at schools. Childhood is the period of extreme emotions and unreasonable actions. Metal detectors may actually prevent the child from committing a crime which he might be later regretting for the rest of his life. Metal detectors may save thousands of children’s lives. They are

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expensive, but these expenses are reasonable when we want to feel safe during our lessons. Conclusion Evidently, there are not so many reasons against installing metal detectors at schools.

For those who vote against such measures, the price of metal detectors is the basic argument. However, the life of a child is priceless. Our parents have to understand that they can protect our lives when we are at school, and metal detectors have proved to be a success in this safety campaign. Each school should have a metal detector not only to detect weapons, but to discourage students from bringing weapons to school. Works Cited Gootman, E. "Metal Detectors and Pep Rallies: Revival of a Bronx High School." *The New York Times*, February 4, 2004, p. A3. Indicator 21.

"Students' Reports of Safety and Security Measures Observed at School." 2007. National Center for Educational Statistics. 22 February 2008. [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/crimeindicators2007/ind\\_21.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/crimeindicators2007/ind_21.asp) Infoplease. "A Timeline of Recent Worldwide School Shootings." 2008. Infoplease.com. 22 February 2008. <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0777958.html> Wagner, J. L. "Metal Detectors Approved for Cleveland Schools, Will Cost \$3.3 million." 2007. Cleveland.com. 22 February 2008. [http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2007/10/metal\\_detectors\\_approved\\_for\\_c.html](http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2007/10/metal_detectors_approved_for_c.html)