



# St Ambrose Parish

**Mr. David Hayes**

**Safety & Security Committee Chair - St. Ambrose Catholic Church & School**

September 5, 2025

My name is David Hayes, and I have the privilege of serving as chairman of the St. Ambrose Safety & Security Committee. Though I've only been a member of this committee for the past year, I bring with me over four decades of experience in law enforcement, including my current role as an in-service training coordinator for law enforcement agencies throughout our region.

Considering recent incidents of violence that have occurred across the country involving Catholic schools and churches, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the understandable concern that many of you may feel. At St. Ambrose, the safety and well-being of our children, staff, and families is our top priority. Our committee is committed to fostering a secure environment where children can thrive – physically, emotionally, and academically.

Over the past several years, our committee – working closely with school administrators and church clergy – has taken many proactive steps to strengthen our security posture. These include:

- **Facility Improvements:** The perimeter of the school has been hardened with new, more secure entry doors, replacing glass doors. Shatterproof window film has been installed on every window and door glass in the school and gym. New one-way exit doors have been installed that prevent exterior access.
- **Enhanced Access Control:** We have implemented stricter visitor protocols, more controlled access, and upgraded video surveillance systems that are constantly monitored.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Faculty and staff members had been trained on multiple occasions, by the Alton Police Department in “active shooter” response protocols, where active scenarios are played out. The faculty and staff are trained by the same vendors who train law enforcement officers. They have also received training for “stop the bleed” tourniquet application, CPR, and first aid. All faculty, staff, and exterior maintenance employees have two-way radios for rapid communication.
- **Law Enforcement Collaboration:** We maintain an active partnership with local law enforcement agencies. A member of the Madison County Sheriff's Department and the Alton Police Department are active members of the St. Ambrose Safety & Security Committee. We have constant access to law enforcement intelligence that enhances our security and preparedness.

We are currently discussing ways to further enhance safety during our weekly all-school Mass. This sacred time is central to our community, and we are committed to ensuring that it remains both spiritually enriching and physically secure.

Three years ago, we implemented a lockdown protocol during all-school Mass, which included internal and external visual surveillance conducted by trained staff members. These individuals remained in constant communication throughout the service, allowing for real-time situational awareness and rapid response capability if needed. Our committee is exploring additional strategies that balance security with the reverence of the worship experience.

Based on my experience and observations, I believe that St. Ambrose School maintains security measures that are better than most other schools – both public and parochial. Another important layer of security we are blessed to have at St. Ambrose is the presence of a faculty member with over 20 years of law enforcement experience. This individual brings a wealth of expertise and vigilance to our daily operations, by identifying areas in need of improvement and helping adjust practices within the school.

As someone with a long-standing connection to St. Ambrose Church and School – first as a parent, and now as a grandparent – I have a vested interest in the safety and security of our community. It is essential that we remain united in our commitment to protecting our children, staff, and parishioners.

If you have any concerns, suggestions, or would like to contribute to our ongoing safety efforts, I encourage you to reach out to me or any member of our safety committee who are listed below:

David Hayes – Alton PD (Retired), Southwestern IL Law Enforcement Commission

Scott Rose – St. Louis Metropolitan PD

Jason Sandidge – Madison County Sheriff's Department

Tyler Heffington – Edwardsville PD (School Resource Officer)

Jarrett Ford – Chief of Police Alton PD

Scott Pulaski – Local Businessman

Robert Lahlein – Alton PD (Retired)

Tom Kochan - Wood River PD (Retired)

Justin Johnson – St. Louis Metropolitan PD (Retired), St. Ambrose Faculty

Bob Rawson - Retired Law Enforcement, EMT/Emergency Services

