

Problem Student, Problem Admin

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“School downplayed warnings about 6-year-old before teacher’s shooting, staffers say,” *The Washington Post* headlined its Saturday [report](#).

Weeks ago, elementary school teacher Abigail Zwerner was shot by a *first grader* in their Newport News, Virginia, classroom. Authorities are not sure of the precise motive but have called the attack “intentional.”

Zwerner remains hospitalized in stable condition, while her child assailant is in emergency custody undergoing “court-ordered mental health treatment.”*

“Several teachers said they received no support when they faced violence in the classroom or attacks from students,” the article informed.

School officials received a tip that the boy had brought a gun to school but did not find the weapon in their search.

More disturbing, *The Post* interviewed “educators claiming that Zwerner raised alarms . . . and sought assistance” but “that school administrators waved away grave concerns about the 6-year-old’s conduct.” The lad reportedly “threw furniture and



other items in class,” once “barricaded the doors to a classroom, preventing a teacher and students from leaving,” and “was known campuswide for disruptive and violent behavior.”

One educator revealed that “the boy wrote a note telling a teacher he hated her and wanted to light her on fire and watch her die.” When brought “to the attention of Richneck administrators,” however, the teacher “was told to drop the matter.

“Several teachers said they received no support when they faced violence in the classroom or attacks from students,” the article informed. “Some speakers claimed the district is more interested in keeping discipline statistics low than in taking meaningful action to address students’ problems.”

The *Post*’s story was hampered by numerous school personnel refusing to talk citing their fear of reprisals from school authorities.

While mental health help must be addressed, there is no solution to problems if administrators act like crooked politicians, simply sweeping aside serious issues.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.

* In Virginia, a person must be seven years of age to be charged with a crime, so the first grader will not be prosecuted.