



Texas School Will Open Police Station on Campus to Keep Students Safe

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By [Joe Setyon](#)

February 23, 2018 at 8:57am

A public charter school in North Texas is taking the threat of school shootings seriously enough that it plans to open a police substation on its campus.

Westlake Academy, a K-12 school that opened in 2003, got the ball rolling with this initiative in the fall of 2017. The plan was approved by the town's council one week before a gunman opened fire with an AR-15 at a high school in Parkland, Florida, killing 17 people.

“There was no one particular incident that prompted this plan,” said Laura Wheat, who serves as both president of the school board and mayor of Westlake, which owns the school of about 850 students.

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“The atrocities that occurred at Sandy Hook, and Columbine before that, confirm that horrific things can happen anywhere,” she told the [Star-Telegram](#).

Keller Police Chief Michael Wilson, whose department has partnered with the town of Westlake for more than 15 years, said the plan was inspired by “what we’ve seen throughout our country,” as well as the results of security audits of the school that his department has carried out.

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“Westlake Academy is a very nontraditional campus. It’s not built like a typical school; it’s more like a corporate campus,” Wilson said.

“We knew if we were going to try to close any potential security gaps, we couldn’t do that with a traditional approach.”

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The Florida shooting did not prompt the police-school partnership, but there have been multiple threats made against schools in the region following last week’s tragedy.

<https://twitter.com/JamesBowieHS/status/966381513687404550>

In an interview with CBS DFW, Wheat highlighted the safety benefits that having a police substation on campus will provide.

“The substation on our campus seems to be very well suited to our needs. We will have a highly visible police presence. It will be available for use 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” she said. “Officers will become intimately familiar

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we will be a safer school community as a result.

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She added that this model could eventually serve as an example for other schools to follow.

Due to the unique layout and learning style of Westlake Academy, there are no school resource officers assigned to protect the students, Wilson told the [Dallas News](#).

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However, the substation should be able to provide even more protection than a resource officer.

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Keller police officers will be responsible for operating the substation. Wheat said response times from Keller officers reacting to incidents in Westlake are already “impressive.” But now, she thinks they will be even better.

“No longer will they need to run back to a station in Keller to complete a report or take care of other administrative duties,” she said.

The substation will be installed in an existing building on the school’s campus, at a cost of roughly \$25,000.

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