

Members of the Board. Good evening.

While we were in DC a few days ago, we were discussing what we were going to speak about tonight.

I was struggling to try and determine what I wanted to report to you.

I wish I was still struggling.

But, I am not.

I need to speak to you about action.

I need to speak to you about organizing.

I need to speak to you about gun violence in our schools.

On September 7th, 2012, I got up and went to work.

It was my first month teaching at the high school in my district.

I had finished first hour and around 8:30 was on my way to teaching 2nd hour when I heard some commotion downstairs in the atrium.

Some students were shouting and I chalked it up to the normal hubbub that happens in between classes.

In a few short minutes, my life and the lives of every single student in that building would change.

CODE RED, rang out over the PA. I kept loading my files on the smart board.

CODE RED. The teacher who I shared a classroom with came running back into the room and slammed the door.

CODE RED. I realized that this was for real and not a drill.

CODE RED. We herded the students into the corner, locked the door, and turned out the lights.

Silence.

We waited.

We checked our email. There was an active shooter downstairs.

The screams I had heard were children running away.

After a few minutes or so I called my next school to tell them I would be late and make sure that someone was there to supervise the students so that they would be safe.

I remember thinking, "I have to call my wife even though I knew she was teaching. My last phone call can't be to a school secretary and not Stacy."

So I called her, told her I loved her, and said goodbye.

Sometime later we found out that the police had a shooter under custody and were clearing the building.

We waited.

For the next several hours I kept students huddled in a corner as they looked longingly at their backpacks.

Their backpacks were beeping, buzzing, and flashing as parents frantically tried to connect with their children to find out if they were safe.

We waited.

Hours later the door jiggled and unlocked and then slowly opened.

Through the crack an automatic weapon was pointed in at all of us.

That moment lasted a lifetime.

We waited.

We didn't know if the person entering the door was there to help or to hurt.

We waited.

It was the police and we were being escorted from the building.

The students wanted to get their phones from their bags and were told absolutely not.

It took me a moment to process.

In any one of those bags could be another weapon.

Each one of my students could be another shooter.

We spent the next few hours reunifying students and parents.

When it was over, I went home completely numb.

It can happen here.

What happened in Florida on Valentine's Day and what happened in my school differ in scope.

We had 0 deaths. In Florida 17 children and teachers lost their lives.

But the truth is, none of us are safe now, and more guns in our schools will not make us safer.

So, how does this relate to the NEA meeting and my report?

My class, the Freshman of 2017, are organizing a grassroots day of action on April 20th to coincide with the anniversary of the first major US school shooting, Columbine.

I am asking that you organize with us.

This is not about asking the NEA to organize an event.

This is not about asking the IEA to organize an event.

This is about members locally taking action, raising awareness, and demanding change to ensure the safety of our students and each other.

You can log on to my Facebook page search Karl Goeke on Facebook to learn more about this event.

In our local, I will be putting together a committee to plan out local response.

Please join us in organizing locally a day of action against gun violence in schools on April 20th, 2018.

*By Karl Goeke
IEA Board member and NEA Director*