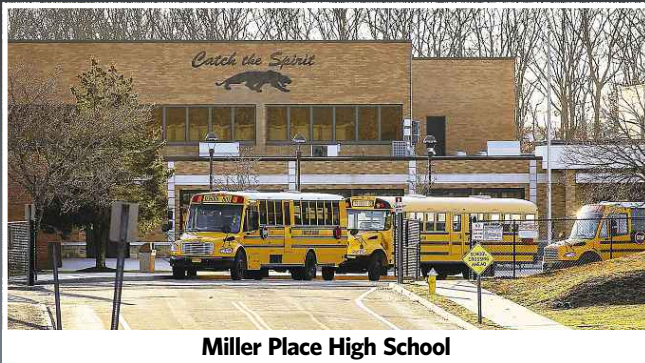


LI DISTRICT HIRES ARMED GUARDS



**Miller Place assigns
retired NYPD cops
to four schools**

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ARMED GUARDS

■ **Miller Place schools**
hire four ex-NYPD cops

■ **More LI districts boost**
security after Fla. killings

Miller Place school authorities confirmed Tuesday they have assigned armed personnel to the district's four schools, joining a growing list of Long Island school districts clamping down on campus security.

Four armed guards, all retired NYPD officers, started Monday, joining 14 unarmed security staffers already employed by the 2,707-student district, officials said. The guards have been assigned to each of the district's four campuses: Miller Place High School, North Country Road Middle School, Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School and Andrew Muller Primary School.

Miller Place school district officials described the additional staffing as a temporary pilot program. Several districts across Long Island are considering adding armed security or other measures to boost campus safety after the Feb. 14 school shootings in Parkland, Florida, that killed 17 students and faculty.

Center Moriches school district Superintendent Russell Stewart said earlier this week his efforts at keeping students and faculty safe include the hiring of armed guards. He has proposed hiring two armed guards for district campuses — a plan floated before the Valentine's Day Florida shootings but among a range of safety measures now on the table of Long Island educators.

On Tuesday, Mount Sinai Superintendent Gordon Brosdal said district officials are reviewing adding armed guards to district schools.

"They're clamoring for it," Brosdal said of his school community, "and we're entertaining the idea."

Miller Place's school board took the action in a 4-to-1 vote at a meeting on Sunday, officials said. Superintendent Marianne Cartisano emailed about 3,500 local parents, teachers and other staffers, informing them the district was taking additional steps toward safeguarding schools.

MILLER PLACE SCHOOL DISTRICT



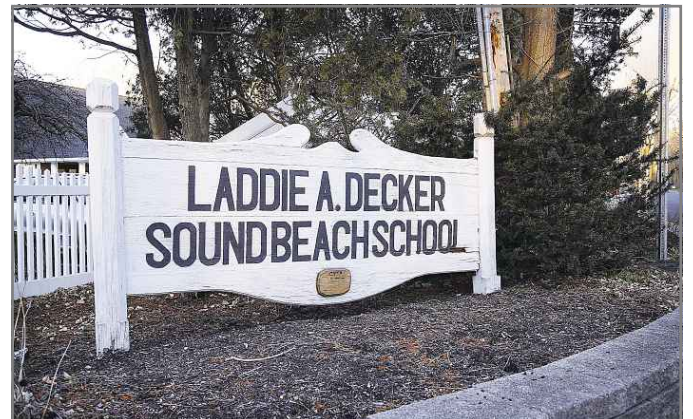
Miller Place High School



Andrew Muller Primary School



North Country Road Middle School



Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School

This story was reported by **Scott Eidler**, **John Hildebrand** and **Joie Tyrrell**. It was written by Hildebrand.

Miller Place authorities emphasized that the new security guards, armed with pistols, would be assigned only to school vestibules, not to classrooms or hallways frequented by students.

A board meeting is set for 8 p.m. Wednesday at the high school, where community residents will have a chance to voice their opinions, officials said.

Educational leaders widely agree that any workable solution to school shootings must be multipronged, and include limits on the availability of firearms, as well as expansion of psychological services for people whose emotional instability poses a po-

tential danger to themselves and those around them.

Opinion in the community is divided on including armed security officers as a solution.

Joe Leek, 42, who has a second-grader at the district's Muller Primary School, said he initially opposed the idea until he discussed it with his wife, who works in another district that, he said, has armed guards.

"Now I feel comfortable with it," Leek, a landscape manager, said.

Scott Mandia, who has two children in local schools, is not sold yet. He noted that sheriff's deputies assigned to protect the Parkland school were widely criticized for failing to enter the building as gunfire erupted.

"It certainly wasn't effective there," said Mandia, who teaches meteorology at Suffolk County

Community College.

In any case, a growing number of the 124 districts in Nassau and Suffolk counties are feeling the pressure to do something.

Stewart made his pitch for armed guards at Center Moriches schools at a Jan. 25 meeting of about 18 superintendents in the Brookhaven Cluster of Interdistrict Council of Superintendents. In an interview Tuesday, Stewart said reducing the time an active shooter can roam a school corridor is the goal.

"The time will decrease with having an armed police officer in a building, versus waiting for outside help," he said.

Brosdal said armed security has support in his community.

"I've heard more in favor of armed guards than those against it," Brosdal said Tuesday.

Elsewhere, other school lead-

ers harbored doubts.

Longwood Superintendent Michael Lonergan said of hiring armed guards: "It really would be our last option, if it ever came to that. It's a weapon in the building, which we don't want to begin with."

Jericho Superintendent Henry Grishman said he did not support proposals to place armed guards outside schools.

"I think when somebody has an intent to enter a school building — and using past history, most cases the perpetrators have known the school building — they can gain entry around an armed security guard."

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