

Three dead, six injured in St. Louis, Missouri school shooting, fortieth in the US this year

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A shooting Monday morning at the Central Visual and Performing Arts High School (CVPA) in St. Louis, Missouri left two people dead—a health teacher and a student—along with six wounded. The gunman was killed by police.

The teacher has been identified as 61-year-old Jean Kuczka, the student as Alexis Bell, and the shooter as 19-year-old Orlando Harris, a graduate of the school the year prior.

An active shooter call was placed to 911 where officers were notified of a man with a “long gun,” according to St. Louis Police Commissioner Mike Sack, inside the CVPA high school. Police arrived at 9:10 a.m. and entered the school where a firefight soon ensued, fatally wounding the suspect.

“While on paper we might have nine victims, eight who were transported and one remained, we have hundreds of others,” Sack said at the news conference. “Everyone who survived here is going to take home trauma.”

One survivor, mathematics teacher David Williams, reported Harris made the declaration, “You’re all going to fucking die!” Another reported the gunman having said he was “tired of everybody.”

Adrianne Bolden, a freshman, recounted his experiences to NBC News, explaining that he and his classmates initially thought an intruder drill was activated. However, upon hearing police sirens outside the building they realized it was no drill. “The teacher, she crawled over and she was asking for help to move the lockers to the door so they can’t get in,” he said.

Bolden continued, “[W]e had to wait a little longer before the assistant principal came up to one of the windows that was locked, and when we opened it, the teacher said to ‘come on’ and we all had to jump out of the window.” To escape the gunman, Bolden and his

classmates jumped out of a window, risking sprained ankles or broken bones.

Another student, 16-year-old Taniya Gholston, told the *St. Louis Police Dispatch*, “All I heard was two shots and he came in there with a gun,” continuing, “And I was trying to run and I couldn’t run. Me and him made eye contact but I made it out because his gun got jammed. But we saw blood on the floor.”

Another survivor, teacher Michael de Filippo, also reported, “Once you heard the boom, all the chuckling and laughing in the back of the room stopped.”

According to Sack, the doors at the school were locked, but did not elaborate on how Harris was able to enter. Sack said security guards were able to quickly alert cops who arrived within minutes with officers entering the school with “no hesitation,” engaging the suspect with gunfire, drawing a contrast to the 376 law enforcement officers that refused to engage 18-year-old Uvalde, Texas, elementary school gunman Salvador Ramos as he killed 19 children and two teachers.

During a news conference, St. Louis Mayor Tishaura O. Jones, a Democrat, issued the typical hollow words of a pre-written script regarding the school shooting, an all too familiar phenomenon in the United States, saying it was “a devastating and traumatic situation.”

Jones continued her remarks, saying, “Our children shouldn’t have to experience this; they shouldn’t have to go through active shooter drills in case something happens. And unfortunately, that happened today.”

The shooting at CVPA High School is the fortieth school shooting this year. According to Education Week, 2022 holds the record for most school shootings in a single year since the news organization began recording data in 2018. From January 2009 to May 2018, the United States experienced 288 school shootings.

As the days go on, the statistics become ever more harrowing. Since the 1999 Columbine High School Massacre in Littleton, Colorado, more than 311,000 students have experienced gun violence in school. Thirty-two were killed in the 2007 Virginia Tech University shootings in Blacksburg, Virginia, 26 in during the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012, 17 in 2018 at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and 19 children aged from 9 to 11 were gunned down along with two teachers, this year at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. These are but the deadliest school shootings over the past three decades.

According to the Gun Violence Archive, 2022 has tallied 36,154 deaths as a result of firearm: 16,552 by homicide and 19,602 by suicide. From 1999 to 2017, the CDC reported a 33 percent increase in suicides and in 2020, “the firearm homicide rate increased nearly 35 [percent], reaching its highest level since 1994...”

Such violence is rooted in the capitalist socioeconomic order, based on the subordination of human need to private profit, inequality and war. The American capitalist system and its twin capitalist parties are responsible for the social misery which gives rise to continued eruptions of violence. Only a party oriented toward to the interests of the working class, armed with a socialist program, can provide the working class with the tools to overturn the capitalist social system and put an end to the violence which it spawns.



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