



## **The Door and Hardware Institute (DHI) and Door Security and Safety Foundation (DSSF) issue joint statement in response to Apalachee High School Shooting**

*DHI and DSSF jointly call on school districts and legislators to work with door security and safety professionals to assess and implement life-saving security measures.*

**September 5, 2024 – Washington, DC** – On September 4, two students and two teachers were killed and nine more victims were injured during a shooting at Apalachee High School in Winder, Georgia. As details about this horrific attack continue to emerge, DHI and DSSF emphasize the importance of door security and safety within schools.

“On behalf of DHI and DSSF, we are devastated to hear of yet another tragic incident involving gun violence at a school,” said Lewis Smith, CFDAI, President of the DHI Board of Governors. “While such violence is not completely preventable, and circumstance vary with each tragedy, there are actionable measures and safety precautions, specifically pertaining to doors and locks, which can and should be taken to mitigate loss of life. As the leading bodies representing and advocating for door safety and security experts in the field, we, at DHI and DSSF, encourage school districts to work with certified professionals who are skillfully trained to assess and recommend door and hardware solutions that can ultimately save lives.”

James Tartre, President of the DSSF Board of Trustees, also shared, “The type of doors through which school gunmen gain access are too often easily breached. While safety measures such as limiting entry points or providing additional security are viable options, the one physical thing keeping an assailant from entering any sort of building is a secure, code-compliant door.”

[Reports indicate](#) that adults prevented even further tragedy in this situation by using secure, locked doors. Witness Sergio Caldera reported to ABC News that his teacher locked the door of his classroom, and the assailant pounded on the door, shouting “open up!” The assailant did not gain entry to this classroom and the class was safely evacuated, further showcasing the critical importance of code-compliant doors in schools and their effectiveness in deterring adversarial behavior.

Door security and safety professionals, many of whom are specialized consultants and DHI-certified, play a critical role in assessing existing doors and hardware, recommending innovative yet cost-effective solutions, and resolving door safety and security issues.

DHI’s membership base encompasses design and construction experts, building code officials, local code experts, and professionals in the commercial door and hardware industry who possess the technical knowledge, skills, and expertise needed to provide life-saving, door and hardware solutions.



Consulting a door security and safety professional should be a basic requirement to ensure school safety. We encourage door and hardware professionals within the industry to join our efforts in amplifying this message by:

- Reviewing the [Are Your Doors Secure?](#) report, outlining recommendations for levels of security required for building openings – necessary precautions in the absence of national standards on the issue.
- Referencing DHI’s [Ambassador Toolkit](#) – consisting of talking points, sample social media posts, a *Letter to the Editor* template, relevant statistics, and links to valuable assets and resources – to help raise awareness of the door and hardware industry and its professionals.
- Using key messages outlined in the [DHI School Security and Safety Policy Principles](#) to draft a letter to local school board members, the local Parent Teachers Association (PTA), and school district leadership. We recommend using the *Letter to the Editor* template, included in the Ambassador Toolkit, to help craft your letter.
- Focusing your message on proven best practices related to life safety and security as it pertains to doors and hardware, rather than any perceived failures.
- Communicating to stakeholders that you are available to consult in and assist with the decision-making process, knowing that they may be presented with numerous solutions in the aftermath of recent tragedies.

For more information, please visit the [DHI website](#), [DSSF website](#), or contact DHI CEO James Gammon, CFDAI, at [jgammon@dhi.org](mailto:jgammon@dhi.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Lewis Smith'.

LEWIS SMITH, CFDAI  
President, DHI Board of Governors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'James R. Tartre'.

JAMES R. TARTRE, CDC, FDHI  
President, Board of Trustees, DSSF