

Statement of Deidre Rushlow

My name is Deidre Rushlow. Up until February 10, 2026, I was the English and Humanities teacher at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School. My students were in the library when the shooting happened. I did not know, nor could I know, that when I sent them to the library with my educational assistant, they were living their final moments.

The 2025 – 2026 school year was my first official year teaching. I attended and graduated from Tumbler Ridge Secondary School, I substitute-taught there and did all of my practicum training in that building. The unwavering sense of safety and deep personal bonds forged inside that building inspired me to embark upon a teaching career. When I finally got the keys to my very own classroom last summer, I scrubbed each corner clean, added personal touches to brighten it up, and spent days organizing it until every last detail was perfect for my students. That same classroom has now been reduced to a pile of dust, all of my supplies and decorations packed into boxes and stored somewhere unknown to me. The career that once brought me such joy now terrifies me in ways I never imagined possible. How can I ever be responsible for another parent's child again?

Today, a dark cloud lingers over my town. My colleagues and I are haunted by the memory of shielding children with our own bodies as our ears rang from the sound of continual gunshots and high-pitched screams. An entire generation of young lives, gone in a second; their innocence drowned in blood and the acrid haze of gunpowder. This is a wound that sears with unending pain for my entire community. And for what? So OpenAI could get to an IPO? Were the lives of my students and educational assistant just the cost of doing business?

In the six months since my students and educational assistant walked out of my classroom to their deaths, I have thought about the meaning of justice. My students should be here getting ready for the next school year. Instead, their families, friends, and classmates are left behind to suffocate in limitless grief and trauma. I know there are individuals at OpenAI who recognized the shooting was going to happen, had the means to stop it, and deliberately chose not to do anything. I cannot imagine those people as real humans with souls or consciences. Because they aren't. They are monsters who chose profit over the lives of innocent children. They belong in prison. They don't deserve to walk free in a world where my students don't get to grow up, fall in love, graduate, or have families of their own.

The decisions of those at OpenAI, led by Sam Altman, turned my safe and comfortable school into a killing field. The building may be gone, but the evidence of OpenAI's crimes is a lasting bloodstain upon my community. What is done cannot be undone. We will not forgive, we will not forget, and we certainly will not rest until every last individual at OpenAI who was complicit in the Tumbler Ridge shooting has been brought to justice.