

**LEAD & MANAGE MY SCHOOL**  
**Conference on School Safety: Transcripts**

Panel I: Preventing Violence in Schools

Panel II: Prepared Schools & Communities are Safer

Panel III: Helping Communities Heal and Recover

National 4-H Youth Conference Center,  
Chevy Chase, Maryland

October 10, 2006

US Department of Education

**CONFERENCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY**  
**Tuesday, October 10, 2006**

**Introduction of Mrs. Bush**

**ANNOUNCER:** Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings.  
(Applause.)

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Hello again. Welcome back. I hope you all had a good break. I know you've enjoyed the program this morning as we all have. We've had a chance to learn about effective strategies, both from the law enforcement perspective and from the school and educator perspective on how we're going to keep our students safe. This afternoon we're going to hear about how to cope and how to recover, how to restore the educational environment. And we're going to hear some very inspiring stories from some of the survivors.

But first, we have a special treat, and it's my great honor to introduce my friend and our fabulous First Lady, Mrs. Laura Bush, who has been an incredible source of great comfort to our country and to its children after 9-11 and after Hurricane Katrina. She is a teacher first, as well as fabulous First Lady, former school librarian. And she continues to travel not only all over our country, but all over the world to promote learning, safe environments and literacy for children all over the world.

She last year launched a fabulous initiative that is totally connected to what we're talking about here today. And it's called Helping America's Youth. And it's an initiative that recognizes the holistic, the community-based approach that we need to take when it comes to school safety as well. And I would encourage you to look at the HAY website, the Helping America's Youth website, HAY as we call it, [HelpingAmericasYouth.gov](http://HelpingAmericasYouth.gov) to find out more about that initiative.

In good times and bad, our nation is incredibly lucky to have such an inspiring educator, a wonderful mom and a great friend, our First Lady, Mrs. Laura Bush. Thank you.

**CONFERENCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY**  
**Tuesday, October 10, 2006**

**WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

*Margaret Spellings, Secretary of Education*  
(8:30 AM to 8:40 AM)

**MS. SPELLINGS:** Good morning. Thank you, everyone, for being here this morning. I know you all came long distances on short notice, and I'm very grateful that you're here. I think it's important that we respond as immediately to the recent incident that has occurred in schools across our country and thank you very much for responding so timely.

Thank you also to our host, 4-H, for all of your great work. We're thrilled to be here, and what a great facility this is for such an event. I'm very grateful to you.

Every single person in this room is here for a reason because you represent organizations that can and do and have in many or most cases played a role in making sure that schools are ready, that they can respond, and that they can recover. So I'm very glad that your organizations are here, and there will be a little call to arms before the day is over about things that we can and continue to do to gather—to make sure every community is as prepared as possible.

We have all had heavy hearts obviously as we've watched the events of the last couple of weeks unfold. And our sympathies and prayers go out to the victims and to the families and the communities that are coping with the recent situations. You know, as all of us who are parents know, you know, it's frightening, and you certainly get the weightiness that this could really happen anywhere.

And so that's why we educators, we in the education business, for your law enforcement folks, we call this a teachable moment. That means this is a time for us to take stock, to reflect, to make sure that not only do we have the world's most effective, world's best plan, but that every single person who needs to know is aware of what the plan is. You know in education, I think it's a constantly changing cast of characters with new families and new parents and new personnel. And I think we really can never let our guard down and that certainly is one of the things that was made clear to us last week. So it's a difficult time, but it's a time for us really to all come together and refresh what we need to know, what we need to do.

As you all know, for those who have been working in this field for a long time and representing organizations that have been doing this work, a lot has been done. One of the silver linings of 9-11 was that we started to take stock of our preparedness in communities and obviously—then the wake of Columbine, schools were very much attuned to what was going on. And so some things—some planning has been done, but we can always be smarter, be more current and work more effectively.

There are lots of resources that are available to all of us. I hope that you all picked up one of the brochures that have some of the resources. It's a time for parents, for students, for families to ask questions, to take stock, and to make sure that they're aware.

As you will hear, and as many of you know who have a lot of expertise in this field, there's a lot of research about effective practices. And in many cases we know what strategies work. We know what to do, and we need to bring those effective practices to bear. So our Attorney General will lead our first panel on working with law enforcement officials, working between educators and law enforcement to make sure that we have every person who needs to be at the table, at the table, to be ready to make suitable plans for unique local situations.

I will moderate the second panel on how schools and communities can create safe educational climates and be better prepared for emergencies, what school people can do. And then after lunch, I'll lead a third panel on helping communities recover. So we're going to be ready, we're going to be responsive and then we'll be ready to talk about recovery in our third panel.

So we have a lot of ground to cover in this day. Thank you again for being here. And now it's my pleasure to introduce my friend and our great Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. Thank you.

(Applause.)

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## **PANEL I: PREVENTING VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS**

*Moderator: Alberto Gonzales, Attorney General*

(8:40 AM to 9:40 AM)

### **Panel I Participants**

Jeffery Dawsy, Sheriff, Citrus County  
Sheriff's Office, Beverly Hills, FL

Delbert S. Elliott, Director of the Center  
for the Study and Prevention of Violence,  
University of Colorado, Boulder, CO

Thomas Kube, Executive Director and CEO,  
Council on Educational Facility Planners,  
Scottsdale, AZ

Georganne C. Rooney, Threat Assessment  
Specialist, U.S. Secret Service National

Threat Assessment Center, Arlington, VA

Fred Wegener, Sheriff, Park County, CO

Gregory A. White, U.S. Attorney, Northern  
District of Ohio, North Ridgeville, OH

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Thank you. Let me begin my thanking Margaret Spellings for outstanding leadership, and also of course thanking the President of the United States who is very, very concerned about the safety of our children. And he wants to ensure that we are doing everything we can at the federal level, at the state and local level to create a safe environment so our children can learn.

This particular panel is going to examine the scope of the school violence problem and discuss concrete ways that we can prevent future tragedies. And we've learned a lot of lessons already at the law enforcement level from tragedies like Columbine. And the goal of this best practice session is to share practical ideas and solutions to ensure that everyone knows all the resources and information that's already available out there.

We are doing a lot to make our school safe. A lot of people don't know all of the resources that are available. And part of today's dialogue is to ensure that people have a better understanding of the help that is available out there already.

The panel discussion will focus specifically on the scope of the problem, threat assessment, physical facility security, specialized enforcement expertise and law enforcement community outreach.

I am joined by an outstanding panel of experts. But before introducing our panel of experts, I want to emphasize to the audience that we understand that many of you, yourselves, are experts and have a lot to contribute to this debate. And we hope that this—the event today will initiate further discussion amongst experts on the stage, experts in the audience and experts around the country.

I'm going to start at my far right, your far left. Mr. Tom Kube. He's executive director and CEO of the Council of Educational Facility Planners. Next to Mr. Kube is Dr. Del Elliott, director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Next is Mr.—Sheriff, Fred Wegener of Park County, Colorado. Next is Ms. Georgeanne C. Rooney, a Threat Assessment Specialist for the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center. Next to Georgeanne is Sheriff Jeffery Dawsey of Citrus County, Florida. And finally Mr. Greg White, who is the United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio.

Now I'd like to begin by asking generally about the scope and nature of the problem. In recent weeks, there have been four incidents and three school shootings that have caused many moms and dads across the country to ask are our schools safe. Is my child safe when I send little Johnny or little Jane out the door every morning. Are they

going to be safe in our schools. Dr. Elliott, I'd like to begin with you. Can you put these disturbing events in the context for us. Are America's schools safe?

**DR. ELLIOTT:** I think that the most important fact to say right off the bat is that our kids are safer at school than they are in almost other places. They're safer there than they are in a shopping mall or out on the streets, or even at a fast-food restaurant, unfortunately and even in their own homes. So the risk of being murdered at school is 70 times greater away from school than it is at school. So schools are still relatively safe places.

But these events of the last week and the earlier events at Columbine and events like that involve—that there is a real violation of the public trust when something happens at school because the expectation is that school will be a safe place.

Unfortunately we are seeing a change in the trends around youth violence nationally. So we enjoyed a decade of declining involvement in violence on the part of young people, and declining violence at school. But the last two years we have seen a reversal of that trend. So gang activity is on the increase again. The number of school-related deaths in the last two years is twice what it was in the two years prior to that. So we are seeing a resurgence in youth violence, and that is a concern. We know that 6 percent of 12 to 18 year olds attending school reported that they carried a weapon to school in the last 30 days. That's a real concern. We are seeing the highest proportion of students reporting that they were threatened or injured at school that we've seen since CDC started collecting that kind of information. So we are seeing an increase in the risk of violence at school and more generally on the part of young people.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Now are these primarily—are these gang-related, are these random acts of violence? How would you characterize the recent trend?

**DR. ELLIOTT:** I think the recent trends are first gang-related, that is the truces that were worked out in the mid-'90's when we had the violence epidemic in this country are breaking down. So we are starting to see increased gang activity. And we're still seeing the kinds of conflicts which always existed at school, the bullying events, kids who feel that they're disrespected. Those events are still very much with us, and the conflicts around girlfriends or some kind of grievance that two people have with each other. These are the primary causes, or the primary events which precipitate violence.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Any particular strategies you think would be effective based upon your research and work?

**DR. ELLIOTT:** There are several things I think we have to emphasize as being very important. I think our first line of prevention is really having a good intelligence. After Columbine, one of the recommendations that was put forth by the Columbine Commission was that we have a state-wide hotline, so that individuals who had some

knowledge of an event could report that in a confidential manner. So I think that is really our first line of defense.

We know that most kids who are planning a violent event tell somebody. They talk about it. And because they do, there is an opportunity for us to know. I think in the last—since Columbine, you know, we have averted many, many, many serious violent crimes because we got a tip that it was happening. I think the code of silence has been largely broken because of Columbine and events like that. And so we need to enlist our students and our parents and members of the community to participate in helping us to anticipate these kind of events. I think that's our first line of defense.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Any other panel members have anything they want to add with respect to the importance of intelligence gathering?

**SHERIFF DAWSY:** Yes, sir. I would tell you that the School Resource Officer program—and I can only speak from my community—is probably one the core issues on intelligence. And I think we need to start in the elementary level and then work our way through into the high school level.

The elementary is truly the formative years, and if we can develop a good bond with our young students as they come out of there, that the possibilities of violence, we may be able to negate them through good intelligence. Prime example in our county a couple of years ago, we had a relationship, a young man, a young girl, their relationship started to deteriorate. And he got upset because she had another boyfriend and was going to bring a gun to school, and did bring a gun to school. But because there was intelligence and information, the student was able to get a hold of the School Resource officer, give him that information. We were able to intercede the young man before he got on campus, recovered the gun and stopped the shooting.

The elementary school is kind of a new venue for a School Resource officer, but we have so many opportunities there where we can teach drug education. I know one of your key things is the cyber safety issue, the Child Allure program. When you developed that foundation and that core group of trust, I think it will transcend through later years, and may avert some of the tragedies that we've have.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** So you think this is something that we need to focus on beginning at the elementary school level?

**SHERIFF DAWSY:** Yes, sir. And, you know, one of the things that we were sharing about the safe school inter-agency program, I think there's another thing law enforcement can do, and that's the sharing of information between all social groups that deal with children.

One of the things that the Doctor was indicating that, you know, one of the things we have to do is break down the privacy concerns, that more important is being help our children. In our community we have a footprint down that has not been duplicated before

in which we have five pilot schools. Sam Hemmel, who's the superintendent, myself, and a young lady by the name of Rena Jablonskus (sp) organized this. And we bring players to the program, and we do it on the elementary, middle and high school. And what we're trying to do there is trying to look at these kids, if there's a big issue that occurs at their home, and I'll talk about at an elementary level, where there's a domestic--a young boy sees his mom get abused by the father. That School Resource officer through our computer system is immediately contacted and told that on Monday morning, this young man may be a person of interest, a child of interest.

And confidentiality is the key. Only a core group of people are brought together to deal with it. And if we found out that this child needed some sort of mental health counseling or some sort of social services, because of the relationship and the memoranda of understanding that we have, we're able to get that child into a program almost immediately. That has not been done before. Sharing of information has always been the core. If you ask the educators and law enforcement--we do an action, we give it to the school system, the school system gives it to the mental health facilities or any social service, we never communicated back and forth as to what we're doing with this child. There was always huge voids.

We feel that we have a system in place right now that takes those voids out of the picture, that the school system knows what's happening, law enforcement and all social services, everybody that is involved with that child with confidentiality, and we've seen some very good things where we've got some children that were possibly suicidal out of the bad environment. And we were also able to get them into alternative housing. So that's just a program that we have going on.

**DR. ELLIOTT:** We also have a number of programs which have been proven effective in dealing with the bullying problem. We have the Obey Us Bullying Prevention program, for example, which has been reviewed and has very credible--

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Can you discuss that briefly?

**DR. ELLIOTT:** Yeah, that's a program which brings the community and the school together around planning for how you deal with bullies. It involves changing the norms at the school so that the students don't become participants in the bullying event by crowding around and encouraging the bully on. It involves working directly with the parents of the bully and the parents of the victim in teaching how to avoid becoming a victim. So we've got a program which is a good program. It can cut bullying on the school campus by 50 percent or more.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Now putting aside the violence that's related to gangs or drugs, do you think we have a pretty good idea of the causes for youth violence in our schools?

**DR. ELLIOTT:** I think we have a pretty good idea of those causes. It includes two different onset trajectories. That is there's a group of young people we can identify



very early, and it's as early as age five or six. Kindergarten, first grade teachers can identify these kids. They're already out of control. And we know that the causal factors there are primarily the quality of care-giving that's taking place in the home, and some heritable traits, attention deficit disorder, impulsivity, and those kinds of things. Those kids, if they aren't dealt with early, go on to be life-time, violent, criminal persons.

But there's a second onset trajectory which isn't as well known. And that involves a set of risk factors which don't appear until after the onset of puberty. For this group of young people, it's a much more complicated causal--set of causal factors. It involves the peer group, and whether or not this kid is accepted by their peers, which becomes a critical issue as a part of that transition out of childhood and into adulthood. It involves the school and what's happening at school. It involves the neighborhood and the community in which the kids live. So it involves a more complex set of risk factors. An example of this would be Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold. There was nothing in their background which would have allowed us to predict that during their adolescent years, they would become involved in such a terrible violent act.

That late onset group involves then the peer group to school and the community. It involves a deep-seated rage. It involves anger. It involves being marginalized at school and cut off from peers. So we know a lot about those factors and those conditions.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Well, as to that first set of categories, there are early warning signs. Is that information somehow translated, or transmitted to the schools, and can it be done in a way that doesn't pigeon-hole a young child as a troublemaker from early on?

**DR. ELLIOTT:** I believe it can, and I--and here we're talking about doing the same kind of information sharing that the sheriff was talking about. So we have a model inter-agency agreement that we give to all schools in the state of Colorado after Columbine, which brings together law enforcement, schools, mental health, social services, and in some cases, faith community or YMCA groups that work with kids. And it creates a confidential setting in which information is shared so that you can involve an early intervention for kids. It might just involve a relatively minor thing like just getting a counselor to sit down and talk with the kid, all the way to the point that it might involve getting Protective Services involved in actually removing a child from the home.

This group, because it includes law enforcement, can actually implement--has the authority to implement a wide range of possible interventions, so that if it requires a search warrant to look for bombs being made in somebody's garage, it can be done by this group. And yet you're keeping the information confidential so you aren't labeling the child.

And these are the people who have the skill and the knowledge and the ability to make these kinds of judgments, whether there's an immediate threat or whether it's not an immediate threat and can be handled in less formal ways. And I think that that's where the burden for making decisions ought to take place. I don't think we should ask our teachers to be making judgments about whether there's a serious mental health

problem here, or whether there's a serious threat here because of an essay which was turned in.

So we want to give that responsibility to this team that has the ability to make that kind of decision, where they share information. And I think that we can intervene successfully with kids long before they get to the point where they're ready to commit a serious violent act.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Okay.

**MS. ROONEY:** Just along the lines of the findings from the Secret Service and the Department of Education report where we applied our knowledge, our expertise and targeted violence towards public officials, we partnered with the Department of Education in the aftermath of Columbine. And some of our key findings were that these attacks are often planned well in advance. And the planning is often detectable and observable if you know what questions to ask, and you know what to look for, and what communications to look for also because these individuals, over 81 percent had communicated their intentions somehow, either through direct communication, a website maybe perhaps.

But what helps solves these things--I mean helps to pick up the information that is often out there in advance of these incidents is establishing a team approach, a multi-disciplinary team that develops the capacity to be able to pick up this information that's often out there. And it's just people that aren't talking to each other and don't know what to look for. So if you have law enforcement working with education and social services in advance of something occurring, it helps the process move a lot smoother and helps people work together and use a threat assessment approach and ask questions, and determine what's out there in advance.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** A lot of people don't realize that the Secret Service has been very much involved in this whole issue of school safety. Why don't you talk generally about what some of the things the Secret Service has been doing?

**MS. ROONEY:** Sure, sure. Well, we conducted some operational research about our targeted violence directed at public figures and public officials that really helped inform the way we as an agency conduct our threat assessment investigations. And in the wake of Columbine, we partnered with the Department of Education to apply this research, this operational research to the problems that we were experiencing in schools. So we were able to identify, as you were speaking about the scope of the problem earlier, through our research that's targeted violence in schools. The earliest case we came upon was in 1974. We completed data compilation (inaudible) in 2000, and we identified 37 instances of targeted school violence where a parent or a recent former students took a weapon to their school. 37 instances involving (inaudible) attackers. That's over about a 26-year period, so it is really a very limited population there.

And as such, you can't draw a profile. I know a lot of times people think a profile that's out there, and there is no profile, but there are planning indicators in advance. There are behaviors that you can look at.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** What kinds of things should we be looking for?

**MS. ROONEY:** Definitely weapons acquisition, if a student is making an attempt to acquire a weapon sends up a red flag. Also a lot of the students, almost 100 percent of the students that we looked at in our study had difficulty dealing with a significant loss or failure. And that's not to say students deal with losses or failures often, a lot of times. They can handle it, but it's that one student that seems to really be having problems, and maybe the students around them are concerned that they're not acting normal, and they're concerned for how they're dealing with maybe the loss or a death or an illness or a divorce, how they're handling loss or failure.

And another thing that we found was in over 81 percent of the instances, that these people communicated their intentions. As I was saying earlier, they communicated in some way, somehow. And that's such a key finding we think in the area of prevention that we're actually currently conducting a new research project, and that will be called the Bystander Study. And again it's in partnership with the Department of Education and McClain Hospital. And we're going out and interviewing those students who had the knowledge beforehand that these attacks were somehow planned, and yet maybe didn't put the pieces together or perhaps didn't have an educator or someone at the school or just a responsible adult in general who they felt they could have brought the information forward to. So we're trying to see who those students are, what information they had in advance and why they didn't bring it forward to an adult.

And then we've also gone out, and we're conducting interviews with students who did hear information and actually brought it forward. They were pro-active, and they shared the information with an adult, and their belief through their actions to have averted an incident of targeted violence. So it's very enlightening to see what the two groups—if there's any differences, and also how we can move more students into the second group to get them—if you hear of something, please bring it forward, and you can protect your students and your fellow peers. So we're currently working on that. We've completed interviews and working on data analysis. And we hope to get it out in and make a difference and improve the lines of communication between students and teachers and educators.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** What about if the attacker is someone from outside the school? Have you found that there is some kind of relationship with the school? What kind of relationship exists?

**MS. ROONEY:** Unfortunately our research, we deal specifically with targeted violence by students.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Okay. Can you provide an example of a tragedy that was averted by using threat assessment information?

**MS. ROONEY:** Yes, as a result of our study, our publications which are available at the Secret Service website, we have our final report that details the findings. We also have a guide that helps schools and law enforcement agencies implement the findings and work together and establish a Threat Assessment program. And it was through the establishment of such a Threat Assessment program that a retired Chief of Police, Art Pelley, who's in the audience today from New Bedford, Massachusetts, was able to establish a Threat Assessment program, working with the school and his community of New Bedford, and getting police and the educators to work hand in hand and establish this, and he sees personally some obstacles that they had to overcome and misconceptions they may have had about each other, and just different legislation and laws that they worked with to help form the bonds and establish the multi-systems approach and working with the social systems. And through the establishment of this program, they were able to detect a plot under way to conduct an act of targeted violence at their school, and they were actually successful in uncovering this plot and got some prosecutions from it as well. So it has been proven to work and in good instances.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Good. Let's turn the focus a little bit on the facilities themselves. I mean what steps can be taken to make the facilities that house our students safer?

**MR. KUBE:** Sure. Well, just to frame out a little bit, the Council of Educational Facility Planners is a U.S. based resource that's been around for 85 years. And we are an organization of different perspectives that plan, design and construct schools. And by that I mean we produce resources, documents, research studies, convene workshops and training sessions on how to plan, design and construct those facilities. And that information is also available on our website for the general public to access.

But you're focusing on different aspects of the planning and design of the building, which you consider part of the natural and the mechanical type strategies that are available to design safe buildings, access points, entries, exits, lines of sight within the hallways, use of closed circuit television systems to monitor areas of the grounds that might not be easily accessible. You're also looking at designing sight lines into buildings where administrators and faculty can observe what's happening in hallways and corridors, designing stairwells and so forth to avoid secret hiding places and things of that nature.

They're also looking at designing facilities so you don't have the traditional double-loaded corridors where at the bell, everybody empties out into one common space where you've got a number of children jostling themselves, particularly the high school level. They're also a number of strategies that are used in larger schools. For example, in our newer suburban areas, or even in some of our urban settings, you've got the large high school settings that go over 1500 to 2000 students. And that's a lot of kids to put in one physical environment. There are strategies to break up the building into smaller

communities, learning communities, or houses, as they might be termed, to keep them not mingling, all of them, all at the same time, so the kids get a sense of community within the school.

The buildings are also very expensive propositions to the point that they're no longer just open 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. for school use alone. They're becoming systemically integrated community use facilities. You might have community pools, performing arts centers, senior centers, other aspects of community use tied to the physical space, typically at a middle school or a high school level. And there are examples of that to where you can design the facility to where the public access is different than the student access, where you've got your bus and student drop-off zones in different locations aside from where the community would come in, so that you can segregate them during hours where school might be in session, and that might be a community use of the building. Or after school, you can close off the school portion of the building to where only the community's use portion of the school is available.

A good example locally here would be the Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, Maryland, which is a large suburban boarding on urban area high school, well planned. It was broken down into learning communities. It integrates a lot of the natural strategies and mechanical strategies to create a building for faculty and staff to monitor the student flow within the building to see that there's a limited chance for conflict and so forth within the building.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** You know, I went to public schools, and it was a great experience for me. And my sons go to public school, and I want them to enjoy it equally. And so we want to create an environment where our kids can learn. We want them safe. But I worry about creating facilities that begin to look more and more like prisons. Metal detectors. What are your views about metal detectors? Is that something that makes sense? Maybe perhaps in urban areas we have a lot of gang activity. Perhaps that may be something to consider, but what are your thoughts generally on metal detectors.

**MR. KUBE:** Well, what we're looking at here is integrating the whole aspect of creating a safe and secure learning environment with what I call a healthy high performing school and balancing off keeping our children safe but affording them good learning spaces that really help the teachers do their job, and the kids do their job in terms of learning.

The mechanical types of strategies like metal detectors and so forth, you tend to see more in urban settings where there are chances of more of endemic violence. You would tend to find them in retro fitted buildings that are being upgraded and so forth where the site that the building is on doesn't allow for it to be physically changed to a large degree. And you've got very public access points that are harder to control, or that you've got activities in terms of gang related community activities that just—they need to have that type of intervention to have the secure entrance point to the school.

Personally I'm not in favor of them. And I'd like to not see a metal detector in the school. I think that where we send our children to school sends a message to them in terms of what we think of them. And where they learn should give you that feeling that you've had, Mr. Attorney General, of going to school, and that's part of the experience of learning. And I think the metal detector, although it serves a purpose, sends a negative message to our young people that this is what we think of you, even though we're sending you here to learn.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Doctor.

**DR. ELLIOTT:** I think it needs to be pointed out that the vast majority of school shootings take place outside of the building. So having that as a—at an entry point in the building is not going to avert very many of the school shootings. Only one out of five school shootings take place inside the building. The parking lot, the street in front of the school, these are the places around—athletic events, these are where most of the school shootings take place. So I also don't think the metal detector is going to be a very efficient way to cut down on school shootings.

Research also shows that it doesn't take very long for students to learn how to circumvent the metal detector. So it's not a strategy I think that's a very good one.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Okay.

**SHERIFF WEGENER:** So some of the rural schools like in my county, that would be kind of hard pressed too with the amount of funding that they receive. They would have a hard time being able to purchase some of those. Then you also have manpower. You have to have somebody man the metal detectors, and so you've got to be able to find somebody to do that. Surveillance cameras would be the same thing. You've got to find somebody that's got to sit in there and watch those cameras. So—

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** So what do we do?

**SHERIFF WEGENER:** Yeah. I think what we have to do is we still have those—we still have good programs in place though. We still have—like we have the Safe to Tell in Colorado. We have those programs that allow kids to take ownership of their facility. And I think that's probably the key is they have to take ownership of their facility. I think the teachers do. I think the community does. I think if we all take ownership of each one of our facilities, that's going to help us probably have a more secure facility.

Would it have stopped the round of active violence that I had at (Inaudible) King High School? I don't know. I mean obviously it didn't. And those would be things that we have to think about. But I think ownership in that facility by the community is just probably more key than anything.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Okay. Sheriff Dawsy, can you talk a little bit more about additional steps you've taken in your county to make the schools safer?

**SHERIFF DAWSY:** Yes, sir. I alluded a little bit to acronyms in our career field, STP, which is basically Safe School Inter-Agency Team program. This is a program that I think measures our communications within our profession. And I think that's what we're saying right here at the table.

There are great programs, many programs that are out there. But we that deal with the safety of our children, one of the core issues is that we have to communicate with each other. The program that we are putting in as a pilot program, we have about 16, 17 schools in my community, 10 are elementary, and then an alternative school, and then four middle schools and three high schools. We've hit each venue, high school, middle and elementary, with a real focus on the elementary school. And what we're trying to do there is we bring a core group of people that are involved in a child's life.

There's actually nine social, law enforcement, educational groups that come together. And we meet, the Executive Committee meets on a quarterly basis. The people that are at the school meet as needed. There is no barriers. They don't have to wait a week. They don't have to wait till Friday. It's based on the crisis or the issue that's at school, which gives them tremendous flexibility.

I alluded—and I'll just go from the law enforcement function because I think we're on the outskirts of everything that occurs many times in a child's life. But you know, when a child sees somebody, their mother especially, become a domestic and becomes a victim of domestic, that causes some major issues in that child's life. And a lot of times, that child goes under the radar. We do not know what occurred on Friday, Thursday, Tuesday, Wednesday night at that child's home. All we see is this young child come to school with some changes in their attitude. And mostly elementary school teachers, my mother-in-law and my cousin were all elementary school teachers for years, they see the changes. I mean you ask the teachers out there, and they'll truly be able to tell you, hey, there is something going on in this child's life.

That being said and through some of the training through Fox Valley, we were able to bring these core groups to a training program and then implement it where when something occurs in a child's home that we're called to, our deputies have—and are ordered and have the capabilities through a computer system to immediately contact that SRO so that on Monday morning when that SRO turns on his computer, they immediately know that that child who had an issue goes to their school, and that this individual really needs to be looked at.

Now that's an elementary issue. We bring that child in to see if he needs some—or she needs some sort of social services. But the real big picture is that we're communicating, you know, the intelligence that we were talking about. The intelligence and the information that we can share, I think is paramount in keeping our children safe.

It is our responsibilities as parents. I don't want to put it all on our shoulders, but we talked a little bit that the parents have to be involved in this process too. That when we find that the child has an issue, that we get them involved in their part of the mending basis.

And then what we do is we take this program and we try to implement the steps. And as we're implementing them, one of the key issues that I have found through 25 years of law enforcement is that we fail to tell each other what we're doing. I mean we're doing something for the child, but, you know, law enforcement--well, you know, I turned it over to the mental health facility or the centers. Or we turned it over to the school. Do you know what's happening. Well, no, we don't. And I think what happens here is that with this particular program, we follow the information from one stage to the other and hopefully through returning this child back to a successful student in our community. And that if we have an issue, if we truly have an issue with a child, that this child becomes a child of interest. And we talked about the confidentiality, and you never want to tag a child with a term. But in an environment of professionals where confidentiality is the key, we can use those terms to the benefit, not to the negative of the child. I think what we're hearing today is that, you know, there is programs in place.

But us, in our career field, I think there is an apprehension, sir, if I can say this, within certain school systems, law enforcement, social services, to share that information, that liability word is out there. And that liability word in our career field, we live in liability. We shouldn't be afraid of liability. We should embrace it and understand it. And we have to find ways, such as the memorandum of understanding that we understand we're going to be held accountable for this information. But it is paramount for the safety of our children and the future of our children that we break down those barriers and we move forward, and we build an environment that we in our profession share information, sir.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Good point, thank you. Mr. White, you've served both as a county prosecutor and now as a United States Attorney. What roles do you see for the federal, state and local law enforcement officials?

**MR. WHITE:** Well, sir, I believe firmly that based upon everything you hear from these experts around this table that the real function of law enforcement at all those levels is to facilitate partnerships. Now facilitating partnership with the school system, with the broader community, all the agencies that we talked about, the court system, the mental health, the Emergency Management officials, the Emergency Medical officials, all of those folks have to come together and form a plan on how to address safe schools in their jurisdictions.

Some jurisdictions are easier than others. Sheriff Dawsy has one school system in his county. The county that I came from had two urban school systems and multiple smaller systems. Each one of those systems has to have a plan, and we have to work with them. Each one of those school buildings has to have a plan as to how they're going to address safety in that building because each one is unique.



It's an overwhelming task that we have to either form task forces like we do for terrorism investigations, or we do for drug investigations, to work with schools in those jurisdictions. We can do that. We can bring those communities together. And it's going to take the school superintendents to pick up the phone and call their county sheriff, to call their county prosecutor. If they haven't heard from them in a while, they need to call them. The same goes the other way, the prosecutors and the sheriffs. This dialogue that we talked about is crucial I think to making these programs work.

What are the constraints of the court system? We talk about the constraints of the schools. What are the constraints in the court systems to deal with these children that are referred there, whether it's the civil end in Children's Services, or the criminal end in the Juvenile Justice system.

There are a lot of resources obviously that the Department of Justice brings to this table as well in terms of addressing these issues.

The Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in tracing firearms, in bringing to the table the issue of where are these children getting the guns, and how do we prevent guns from getting into the wrong hands. They have obviously training that they do for bomb threats, for instance. The FBI is assembling statistics on school-based violence, incidents of school-based violence. That doesn't stop at public schools, but it goes on to universities and the level of violence that we've seen on campuses on occasion. We experienced that in Cleveland.

So the issue is develop a crisis plan. Law enforcement needs to be intricately involved in that in every school.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Do you think that post-Columbine students are more willing to come forward to the law enforcement community and report threats?

**MR. WHITE:** I think the answer to that is yes, but it's a qualified yes from my experience, and that is we have to create an environment in the schools that encourages that habit. Some schools are better at that than others.

There are a lot of programs that deal with students. We had a program called Youth for Youth. There are others. I think there's a student here at this conference that's going to talk about what happens there. But the issue is how do the students in that school, in each school, define the problems in that school and come up with goals and procedures on how they're going to solve that problem. Is it bullying? Is it respect? Is it drugs? Is it alcohol? Is it guns? All those things are different in different schools, and their programs have to be unique for that school. But they have to have a culture of safety that encourages the students to come forward with that information and the intelligence that we talked about.

Secondly, and also importantly, once you have that in place, the crisis plans and all those things, I think we need to mention, and we talked about this informally a little bit, about the opportunities to exercise those plans. Don't put them on a shelf and forget about them. They need to be brought off that shelf. They need to be dusted off. They need to be reviewed, and obviously that's something that law enforcement and those partnerships we talked about has a crucial role in seeing that that happens. And it's not happening as it should in most schools. And when the crisis happens, that's not the time to figure out all the details of how that plan works in that school.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** And this is a very important point. I heard Secretary Spellings this morning emphasize that there is such a turnover in schools. Administrators come and go, teachers come and go, families come and go. And you just can't assume that people know what to do in response to a particular threat or in response to a shooting. These plans are very, very important, but they are absolutely worthless if they are not exercised, if people don't know what those plans are intended to do. Do you think we're safer today in our schools?

**MR. WHITE:** We're definitely safer, but as you say, teachers come and go, so do students. And the sheriff talked about pushing programs down and up from elementary school to the high school. Some of these programs need to be pushed down from the high school to the junior high schools, which, you know, that whole issue of bullying and respect, there's a role to be played by the older students in helping the younger students come along. And that's part of that transition in students as well.

**SHERIFF DAWSY:** Sir, if I could just make a comment on practicing of the plans. We have plans, and we found after Columbine that, you know, that we needed to have many different plans to deal with a different type of results. And I know there's turnover. But, you know, I charge my career field that people that have a relationship like I do with my superintendent where we're first name basis. And our core key is that, you know, to keep our child or children safe within our school system. I think it's our responsibility. It's not our children's responsibility, or our parents' responsibility. It is the educators, the staff at the schools, the administration of the schools, and law enforcement itself to make sure those plans are exercised.

Case in point with us, we have lock-down drills, just like we have fire drills, with all the new teachers, And it's done on a continuous basis. Different schools, different time lines, but it's done several times a year so that we understand how to lock down a school, and what the law enforcement personnel is going to look for and what the school's responsibility is on the lock-down.

And then actually you can do table-tops or actual deployment of a plan. Of course maybe when the students are not there so we don't unnerve all the children. But I really think that is the key because when it happens, it is not the time to react. We need to know as a unit to when one responds to a particular scene, and we've all had scenes in our schools, some, you know, a lot less traumatic than a true shooting, But when a plan goes as well, it is much more systematic and the approach is much more successful. And

it's our responsibility. Nobody else's. We need to put that on our shoulders. It's no excuse for not implementing and practicing a plan. All it takes is a phone call and some action.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Okay.

**MS. ROONEY:** Also I'd like to add I think all of us do realize that practice does make perfect with a plan in keeping them alive and keeping them renewed year after year. And with that in mind, the Secret Service currently has underway in production an interactive threat scenario CD so that it will allow—it has two hypothetical school-based threat scenarios, and it will allow school Threat Assessment teams to be faced with this hypothetical scenario. And it stimulates discussion in what would you do in your role as a prosecutor, and what would you do in your role as an educator. So you can see how people's roles would play out. And you can keep doing this and keep it alive and keep it vibrant.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Sheriff Wegener, two weeks ago you were on the scene of a shooting in Bailey, Colorado. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

**SHERIFF WEGENER:** Going back to their plan, we had just exercised our lock-down procedures back in August, going through what would happen, what it's going to look like when the SWAT team enters the building just so that everybody has an idea of what's going to transgress.

Of course, you know that on September 27th, we get the call that there's a man with a gun inside a classroom at the high school. This call, as I'm in Bailey and I first hear it going over the radio, I immediately think that it's a drill and somebody forgot to tell me. But then as I hear more and more of the officers and the strain in their voices, I realize that it was in fact happening.

You know, we get on the scene. We have a thing called active shooter, and most of the agencies in Colorado have been trained on active shooter, and that is that the first three officers that arrive on the scene immediately go to threat. Wherever the intel has told them via that—the secretary, or via another student, or what information they have gotten, they go right there so we can pin the threat down.

This in a post-Columbine designed school, they were able to go right to Room 206 and pin the shooter down right there. This gave the ability for the rescue team that I was on and some of the other officers to go in and evacuate all of the other children out of the school.

This we had planned. And we talked about the lock-down. We had the little cards that slid underneath the door that let us know if there was a problem in that room, or if it was a safe room. They also then—the teacher then, when we know it's a safe

room, were able to go in, unlock it, say, all right, everybody follow me and go this direction.

It's an—involvement in the school I think helps because when I got there, the look of relief on the teachers' face and on the students' face—oh, the sheriff's here, and they listened right what I said. All right, you guys need to go in this direction. We got everybody out, and then of course, I had to get into negotiations with this individual for the release of six of the seven hostages as you have probably all know now by the outcome. Unfortunately I couldn't get the last hostage out, the last two, and we had to use the Jefferson County SWAT team to make entry into the building—excuse me, to the room, and unfortunately Emily was shot.

Negotiations had broken down after he released the fifth hostage. He wouldn't talk to us anymore and just said that everything would be—something would happen at 4 o'clock. At the beginning, when negotiations were first going, he kept on alluding to a backpack that was supposedly had C-4 in it. And never did elaborate anymore on the backpack. Through the interviews we had with all the hostages, he had the backpack set aside. He never would go over to the backpack according to the hostages, but that they all saw it. So we had to keep that threat. To me it was pretty real. Then listening to the hostages as they were debriefed talk about the, you know, molesting that they had endured. It was the decision that I had made after listening to all that intel that we had to go in and do something to get those girls out of there.

Like I say, I still think our school is safe. I still think that we had a safe school. I think that we had great interaction. We have parents that have come in. We have law enforcement that's in there. I think this is just one of those times when an individual is able to get in, talking to the other kids. They thought he was one of the parents and didn't think much else of it. But it's a very sad event and one that I take responsibility for.

But I think the lessons that, as I told the Attorney General, that I hope to get from this is just an ability to understand all the facets of everything that has gone on, listen to the experts and maybe avert anything like this from ever happening again. You know, it's a terrible tragedy, and we're not supposed to lose our kids at school.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Thank you, sheriff. Well, with that, we have some time now for some questions from the audience. I want to thank the panelists—

**MALE VOICE:** This question I guess is addressed to the entire panel. In an essay released earlier this year by investigators of the 1999 Columbine High School massacre, 18-year-old gunman Eric Harris mused that students can get weapons into school too easily, and they have too much access to weapons outside of school. Fifteen-year-old Eric Hainstock pried open his family's gun cabinet, took two weapons to Weston High School in Wisconsin and murdered his principal.

As the five innocent girls in Lancaster County were being executed, two schools in the Las Vegas area were placed in lock-down after a student was spotted with a firearm. And just yesterday, a 13-year-old student took a replica of an AK-47 from his family's home and was stopped from massacring his classmates only after the firearm jammed.

It seems Eric Harris was correct in identifying the common denominator in the rash of school shootings in the last week. What can our legislatures and this administration do to halt the proliferation of these weapons in our schools and on our streets, especially in light of the expiration of the federal assault weapons ban?

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Do you want to take that? Well, let me just say that obviously kids should not have access to weapons, and there shouldn't be weapons in our school. And that's been the position of the President since his days as governor when he really championed that legislation to make schools gun-free zones.

I think what we can do at the law enforcement community, of course, is ensure that those who break the law are in fact prosecuted. And the level of prosecution related to gun crimes is up something like 62 to 65 percent since George Bush became President.

We have a program called Project Safe Neighborhood, which is really focused on prosecuting violent gun crime. And it's been successful, and obviously it's something that we'll continue to focus on. And there's been a lot of money spent on trying to curb that kind of violence, and we're all obviously very concerned about the guns that make their way into our schools.

**SHERIFF DAWSY:** If I can just answer that? That's a great question, sir. I'm not sure that anybody up here is going to be able to give you a thorough answer to that.

I truly believe that we can't legislate safety. We can set some blocks in place that can protect our children in school. I made a comment when I first had a chance to talk to the Attorney General that I think the communications is the key. In the state of Florida, guns and weapons are very accessible. And the fact is that bad things are going to happen from time to time, and that means a child bringing a gun to campus.

If we use that as a guiding light, then my position is I as a law enforcement officer and the superintendent of my schools have to work together to develop programs in place that when those isolated issues do occur, that one, we have some sort of communications mecca in place. That is, that we have developed a relationship with our students, whether it be a teacher, whether it be a law enforcement officer, that they know where to go because I think a lot of times you look at--they don't know who to go talk to. Who do I bring this information to. That to me has always been a key and so has my superintendent, Sam Hemmel, that we develop that relationship so the child needs to go, so that we can avert, and we do. We avert probably more tragedies than what tragedies do occur. Not the fact that I think any tragedy should happen, but I really think we have to develop that relationship from the elementary school level. And that is a different

venue than a lot of SRO programs are. We need to develop that confidence in children, getting programs in place that will safeguard our children while they're in the schools and understand the dangers. And then as they grow older, they have the confidence in law enforcement and the school system that they can take that information and do something with that information to protect themselves and other children.

**DR. ELLIOTT:** The primary prevention strategy there is really to deal with the motivation issue to take away the desire that anyone would have to take a gun to school. We know a little bit about that. We know that when there's a lot of bullying going on at school, or when the student perception is that the rules are not applied uniformly to everyone. It's under those circumstances that a kid is most likely to take the gun to school because he feels, or she feels that they have to protect themselves because the school is not protecting them.

So if we can create a normative climate in the school where the view is that everybody is respected, that the rules apply uniformly to everyone in the school, and the issues of bullying are dealt with appropriately, then we take away the typical motivation for carrying a gun to school. And that's the best prevention strategy.

**SHERIFF WEGENER:** Thinking of your question, I was trying to think back to the rural area I'm from. The answer to your question is relatively easy. You just need to change society. Right?

I went to school. When I was in school, I had a 30-30 rifle in the bed of my pickup truck, but I never thought about shooting anybody with it. We took knives. Boys have buck knives on their belts. But we never thought of stabbing anybody with it. We always knew that to deal with something, you had to deal with it intelligently. Either you got in a fight or what not, but that was it. It was over. Has that changed? Yes, dramatically. And that's--

I think Dr. Elliott's right. We have to figure out how to change everybody's thinking. And that's--the gun thing's a terrible thing.

**MALE VOICE:** If I could just comment real quick. As a student--I am 19 years old. I have grown up and gone to high school in the climate that we live in today. Our's is a post-September 11th world. Our's is a world where we've been exposed to violent video games, mass media, even my own California governor did a lot to perpetuate those kinds of messages.

What kind of society--we're in a society--I mean it's true. What kind of society that we live in today is far different from one where weapons could be taken to school. They could be put into the back of a pickup truck. And having survived through with the Columbine high school shooting at a time when I was going to be entering high school, I'm not sure that a request for a society to change is enough.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Any response to that? If not, we'll go to the next question. Yes, sir.

**MR. BRANDOM:** Good morning. My name is Robert Brandom, and I teach in the D.C. public school system. And I want to pick up on something that was mentioned earlier about the teacher in the classroom knowing that the students is having a bad day because something may have happened at home.

What I would like the panelists to comment on is how do you separate the culture and society of the school from the culture and society within the community? Schools are in the community. If the community sees violence and deals with it on a daily basis with shootings and stabbings and domestic violence and robberies and gangs, how does a young child separate from that on a daily basis when they come to school when all the children in the same neighborhood go to the same school?

And I think one picture we forget in trying to deal with student behavior is that they see adult behavior, and they pick up on what we do and what we say. You turn on the television. It isn't the issue of violence on television as much as also we forget about the violence in our conversations, in our debates. Some of the political commentaries by talk-show hosts is just as violent as some of the things that happen in the community because it shows disrespect for one another. And I think that's the key element. Our conversation needs to tone down to the point that adults start respecting one another and then children will see that they need to start respecting each other because children don't have much respect for adults because adults are not respecting one another.

**MR. WHITE:** I would just say this about your issue. There's no question that there's a relationship between violence in schools and violence in neighborhoods. I think that's been well established, and Dr. Elliott has talked about that before. What we all need to do I think is be more pro-active. That's where law enforcement and the schools are working together now more closely in being pro-active on those kinds of issues.

And I will add this. Law enforcement sees the element of prevention now. They get that part I think more so than they did 10 years ago or 15 years ago. We're all working together for that prevention piece.

The neighborhoods, if you consider what's out there in terms of the most violent people versus the masses of folks that live obviously in the neighborhoods where you teach are law abiding. They want their children to go to school. They want to be safe. There's an element there that you can work with. There's an element there that needs to be dealt with sternly by law enforcement. So there's a law enforcement piece. There's a prevention piece, and we all need to work together to advance that cause that I know you believe in so firmly.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Thank you, Greg. Next question.

**MS. VAN SICKLE:** Good morning. My name is Lisa Van Sickle. I'm with the International Coalition for Drug Awareness, and I'm from Rowerton Township in the state of New Jersey.

I have or had a child who was violent and suicidal. She was violent and suicidal due to the anti-depressant, Paxil. I took my crusade to the White House. The President responded. It went to A. J. Jass. We've had Congressional hearings. The FDA is now under deep scrutiny. I want to know when are we going to hold the pharmaceutical industry responsible for putting anti-depressant medications on the market that cause our children to become violent, suicidal, and in the majority of cases, homicidal.

I hear about Columbine all the time. What is not known to the public is that Eric Harris, over the course of a year, was on a drug, Luvox, and it was increased four times. We know these drugs cause violence. We know they cause homicide. What are you going to do about it? We have medication guides that are not being distributed to the classroom, to physicians, to parents. How can we properly monitor our children without a defined regulation on how these med guides will be distributed? Thank you.

**DR. ELLIOTT:** I can't really answer your question as to when, you know, that's going to happen. I guess I do want to comment that what the evidence suggests that those anti-depressant drugs increase the risk for violence and for suicide. So when you talk about causes, I want to be sure we understand what we mean by that. And that is that it increases the risk. It is true that Eric Harris was using Luvox, but it's also true that Dylan was not.

**MS. VAN SICKLE:** But if you look at the medication guide, and I will be more than happy to provide a copy to you, the FDA says to monitor a child for agitation, aggression, violent behavior, changes in mood and behavior. Agitation and aggression, that's bringing a knife to school. Agitation and aggression is beating up another child. I lived the nightmare. I know how violent and suicidal a child can become due to the side effect of a medication. My daughter didn't have depression. She had Lyme disease.

You need to look at the issue with 11 million prescriptions being prescribed, and if one out of 50 children will become violent or suicidal on these medications, we need to take a more serious look at the issue. Thank you.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Ma'am, what I'd like to do—I know that the Secretary of Health, Human Services would be very interested in this issue, if he's not already looking into this area. So perhaps later on, you and I can have a discussion, and we can see—give him more information about what's being done.

**MS. VAN SICKLE:** I would love that because I brought some information to you, and Mr. Gonzales, thank you very much for your time.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Thank you. Yes, sir.



**MR. SHIRER:** Good morning. My name is Jim Shirer (sp), and I'm associated with the Institute for Strategic Exploration which is based on futurist Joe Barker's work. I'm a futurist and an educator. I'm also a resident of Wisconsin, the site of two of the most recent issues.

When I originally stood up to ask a question, I think it was going to be directed towards perhaps both Dr. Elliott and Ms. Rooney, but Sheriff Dawsy also mentioned something a couple of seconds ago that relates. In the tragic death of the high school principal, a recent interview with the grandparent and pastor of the young man who committed the violent act stated that he just didn't think through the consequences of his decision to carry that out.

We believe that one of the major issues of prevention, in addition to one of the things mentioned by the panel concerning empowering more and more students to report on incidents, is the basic thinking skills of everybody involved in the process, in being aware of the short term and long term consequences of their decisions. We've actually been developing some simulations related to issues like drug use and binge drinking among youth to make them more aware of the consequences of their decision.

And I'm interested in hearing, based on the positive results we've gotten, probably best summarized very briefly by a student coming up to me one day and saying I've never had an opportunity to think this way in any classroom I've been in. This is completely different. How we can address the prevention of incidents like that at that level before they occur.

**SHERIFF DAWSY:** One of the things that we have in place in our community is called a Focus program, very similar I think to what you're talking about, maybe not on the same level. It is our drug education, gang violence, and the rest of the gamut. It's filtering out crime united with students. It was developed by my SRO's and our curriculum specialist to where we can look at a global issue. We could also look at the local issue, which I think is extremely important factors that affect our children in our school system.

That being said, our SRO's, our School Resource officers, excuse me— acronyms are part of our career field—our School Resource officers do exactly what you're talking about. They put the kids in mock scenarios, trying to get them to look at the big picture. We focus on the 5th grade level, which to me is a good age to really work on so that they can focus further. And we are seeing some benefits, but, you know, it's a new program that we put in place. It's about four, maybe five years old now at the most, and we're still watching the relationship.

In our community, we have found a few guns. Most of the time it's young men bringing pocket knives to school. So maybe we are having an impact. We just haven't seen it.

**DR. ELLIOTT:** I would just like to confirm what you're saying because I believe that is part of the problem. And we do have some alcohol binge prevention programs which utilize that same strategy which look like they're quite effective.

One of the problems is that the current use of interactive video games, for example, helps to break that connection between action and consequence. And so part of the problem—I think we know that exposure to television violence, to film violence and to those interactive video games is causally linked to violent behavior. It's not the strongest link, but it clearly is there. And I think it's because of the de-sensitization which takes place with watching killing after killing after killing, and it does break down that connection between the behavior and the consequence. That's a serious problem.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES:** Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sorry, but we are out of time for this panel. If there are additional questions, I'm hopeful you'll have the opportunity to ask other panelists who will be presenting later.

Before we take a short break, please join me in thanking our panelists for this morning's session.

(Applause.)

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**CONFERENCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY**  
**Tuesday, October 10, 2006**

**PANEL II: PREPARED SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES ARE SAFER**

*Moderator: Margaret Spellings, Secretary of Education*  
(9:50 AM to 10:50 AM)

**Panel II Participants**

Frederick Ellis, Director, Office of  
Safety and Security, Fairfax County  
Public Schools, Fairfax, VA

James Moore, Founder and President,  
WatchDOGS, Springhill, AR

The Honorable Jane Norton,  
Lieutenant Governor, Denver, CO

Chiarasay E. "Chiara" Perkins, Student,  
Walton Senior High School and President,  
Youth Crime Watch of Walton County,  
DeFuniak Springs, FL

Dr. George Sugai, Professor and Neag  
Endowed Chair, Neag School of Education,  
University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

Patrick Weil, Principal, Valparaiso High  
School, Valparaiso, IN

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**ANNOUNCER:** Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Secretary of Education,  
Margaret Spellings.  
(Applause.)

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you. All right, if I could ask everybody to  
take their seats. I think that was a great start. I thank Attorney General Gonzales for  
getting us off, along with the members of that panel. A lot of issues were provoked that I  
think are a nice segway into the discussion that we're about to have here in Panel II,  
which is about prepared communities. We know that prepared communities means safer  
schools, and that's what we're here to talk about.

We have lots of great expertise and many, many perspectives on this panel. I'll  
introduce them in mass and then turn to them for their comments, and then we'll have  
some interaction with you toward the end of our discussion.

The first person who will be addressing us this morning on this panel is Colorado Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton. Governor, thank you for being here. She is from Colorado as well as I said, and they obviously have been responding very lately to the tragedy there as well as, you know, have lots of lessons to share post-Columbine. So, Governor, thank you for being here.

Also joining us is Dr. George Sugai, who is a professor at the University of Connecticut, and the College of Education. And he is an expert on identifying, adapting and sustaining positive school environments. That's one of the things that we talked about a little bit this morning, is the environment at school, the nurturing nature of it. So, Dr. Sugai, thank you for being here.

Next we'll be hearing from Patrick Weil, who is the principal of Valparaiso High School in Indiana. In 2004, a student attacked seven peers with knives there, and since that time, obviously they have taken many steps to ensure that that sort of thing does not happen again. Thank you, Mr. Principal, for being here.

Next is my fellow Texan, Jim Moore, who founded a group called Project WatchDOGS. D-O-G-S stands for Dads Of Great Students. And he has a very innovative approach to engaging parents, specifically dads, in this issue. So, Jim, we can't wait to hear from you.

And then finally is Chiara, Chiara Perkins who is a junior at Walton County High School in Florida, and she has helped lead her school's Youth Crime Watch program for the past four years. And I think we all know that without engaging students, we're not going to be effective. So, Chiara, thank you for being here.

So Governor, let me start with you. Please tell us about what you have learned in Colorado, and give us your perspective and what advice you'd have for other state officials working on these issues.

**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR NORTON:** Thank you, Madam Secretary, and I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this important summit.

Columbine forever changed the way that Americans view the potential of violence in their schools. We know we can't restore the losses or erase what we've seen in terms of horrors, but we can take away important and valuable lessons to make our schools and our communities safer. And Columbine certainly afforded us that opportunity.

In the area of communication, we learned that to be able to interface different law enforcement agencies for responding is absolutely critical. And Colorado has dedicated itself to a digital trunk radio system that utilizes the newly allocated 700 megahertz spectrum for public safety in order to have different law enforcement be able to communicate in case of an emergency. This is a partnership with the local government.

If you want to participate, you can. And currently we have about 85 percent of the state covered. We hope to have 100 percent covered in the near future.

The second area is in terms of what we learned with planning. You heard about it in the original panel earlier this morning. We have 64 counties, 103,000 schools in the state of Colorado. Each one is required to have a variety of emergency plans in place. They're tied in to the accreditation. We have a safety analyst that looks at the plans. They're part of our Department of Education, and those plans also have ways that parents are notified in case of an emergency.

The third area is in training. You've heard about the importance of inter-agency training. We've taken that to heart in Colorado. We have an all-hazards system of nine regions in that we interact with different agencies and stakeholders in that process. You've heard about the importance of listening and the Safe to Tell project, so I won't go into that.

But one of the most important lessons that we learned is that people want to be a part of the solution. And communities, business leaders, law enforcement can all do things like adopting a school and providing a little bit more of a presence in that school. We also have an innovative project that Douglas County has done, and it's called the Seniors Work-Off program. And seniors can actually reduce part of their property tax by volunteering in a school system. And so again, it just provides another set of eyes, relationships in the district.

But finally, let me just say that it is incumbent upon all of us to be vigilant. And our state School Board after Columbine released a statement that talked about this rip in our moral fabric when violence occurs in a school. And that we can do a lot of different things, but we have to be vigilant in terms of teaching not only academic literacy but moral literacy. And that the faith-based community values, teaching, discipline and respect are all important parts of keeping our schools safer and our communities safer.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you, Governor. You know, you talked about successful strategies there. I think since you all have been at it for a while out there, talk about some of the things that maybe you thought were going to work and didn't prove to be as effective, and that you revisited.

**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR NORTON:** Well, I think one of the things that Columbine taught us is that individual agencies did a great job in responding, but if they hadn't practiced together in a unified way, they weren't nearly as effective. And again, you talked about it earlier. It was touched upon in the panel earlier, is the importance of building those relationships. Building relationships during a crisis is not the time. We need to do advance planning. And so those were some of the important lessons we've learned.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you, Governor. Fred, my apologies. I overlooked my own school district representative. Fred Ellis, we'll turn to him next. He

is the director of the Office of Safety and Security in Fairfax County Public Schools, and has been recognized as one of the premier plans for school safety in this country. That is my school district actually too. And Fred is a member of my Commission on Safe and Drug-Free Schools. So, Fred, my apologies, and please tell us about your experience in Fairfax County, how it is that you've come to be one of the nation's premier school safety sites.

**MR. ELLIS:** Well, thank you, and no need to apologize. I'm used to--my wife ignores me quite frequently. Can't say that I blame her.

But in terms of why Fairfax County Public Schools has been recognized, quite frankly I think there are a lot of other schools systems out there that are doing a great job, doing a lot of work. And we have done a lot in Fairfax County, but it's one of those things that we're never done, we're never satisfied. There are always things to do, always things to improve, and we know that.

Quite frankly, back in about 2000, we really took an initiative and really got buy-in from our school leadership at the time. And our position is that without that buy-in from the top, from the superintendent and the elected school officials, it's really difficult to have a vibrant, robust program in the school system because if it's not important to the people at the top, it doesn't become important to the people all the way down the chain. But we had that, so that was a big help.

And then quite frankly we looked at plans. We started doing plans, thinking about it, bringing in the other agencies that you've heard earlier in terms of public safety and all the other stakeholders to review the development of our plans, and we took an all hazards approach. But then we also took a look at individual types of incidents and what unique things exist about those, such as a bomb threat, what's the difference between a bomb threat response and a fire because there are some unique differences to those.

But also recognizing that in the end, there are only a certain number of things the school can do basically in terms of response plans. You can stay at school in a status quo position. You can do what we can an exterior lock-down, or some places call a soft lock-down where you lock the exterior of the building. You can also move into an interior lock-down where all the interior doors are locked. So you can stay there and you can also do a shelter in place. So those are the kind of responses that are in the school on the property.

And in terms of evacuations, you can leave the building, and you can stay on site, or you can go off site. So basically the responses come down to answering the question, is there a safer place for us to be and can we get there. So we kind of took that approach.

And then we filled in kind of the blanks in terms of a lot of the ancillary kind of issues that come up. In other words, communications. How are you going to communicate in all of those kinds of responses? How are you going to do student accountability? Parent-student reunification? How are we going to make contact? What

about staging areas and what not? You just kind of fit those into your planned development.

And then I think most importantly is that you have to practice those plans. We heard that earlier. They can't just be on the shelf. They absolutely cannot be. They have to be updated annually. We have an annual requirement for those to be updated, and then they're reviewed. In Fairfax County, they're reviewed by folks in my staff who are specifically trained to do that. And then we provide them facilitated table-top exercises at all of our schools so that the administrators and that crisis management team gets a chance to actually work their plan and see what works and what doesn't work, and what they might need to go back and tweak because one of the things we tell them is that you can't learn to dance the night of the ball. It's too late. And it's just not going to happen, so the next best thing to having lived through an experience is to get some experience in terms of exercises, drills and table-tops.

And then from there, we've really spent a lot of time researching I think some kind of I guess more advanced things, such as hazardous material locations. In your jurisdiction, what kind of materials might they contain, you know, all those kinds of things. And particularly in terms of partnerships with the local Emergency Management at the county level, state level and the federal level, how do we fit in in the school system, not just on the micro-level at the school, but on the macro-level. How does the school system fit in in terms of meeting obligations and responsibilities in terms of local governments emergency operations plan and possibly at a federal level. For instance, in Fairfax County, one of our facilities is a partner with the county facility for the management of strategic national stockpile component. So that's a big responsibility placed on the schools system.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Can you talk about parents and how you make sure that parents were informed about the status of school safety, or what they're to do if they get word of the situation?

**MR. ELLIS:** Yeah. That's a great question. The parents really play heroes, as well as the students. We have a very extensive website with a lot of the information that's publicly available on it. We also publish ever year in what we call our Family Gram.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Give us a few specifics off the Family Gram.

**MR. ELLIS:** Well, basically some of the things we talk about—we tell parents is one, we have plans. And if you're interested, contact your principal and talk about it. If you have concerns, we explain that we do have—for instance, a visitor control process. When you come to the school, you may not be able to just walk in any door you'd like to and wander the building. There's a process where you have to come through designated doors and get an ID, maybe have to show identification, those kinds of things. And explaining the different kinds of emergency responses, how we communicate with them and their responsibilities in terms of registering. For instance, their Blackberries and cell

phones and those kinds of things on-line so that we can push out text messaging to them in the event of an emergency. So all those kinds of nuts and bolts things that parents want to know, they need to know, and they can find out.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thanks, Fred. Dr. Sugai, why don't you talk to us about how the culture of a safe school environment and how that's created by educators.

**DR. SUGAI:** Right. We've had the privilege over the last eight or so years to have a center that disseminates effective practices on changing school climate, or improving school climate. And the biggest lesson we've learned is that schools probably is one of our best social change agents we have. I have two children in high school, and my wife is an administrator, and my two kids spend more days in school with their teachers and with their peers than any other social change agent out there. And it's a great investment.

And one thing we're learning about what those environments look like and how do we change the school climates, it's really about making sure that all children inside the school are provided some kind of opportunity to learn about the right ways to behave if you will, how to solve problems, how to manage conflicts, how to create an environment where there's predictability and trust primarily between the adults and the kids. One thing we've learned is that if the nature of the interaction between the staff members and the students is more pro-active and positive, the greater the likelihood that students are going to identify their school, their classroom, their teachers as being trusted individuals for whom they can talk to. We're also learning that if the school climate is one that's more pro-active, positive and predictable, that the opportunity to learn about some of the crisis and safety management procedures that were discussed earlier is easier to teach, as well as for the students to adopt.

We're learning that academic success may be one of our greatest buffers against development of anti-social behaviors. We know that children who fail academically, combined with some of the community and family challenges that are out there significantly contribute to how students behave at school. We're very interested in kids whose academic profiles changed dramatically because we know that those kids are at risk of engaging in certain kinds of behaviors. And we know that it's very important for the school as a whole to do a good job of understanding how important the larger host environment is.

The big message we've learned is that if the large school environment is working well, that our ability to work with those kids who might have more significant emotional mental health issues, we can provide better supports for those students. But the academic, social behavior link, the academic student and behavior relationship is essential to the work that we do.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** One of the things that the first panel got into was sort of the elementary versus middle and high school kind of discussion. Can you expand on that and talk about maybe some effective programs you've seen in working with each particular grade span?



**MR. ELLIS:** Well, having two kids in high school, I think that's the most important place right now. But, you know, there's many programs as Delbert Elliott and others have compiled. We know that there are programs that allow us to do early screening and universal screening. Those screenings need to occur on a regular basis, so we know which kids are successful, which kids are having some challenges. We also know that targeted, more directed social skills instruction is more important for those kids who might have difficulties. We also know that peer mentoring programs are very effective for many students. However, it's very important that the adults be involved in that mentoring to keep both the peers and the mentors involved in the process. And we also know that having adults who are actively supervising inside these school environments in a positive way is very essential.

The discussion earlier about metal detectors and security cameras, those may be necessary evils, but as Delbert Elliott indicated, probably the really difference is how well and how—how well the school functions and what the nature of the staff members' interaction with their kids, are they greeting them in the morning, are we out in the hallways and so forth.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Can you just take one quick second—and obviously all of us who have children and who sat around with our kids in the last couple of weeks, you know, their kids say, you know, mom, is my school safe. And how do parents react to this, and what can they do to be enforcing about the kinds of things that your work nets out?

**MR. ELLIS:** Right. At our center we've collected quite a bit of what are considered best or effective practices. And from the parent perspective, the literature's quite clear. It's about knowing where your children are and what they're doing. It's about asking questions about how things are going at school. It's about connecting with your—if you're a parent like I am—with your teachers about how your child is doing a regular basis.

We know that the communication link is very important. Much of the work we do at our center though is making the schoolhouse, if you will, a welcoming place for parents because the parents aren't going to engage the schools if they have to walk through metal detectors, if they have to go through certain steps to get access to teachers and administrators. So we know making the school house a welcoming place is one of the best ways to link home and community with schools and vice versa. It's about having teachers and administrators in turn connecting back with kids, making communications back with the family.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Great. Next, our principal, Patrick Weil. Tell us about your experience and how you coped with the aftermath of that, what programs you put in place in your school.

**MR. WEIL:** I'll be happy to. First, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important conference, Madam Secretary.

We had an incident in my third week on the job in 2004 that was really truly uncharacteristic of our school. We had had several interventions in place under the leadership of our superintendent, Dr. Michael Benway. We had started the CASS program, which is part of the Project Ophelia out of Pennsylvania which is anti-bullying program where our high school students mentor middle school students. And the program has now reached down to the elementary levels as well. And in the aftermath of the incident, expanded the program to the 9th grade. So we have our seniors mentoring 9th graders. This year they actually designed and ran our orientation program prior to the start of school. So our focus has really been on discouraging bullying in particular, and really trying to encourage students to become actively involved and engaged with their classmates in a positive manner as opposed to kind of a more traditional role that upperclassmen have taken with freshmen.

We focused on several things. One is the relationship with the community. We have a very strong relationship with the Valparaiso community. We've traditionally had a pretty strong relationship with Valparaiso Police Department. And that relationship became stronger really in the aftermath of the incident.

To give you an example, a press conference which was held in the aftermath of the slashing was done in a joint manner with our superintendent and the chief of police. So we were both coming from the—talking from the same page, communicating with the media about the facts and our actions which we took in the aftermath.

Dealing with the event was a particularly challenging task because of—for me personally as a principal. This is the first time I'd been confronted with an incident of such strong violence that had such an impact on the school. And one of the things that we did with our students the day that they came back—and the incident happened on the day before Thanksgiving, so we had a long holiday weekend to kind of strategize—was to have the students meet in their first hour of class. We designed a writing activity where we gave them a chance to journal for about 15 or 20 minutes and just write about their emotions and feelings. Then we gave them an opportunity in the classroom to get together in small groups under the teacher's direction and just kind of process or debrief what had happened. And that actually proved to be a very productive activity because it gave our kids kind of an outlet, a chance to express their fears, their anxieties, their concerns, and do so under close supervision of our teachers.

We also focused really on developing kind of the hard aspects of school security, kind of typical things. We had a camera system in place. We've expanded it. We had an SRO program. We've expanded that by bringing off-duty Valparaiso Police Department officers into our building. So we have virtual police coverage every hour of the school day.

The county was also cooperative too in basing a probation officer last year for the first time in our school on a full-time basis. And he's helpful in several roles. Not only monitoring students that have become engaged in the Juvenile Justice system, but also, probably more importantly, we've been able to use him in the way of intervening with students who exhibit some of the characteristics of maybe getting involved with the system and being able to establish a relationship with them and kind of talk them through some of the decisions that they made be contemplating.

In addition to hard measures, we really focused on developing a relationship with our students. And I think it hasn't been a particular challenge because we have a teaching staff that I think has a feeling for students. Many of our students are successful. Our school is a national model school. It was recognized in 2004 as one of the top 30 high schools in the United States. And it was based on—we received that recognition based on the relationships that our teachers had with one another and the students have with one another as well, so we really tried to really focus on that and build upon that. And it's a constant challenge, particularly as we have new students coming into our system. Our school system and community is changing. So we don't always have the kids that grew up in the same community.

And getting to know those students and integrating them into the student population and into the culture of the school continues to be a challenge. We've looked at implementing programs where we set up students in situations—incoming students with students who have been in the school, kind of mentors as well, so that they have somebody to touch base with. Our guidance counselors have become much more active in terms of identifying and pulling those students in early. We built a relationship with the Valparaiso University in their school counseling program. And again, this came under the direction of—the leadership of our superintendent, to bring counseling interns into our buildings, so we've expanded the professional counseling staff that has contact with our students.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Tell us—what advice would you have for your fellow principals around the country? Obviously the principal is frequently a major focal point of an incident. You talked about how you had been on the job for three weeks. Probably school safety was the last thing on your mind the day that the incident happened. What advice would you have for principals? Fred talked about the need for support from the top. That may or may not be the case. What would you tell your fellow principals?

**MR. ELLIS:** I think one of the things that I've come to conclude is that many of us have been trained as instructional leaders, but I also think we have to be safety leaders as well. And keeping the notion of school safety always on the front burner, and it can be done in small ways just by making mention of a particular topic in a faculty meeting or in a public address announcements to students, enforcing rules consistently, making sure that no group of students has some special conferred status, and we avoid creating a class system amongst students I think is important.

I think that maintaining and expanding upon relationships within the community, working with community-based mental health agencies. To give an example, we forged a stronger relationship with our local mental health provider in the aftermath of the incident. They've been a particularly strong resource for us. They came in and gave care to the care-givers after the incident. In fact they're helping us sponsor a guest speaker who will be in our building tomorrow addressing issues of drug addiction, the biology of drug addiction, building upon those relationships as well.

But I really think just keeping it out in front of people because if it gets talked about, it's important. And that's what I think my role as principal is with regards to the issue.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Jim actually is from Texas, but now is in Arkansas. And he got involved after the Jonesborough incident in '98 I guess it was, the middle school shootings. And took it upon himself to form the WatchDOGS organization. So talk about that, Jim.

**MR. MOORE:** First of all, I'm honored to be here. Thank you for allowing me to participate.

Eight and a half years ago, just like today with all the media here, all the major media networks were rolling from my state because an 11-year-old and a 13-year-old thought the answer to their last problems was to bring weapons to school and to pull the fire alarm and watch as their fellow classmates went out into the playground. And I was at that school about nine months ago, and I saw where they were standing outside of the school, and they gunned down four kids and a teacher in cold blood. And I'm watching that as a father and just thinking about the great people in that community and what they might be thinking that night. And probably like every community that's gone through the tragedy, they have thought it never would happen here. It always happens over there, wherever that illusive over there is, but that night, it happened in that community. And I thought, you know, if it could happen there, it can happen in a lot of places and what are you going to do about it.

You know, in Texas, we have a great saying, cursing the darkness won't get your pickup truck out of the mud. You know, you're either going to do something about it or just talk bad about it. And I thought, you know, what can you as a father do to try and keep something like that from happening in your own child's community, in your own child's school.

So I began to think about the elementary school that our son attended at that time. He was in the second grade, and, you know, it was a great school. Our principal was just named Elementary School Principal of the Year. Just a lot of great things going on. But I thought what was good and what was bad, and who was there, and yet who was missing, and was there anybody missing that could make a positive impact that maybe could keep something like that from happening. And it really hit me that night that the one guy that was missing was me because I, like most men in America today, have fallen prey to the lie that says dads will be the breadwinner and moms will raise the kids. And

moms will go to school, and moms will do PTA and parent-teacher conferences. And what we as fathers have done over the last several generations is that we planted seeds of inattention and abandonment in our children. And because of that action, today our nation is reaping a harvest of fatherless families in violent schools, and it has to stop yesterday.

So we put together a program called WatchDOGS, and the acronym for DOGS stands for Dads Of Great Students. And we started our program eight and a half years ago. Today we have over 450 schools. We'll celebrate our 500th school this year in 30 some odd states. And we are—we have a twofold purpose. Number one, we want these fathers and father figures just to come to school as many times during the year as they can for two reasons. First of all, just to be an extra set of eyes and ears. You know, just to be an unobtrusive security presence. But second of all and just as important, to be dad, to be the father, to be the father figure. You know, there's a lot of great programs. And I know that everyone that's here today is looking for and longing for an answer, so what are we going to do? I firmly believe that—I love the answer from the sheriff. I believe the answer is to change culture. And you change culture by changing one heart at a time. And when you change a lot of hearts, you're going to change a lot of families and homes and cultures in this nation. And it really can be done.

But, you know, we just want fathers to come to school just to be dad, to be—you know, to eat with the kids, to play with them, to read to them, to flash cards, lunchroom duty, playground duty. Here's how we say it. Do whatever it takes to sow seeds of success into the lives of those students.

Three winners to the program. The dad's the first winner because when I go to school, I'm Michael Jordan on the playground, and I'm Albert Einstein in the classroom, and I'm Superman in the hallways.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** You?

**MR. MOORE:** Yeah, you know. Makes no difference how many times I got cut from my basketball team. I'm the best fourth grade basketball player there. And my level of self-esteem has elevated. I want to come back. In the eight plus I've done this, we've never—I've never had a father walk up to me and say, Jim, I was a WatchDOG and I hated it. I'm never coming back. I never expect that to happen.

But we have cards and e-mails and data that shows—you know, we did a survey of 314 dads, and 96 percent said I love this. I want to come back and do something this again. It was rewarding. Our level of self-esteem has elevated. And, you know, this not an all-male country club for the ladies here. We apologize to the ladies across the nation. All we want dads to do is rise to your level and to do what we've asked you to do for years.

The second winner is the child. And you know the studies. When dads disconnect, kids lose. And those kids automatically are thrown into a category that they had—no fault of their own, higher degrees of violence and gang activity and drug use

and suicide and poverty and depression. But the studies show when dads do connect in a positive way, then those kiddos have a higher chance of making more A's and interacting socially better, and being happier kids. And so the kids are a huger winner.

And the third winner is the community and the schools because you know what? We as fathers forgot what it's like to go to the 4th grade. And we think the fourth grade is like it was when we were in the 4th grade, or when we were a junior in high school. This is a K through 12 program. When we go back to school and spend time with our middle school or senior high or elementary student, we realize, wow, this is not how it was when I was there. And there's a brand new level of appreciation for what teachers do. And dads walk out of there going, gosh, these guys have got to get a raise, you know. I can't do this. I wouldn't do this. And all of a sudden there's a connection between the home and the teacher, and the home and the principal, and the principal meets the father for the first time in most cases. And so it's a win-win situation. And it's just—

You know, you talk about when things are tough and things are tight, this is the cheapest, most cost effective capital asset we can have is the volunteer base of fathers and father figures. And I'll say it is for father figures. Tonight in the greatest nation in the world and the greatest nation in the history of mankind, 25 percent of kids—40 percent of kids, 25 million kids, 40 percent of kids in this country will go to bed in a home without their dad. And those kids are not connected. So when I go to school, or when our dads that serve as WatchDOGS, some of them are here, when they go to school, not only do we connect with our own child, which deepens that relationship, but we probably spend the majority of the time with somebody else's kid who's not fortunate enough to have a father figure, who's one girlfriend breakup away from snapping, who is one bullying incident away from going off the edge and maybe—and here's the preventive side of what WatchDOGS does—maybe over time if you can just plant life and light and seeds of success into kids, then three years down the road when the chance for violence occurs, and there's a choice to be made, maybe somebody has paid the price to make a difference in this person's life where they won't choose violence.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** You know, your model is so simple that it can be put in place in, you know, rural America, inner city America, any place, any kind of school. You've talked about the—and you're getting the 500th school this year. Talk about the kind of training or resources, the tool kit, and what can people do to get—to do this in their own school?

**MR. MOORE:** Well, first of all, if anyone is interested, let me just direct you to the website It's [fathers.com/WatchDOGS](http://fathers.com/WatchDOGS). [Fathers.plural.com/WatchDOGS](http://Fathers.plural.com/WatchDOGS). That's the first step. You know, we have national training conference calls several times a week. It's an 800 number, so there's no cost to the school just to plug into it. We've got dedicated, passionate people who really believe that fathers and father figures engaging with their children, even if they don't live with the birth mother, the fathers and father figures connected with their children on the right thing to do, the right course to take that will work and train those schools in school districts.

And you know, the last thing that a principal wants to hear is I've got a new program for you. You know, they don't want to hear it. But what we do is engage the fathers, and we call them Top Dogs at the school. We get the fathers to take the ownership of the program. So they recruit, and they remind the dads. And they take the leadership and they take the ownership, so the thing that the principal is led to do is just connect with that father, to know them, introduce themselves, and just to give them the responsibilities.

But our organization offers training for schools, training for dads, training for men to where we—you know, we just serve as a wake-up call for fathers and father figures. Nothing wrong with golf, but get off the golf course a little bit and get into the kids' school. Nothing wrong with fishing, but maybe come home from the lake one day early and get in the kids' school. Your kiddos are going to thank you, thank you, thank you many times over.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** So if there's a Top Dog, are you Big Dog?

**MR. MOORE:** My kids call me the missing dog sometimes, but—

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** All right, Chiara, off to you. I think we all know that students are critical to keeping our schools safe. You are the—the ones that are there, the eyes and ears attuned in to your classmates and so forth. Talk about your work in Florida and your involvement over the last four years.

**MS. PERKINS:** Well, I am a junior at Walton Senior High School, and I'm also the president of our Youth Crime Watch program. And as the president, I get together. I form meetings with a group. I go over the nine components. Some of our strongest components go over which is crime prevention, crime reporting, youth patrol and bus safety.

It's a youth-led program which is pretty good, so we just get together and we think of ways to stop crime, help our community and basically stuff like that.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** What would you tell students? How can they get involved? What can they do?

**MS. PERKINS:** If it's at your high school, just any administration should know about it, any administration member, a teacher, a fellow classmate that's probably involved. Just go up to them and ask. It's a free program to go and hang out with friends and think of ways to make your community and school better and to have fun while doing it with each other and interacting with adults, not as a child with an adult, but as a child with like—as equals, like as a human being. And we understand that we go through some stuff, and we try and help people with their problems. We talk and it's just a little—a group where kids get together and they can help.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Support. What kind of warning signs—and we’ve all heard about all the research about the fact that frequently a student did cry out, did call out, did ask for help, or give some sort of indication. Talk about what some of the warning signs are that students can watch for.

**MS. PERKINS:** I’d say if you know a friend—if you know a real good friend, and they start changing in how they behave, how they dress, they’re eating habits, how they act, their grades, if they stop doing stuff that you know that they love, simple stuff that—like hanging out and talking on the phone, happy one day, sad and depressed the next. These are all different types of signs that will let you know that, okay, something’s going on. I need to talk to my friend. I need to see if everything’s okay. And when you talk to them, and if you find out that something is wrong, that’s when you go ahead and, okay, I take certain actions, see if there’s anything that I can do, and then if there’s nothing that I can do as a friend by just talking, go ahead and talk to an adult, a parent, somebody that can actually help them.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Dr. Sugai, I think you have a new recruit for your teacher program. Thank you, Chiara. We have a few minutes for some questions from the audience. If there are folks that would like to call on our great panel. And let me put out a couple of ground rules here because there is so much interesting questions. If people could ask their question briefly and then step aside so someone else can come to the microphone so we can get as much input and feedback as possible. So over here on the right. Are you ready, sir?

**MR. LAFARELO:** Yes.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Tell us who you are, where you’re from.

**MR. LAFARELLO:** Curt Lafarello (sp). I’m the executive director with the School Safety advocacy council. Thank you for the invite today.

My question, law enforcement—my background is law enforcement, and law enforcement typically prepares its strategies based upon intelligence and trends as we’ve heard earlier today. And we’ve seen surveys each year indicate that serious school crime and violence often goes unreported to law enforcement. There’s currently no national mandate for school crime reporting. And typically we’re using a best guess scenario, and oftentimes no principal would want to be the principal of a persistently dangerous school. I’ve often said if I was the police chief, if I’m in a persistently dangerous town, the question may be then why are you the chief. I’d like to just ask the question to anybody on the panel if they feel a national school crime reporting mandate may assist us in gathering the facts we need to prepare our strategies, both in the law enforcement and the community perspective. Thank you.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Fred, why don’t you take a crack at that, and then Governor? I know those are the sorts of issues that you all dealt with at the state level clearly.



**MR. ELLIS:** Well, I know on your advisory committee, that is one of the questions we've been charged to look at in terms of reporting because the speaker's right. In terms of—it has always hit—it has historically been a problem in terms of accurate reporting for crime data and discipline data from schools. So I think there is some benefit with having standardization in terms of reporting incidents that occur on school. I think you have to be a little bit careful because, you know, I think educators are sensitive, of course, to reporting incidents that occur on the property.

But if you think about a school environment—is a shove in a cafeteria because you cut in front of me an assault? Should it be reported as an assault? You know, those kinds of delineations is where the problems occur. The devil really is in the details a lot of times. But again, having said that, I think there is some benefit to it, but I don't want to lock myself into the position because like I said I'm on the Secretary's committee, and it is a very good question that I'm anxious to explore on the part of that committee.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Governor, I know you all looked at a lot of that at the state level.

**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR NORTON:** Yes, we have. Colorado's dedicated to transparency. Parents want to know how safe their schools are, and the only way that there can be accountability is if we have some kind of reporting structure that, as Fred mentioned, the criteria is well understood and there's definitions that make sense and our well publicized along standardized lines. So it's something that we're very, very interested in and beginning to have that dialogue about what constitutes assault or those kinds of things is important. But we feel that transparency is absolutely necessary, and parents should be able to have the choice of deciding what kind of schools they'd like to send their children to.

**SECRETARY SPELLING:** Over here on the left.

**MR. SCOTT:** My name is Darryl Scott, and I'm the—from Littleton, Colorado and the founder of Rachel's Challenge, which is a school program. My daughter, Rachel, was the first one to be killed in the Columbine tragedy. My son, Craig, will be on the next panel.

And as Jim was speaking earlier about cursing the darkness, right after the Columbine tragedy, that was my intention was to curse the darkness and to try to be on committees that would be against things. And I finally realized that was not the right approach. And so we decided the best way to fight the darkness was to light a candle.

And today we have 10 speakers that go into schools all across America, in Bermuda and New Zealand, Australia, and we speak to 30,000—or 60,000 kids currently every week. We have a training program for those children and also an evening with parents and community leaders. And I'm proud that Governor Norton is from our state. I appreciated what she said. And I really believe that we must—more than just having

programs available to schools, integrate the messages of kindness and compassion and morality, the way we treat each other, and this panel is represented itself well. Those things have to become a part of the everyday teaching and training in the schools by principals and teachers.

And so my question is how can we—because we see—we have seen school violence prevented. We've seen bullying stopped. We've seen a number of school shootings actually prevented because of our program. And we've also seen many suicides prevented through the e-mails, thousands of e-mails we get every day. And so my question is how can we get enough of the attention of the educational system to start re-incorporating in our daily lessons—if you look at the old textbooks from Noah Webster who actually did more than write a dictionary. He provided us with some of our original textbooks. And the seeds that Jim talked about, the seeds that were planted from elementary school on, kindness and compassion, through the stories—a math story for example, would say Mrs. Johnson dropped 16 apples. Joe saw her drop them, picked up seven. How many did Ms. Johnson have to pick up. So you were teaching math and kindness at the same time. How can we incorporate those things back into our educational system?

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Great question, Mr. Scott. And as he said, his son Craig, who is awesome, will be on our next panel. Dr. Sugai, why don't you take a crack at that, and then maybe Jim?

**DR. SUGAI:** Yeah, it's a great question. And the trick for us is how do you again arrange those environments so that social skills instruction, character traits and so forth are explicitly part of the curriculum as opposed to being informal?

Your comment's right. We teach academics from a very structured, formalized kind of perspective, yet we assume that kids will adopt best behavioral practices just on their own because it's the right thing to do. And we clearly know that that's not going to happen by itself. And so your comment about how do you bring compassion and respect into the school is really about, we think, about formalizing how social skills instruction, how do we actually teach respect and responsibility in a formalized way on a regular basis across the school?

One of the messages that I'd like to share with you is that it's really about oftentimes how we adults model those behaviors ourselves. So one of the first places to start is with dads and with principals and teachers about if we believe those are important things for our children to acquire. It's really about how we as family members, teachers and adults also model respect, responsibility, perseverance, punctuality and so forth, and making it part of the formal curriculum. That can be easily embedded within our instructional programs. We start on time, we talk about success academically as being building your own self-esteem and so forth. So we know those parts are important.

At the University of Connecticut and University of Oregon where I was, it's very clear to us that how we teach teachers, administrators, social workers, school

psychologists is heavily focused on sort of a reactive catch kids who are in trouble. It's focusing on academic instruction. And now we're really realizing that we need to prepare our administrators as was mentioned by Patrick, our teachers and so forth about what does it look like to have an effectively run classroom, how do we support all children behaviorally in a formalized way and don't assume that will happen by virtue of breathing the right air and so forth.

So I think your comments absolutely right. It's about creating those environments where we as adults really do foster in a formalized way some of those things that are important around our children. Excellent question.

**MR. MOORE:** I agree with George. And I think it's a great question. And I think the bottom line is you want to change—you know, I'm tired of people cursing the dark, and you said I'm tired of people just only talking about what is wrong and not being pro-active in making positive changes. So if you want changes within your school community, get those people in that will make changes.

For example, in our local schools a number of years ago, we got a huge population explosion. We passed a \$100 million millage to build nine or 10 schools in nine years, which to some communities doesn't sound like a lot, but to us, it was. The vote passed by just a little over 300 votes, and I would like to think that a lot of those 300 votes were dads like myself that 10 years earlier voted against a millage because we weren't in the schools to understand the need for that, and the need for growth. But those dads said, yeah, we've got to grow schools. We've got to have more schools. They've got to have smaller classrooms. So if you want to change the belief books legislation, you empower fathers and father figures and mothers and families to go in there and make those positive changes that will change culture.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thanks, Jim. Over here on the right.

**MR. WHITEHEAD:** Yes. Hello, Madam Secretary. Thank you very much for inviting me today. My name is Jimmy Whitehead, and I grew up in Southeast Washington, D.C., and I attended Balou (sp) Senior High School where students killed every day. And I just had to say first that—and I'm going to get right to my question.

The first thing that's needed in all youths today in urban America and on Indian reservations also is the word God because it's illegal to say God in the public school nowadays.

Sprint-Nextel has started a program called U.S. Yellow School Bus. And this program is designed for communications because in emergencies, communications is what's most important, quick communications. What they call Inter-Operable Communications between parents and teachers and emergency responders and Homeland Security and law enforcement.

On the Indian reservations, those nations where I just came from in Spokane the other day, they have no communications at all for their schools. My question is in terms of the U.S. Yellow School Bus program and creating faster communications for emergency responders, not only in terms of domestic crisis, but in terms of national emergencies, these buses can also be used to transport citizens when we have Homeland Security emergencies and also protect children with immediate communications, who is it that I can meet with or speak to to work with Indian reservation initiatives for enhancing communications for emergencies and children's safety with the Yellow School Bus program? And if anybody would like to—

And private sector support is very important, like President Reagan said, private sector initiatives. What we need is the—policies and the discussion is good, but it takes money to implement these programs. And if we get America's corporations together and individual citizens to put up the money, not just the Government because the Government can't pay for it alone, we have to work together as citizens and as corporations to raise the money to protect their children so that we can pay for them to play. And everybody can check out the Yellow School Bus at [www.usyellowschoolbus.org](http://www.usyellowschoolbus.org), and I would just like to know, Madam Secretary, who can I meet with about the Indian reservations and those children's safety?

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Yeah, we have a—as well as the Department of Interior, have folks who work on Indian schools. So we'll get you some contact information off-line.

**MR. WHITEHEAD:** Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you very much for your work. All right, over here on the left. Tell us who you are, sir.

**MR. WIEBE:** Yes, thank you, Madam Secretary, very much for the conference as well as for the opportunity to be here. I'm Keith Weibe (sp). I'm the president of the American Association of Christian Schools. And I'm privileged, along with several others out of the private school sector, to be a part of this. Joe Mati (sp) with Council of American Private Education, John Holmes, American Christian Schools International is sitting back there in the same row that I was. Obviously the school in Pennsylvania last week was among our number. It was a private school, not a public school. And I'm wondering maybe particularly from Mr. Ellis—I know ACS has a school in his county. We're not under the jurisdiction of public education, but obviously very concerned about security, safety, several million students educated in private schools, parochial Christian schools. How are they included in your plans, and what can we do in private education to help this? How can we be involved in this process?

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Great question. Thank you.

**MR. ELLIS:** That is a good question. In Fairfax County, we share our plans, our process, our thoughts, our applications with the private school sector on a couple of different levels. One is through our county which has, through its Office of Emergency Management, has contacts, has basically a contact list with private and parochial schools.

Also in the Washington area, there's a thing called the National Capital Region Council of Governments. On that group within COG, there is Security directors, sub-committee. I sit on that, and a representative from the Archdiocese of the Washington area is on that. And he obviously gets a lot of information from the participants in that subcommittee and likewise.

I would encourage private and parochial schools to make contact with our local Emergency managers, their local public school districts, and inquire about what's available, what can they share, how can they be a partner. We also, with a lot of churches and localities near our schools, actually enter into memorandums of understanding for basically mutual aid, if you will, or in terms of evacuations and what not, you come to our place, we'll come to your's kind of thing, and spell out the duties and responsibilities and expectations. But absolutely a partnership, but as a private school, you can't wait for the public to come to you. You need to knock on that door.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you. Mr. Wiebe, and I'm going to ask my committee, the Safe and Directory Schools Committee that I've recently appointed to take a look at that issue on how we can be more coordinated. I think we have time for one more question, so, sir, on the right?

**MR. ROSELY:** Thank you, Madam Secretary. Jerry Rosely, principal, Salanko (sp) High School, southern Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. We're in a situation where we deal with the state police. We don't have a local police force, and I do want to commend Troop J, which was the troop that dealt with the Amish shootings last week. Their level of communication with us is excellent. But part of that process is our Student Assistance program, and the funding for that, what would be the chance, Madam Secretary, of looking for additional funds for Student Assistance programs throughout the nation because these are groups of trained individuals that deal with the students that may be at risk, who deal with mental health assessments, and give us an extra edge in dealing and preparing for students and programs for students.

And in addition to that, what can be done at the teacher training level to bring training of this nature to teacher training programs throughout the country so that these people enter the workforce trained as opposed to learning when the event occurs? Thank you.

**SECRETARY SPELLING:** Great question. And in our little resource guide, there are many various websites here, including the Department of Education, which has some links to various resources that are available from the federal government. I assume you're talking about mentoring and peer training sorts of things at the student level. There are various pots of money that can be accessed for those sorts of programs. So we'll make sure you get some of that information.

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**CONFERENCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY**  
**Tuesday, October 10, 2006**

**“HELPING COMMUNITIES HEAL AND RECOVER”**  
**Panel III**

Margaret Spellings, Secretary of Education, Moderator

**Panel III Participants**

Jamie B. Baggett, Teacher, Stewart County  
High School, Dover, TN

Betty Alvarez Ham, Founder and President,  
City Impact, Ventura, CA

Dr. Larry Macaluso, Superintendent,  
Red Lion School District, Red Lion, PA

Cathy Paine, Special Programs  
Administrator, Springfield School  
District, Springfield, OR

Craig Scott, Columbine High School  
Survivor, Aurora, CO

Marlene Wong, Ph.D., Director of Crisis  
Counseling and Intervention Services,  
Los Angeles Unified School District and  
Director of the Trauma Services  
Adaptation Center for Schools and  
Communities, Los Angeles, CA

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**ANNOUNCER:** Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Secretary of Education,  
Margaret Spellings.  
(Applause.)

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** All right. Well, we are back to talk about  
recovery and restoring the community and school environment. So thank you, panel, for  
being here.

We're going to start off with—I'm going to introduce the panel in total and then  
we'll hear from each of them. First, I'd like to introduce Dr. Marlene Wong from Los  
Angeles, Unified School District. She and I had the opportunity to work together after

Hurricane Katrina. And Marlene, let me thank you again for all of your great work in Los Angeles and in the aftermath of that event.

Next is Dr. Larry Macaluso. He is from the Red Lion School District in Red Lion, Pennsylvania and lost a principal in his school and a student to suicide in 2003. And if I'm correct, you're very near the community that was affected last week. So we'll hear from Larry.

Next is Cathy Paine. Cathy has worked in education for more than 30 years. You don't look that old, Cathy. And has directed response efforts in Springfield schools following a fatal shooting in 1998. So, Cathy, we look forward to hearing from you.

Next is Jamie Baggett who's a special education teacher in Stewart County, Tennessee. Jamie is going to talk about her experience and her teacher aid who was a bus driver who was tragically killed in that community.

After that we'll hear from Craig Scott. Craig—you heard from Craig's dad earlier this morning. Craig lost his sister at Columbine and was also at the school library in that school when the incident happened. And Craig has been an inspiration to so many students and to all of us all across the country because he has continued to be a spokesperson for this issue ever since. And so, Craig, thank you for being here. We look forward to hearing from you.

And then finally, Betty Alvarez Ham from Oxnard, California, founded a group called City Impact which is a faith-based organization that helps troubled youth and struggling families very much the kind of thing that Mrs. Bush's helping America's Youth Initiative is focused on as well. So this is a group of doers and confronters and problem solvers.

And I know you all are going to enjoy hearing from them. So, Marlene, let's start with you. Talk about your work, talk about what you've learned and what you can tell us about communities and recovery.

**DR. WONG:** Well, my work in this area really began in 1984 when Los Angeles Unified School District experienced its first incident of community crime coming on to a school campus. And on a February afternoon in that year, a mentally ill man as we learned later with many, many weapons lived across the street in a second floor apartment building. And as the little children came out from school, he simply opened fire and held that school under sniper fire for about an hour and a half. And at the end of that time, two little children were killed and several other students and staff were wounded.

And I suspect that many of the people who have experienced these tragic events, these school shootings in which there's injury and death of innocent people are probably sitting in the same place as we were in 1984 which was what do we do, and how does this affect children.

And since that time, we've had many other incidents that have occurred, but also have had the privilege of working with the U.S. Department of Education in responding to some of the--most of the terrorist events in Oklahoma City and New York, Washington, D.C., working with those chancellors and superintendents of schools in their school districts, but also of the many school shootings.

And I think what we've learned from that--and I have to say that the science of child trauma is very, very young. You know, most of what we've learned about traumatic stress and post-traumatic stress disorder is from war. And even as far back as the Civil War, soldiers who survived that terrible hand to hand combat, they simply withdrew, or they had terrible relationships with their families. And they called it soldier's heart. And over time, what we learned more about PTSD came from war as well.

But in 1984 when this occurred, there was a great debate in the psychiatric community about whether or not children could really experience the full effects of post-traumatic stress and stress disorder. And what we've learned is that they can. In fact, in ways that are much more debilitating because they're younger, and their main task is to learn. So as we look at the symptoms of post-traumatic stress, which after three months becomes post-traumatic stress disorder, we see that children, students, whether they're kindergarten or in high school or in colleges don't want to return to school.

In fact after Oklahoma City, almost 35 percent of the children, even though the schools themselves were not directly affected, except for one, which was directly across from the Murrah building. 35 percent of the children did not return to school, and there's a real sense that the perception is that they fear it will occur again. So number one is fear for occurrence of exactly the same thing happening again no matter what it is. So after Hurricane Katrina, the whole fear about another devastating hurricane will happen, that the school shootings, very specific, another school shooting will occur.

And what they go through is the fear of returning, but also a re-experiencing. In fact the school then becomes a traumatic reminder, and a lot of what schools need to do is what they've done in the past. I mean Columbine is a perfect example of changing the way a certain portion of the school looks because when we see something that reminds us of the tragedy of that magnitude, we don't want to go there.

In addition to that, there were other kinds of reactions, including avoidance. If you ever hear someone come home and say I don't want to talk about that, that tends to be sometimes a clue that they've been overwhelmed by an experience, and it is, it can be a traumatic response to a specific event.

And then the third is hyper reaction, and that is that sights and sounds and smells can cause us to jump and be startled. And when we think about all of those things, what brain research has told us is that it's another part of the brain that's operating. It isn't the part of the brain that takes in new information that modulates our emotion. It's a survival



part of the brain. So recovery has become a very, very important part of what needs to happen after some of these tragic events.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Can you talk a little bit about some of the myths? I mean I think we in education think, okay, well it takes, you know, six, you know, X amount of time to do such and such a task. And recovery obviously is very unlike that. What are some of the myths that people have that there's a period of time or the particular strategies. I mean talk about some of the things.

**DR. WONG:** Well, like Cathy, I've been in the school district over 30 years, and one of the things that we have learned is that educators are very concerned because they're so committed to education. That if they enter this arena, they will never get out of it. In other words, if they open the door to talking about our child's trauma, that it will never end, and they fear that. And also they don't have the background for it. So there isn't a class in their preparation period that even speaks to this.

But as we look at the last 15 years, the culture of education has really changed. We've had almost 600 school shootings. That's a tremendous number since 1990. 600 of them. And it isn't that I question whether schools are safe. I do believe that they are, and I think every single adult in the school is dedicated to that. But we have to look at the perception. And many, many educational foundations have asked the students do you think this could happen in your school. And the perception is that it could. Not that it will, but that it could. And how do we then talk about that perception.

So I think that with the mental health folks, and this is where they really come in to being important to school, the school psychologists, counselors, social workers, community mental health people. They can really provide a service to education and help these children get back into school because what we know is that calm routine, being back in school, don't close the school if you can help it, be back in school and have people help you to cope because that's the other thing we've learned. It isn't therapy in schools. It's teaching children and helping children to cope. What is it that you're afraid of? What are you afraid that will happen? There is a crisis counselor here. What would help you to stay in school? What would help you in terms of just talking about that experience and processing it?

And here's the other thing. I think that with good reason, educators have been fearful of talking about recovery and having crisis counselors come into the school. And early in this whole area, we would go in and we would ask children, well, how do you feel and what happened to you and draw a picture. And then we would say thank you very much. And that was wrong. That was just the first part of it.

The second part of it is what can we do to make—to help make things better. What can you do as a student? What can I do as a parent? What can you do as an educator? And together, what can we do together because that constructive action takes us out of being a victim into being a survivor.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Absolutely. Larry, I see you nodding your head. You've had some—you've had to confront all this up close and personal in your community. Why don't you build on what Marlene has talked about and talk about the specific things that you did there.

**DR. MACALUSO:** Absolutely. We've had two violent tragedies within our school district in the last six years, but the most recent as you mentioned is the tragedy in 2003 when one our eighth grade students came into the school with three firearms in his backpack and went into the cafeteria before proceeding to class where a number of the students were before class began, opened fire, shot and killed the junior high school principal and then subsequently shot and killed himself. And this is while hundreds of students witnessed this incident.

We've had a remarkable recovery, but I must say the healing process never ends. You speak of the Amish school shootings, and of course that brought back to our district the sense of reality and the return of some of the trauma that we had gone through. So we are prepared to deal with that all of the time.

I think we've had a remarkable recovery because of the many activities, events and strategies that we put in place. I think the first very important piece is to provide for immediate briefing and information to staff and parents. And to get them in there, as hard as it might be, to get them into the schools to—at another location perhaps at that point, to provide them with information from the police, from the school superintendent and other people.

The next piece that I think is extremely important is we must provide extensive support to the staff because they have to be ready to return to normalcy as soon as possible as Marlene has shared.

And then of course you think about the re-entry plan, and how will we get those students back in school. A very effective strategy is to have an open house before you reopen the school, to bring the parents and the students back in while staff members are there ready to receive them and to try to share with them how safe and warm this environment can be. And of course, taking that a step further, getting them back into the room or the area where the shooting may have taken place. We were able to do that in the night of the open house by providing refreshments in the cafeteria. On the first day of school when students returned, we had those students go by class in the morning if they were ready to do that, to place their hand print on the wall as a temporary memorial to the slain principal. And so that was very effective in getting students back to those locations.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Talk about some of the resources that you brought to bear in your community just beyond the school world.

**DR. MACALUSO:** That was extremely important and as a precursor to that, to develop relationships with those community groups so that in the event you need to bring them into the schools, it can be an effective, coordinated effort. We had a great response

from our mental health community, from our faith-based community, from the law enforcement, to the Emergency Management community. And so as they came in to provide help, because we had a relationship with them, we were able to coordinate their efforts and to be at the highest level.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Cathy, you have more than two dozen students who were wounded. Is that right? And obviously, you know, that has a different effect I would expect. Talk about your experience, what did you all do, how did you react in your community?

**MS. PAINE:** Our community of Springfield, Oregon I think is forever changed because of the event that we experienced. Just to remind you of a couple of details, a 15-year-old freshman came onto campus with three concealed weapons. He passed by the surveillance cameras, the perimeter fencing and the campus monitor to do that, and entered and shot two students in the hallway. And then he entered the cafeteria where he pulled out his semi-automatic rifle and proceeded to shoot 50 rounds into the cafeteria which contained about 300 students. In the end two students were dead, Michael McLaughlin and Ben Walker, and 25 students were injured.

About an hour later, we got more traumatic news in learning that he had also shot and killed both his mother and father the night before at home. His parents were both teachers and they were both long-time teachers in our school district. So this was extremely impactful for the entire community. I was a school psychologist in the district at the time and was placed in charge of the recovery efforts and the response that the district provided.

I wanted to echo a couple of things that both Larry and Marlene have already said that recovery takes a long time. We're eight years out, and we are still recovering. For some, it's weeks and months. For others, it's years. For others, it's a lifetime. And we're always mindful of that. Whenever something happens, we're always right back there again in that cafeteria.

So one of the tasks of recovery is obviously to restore the learning environment because that's what we're in schools for. But the other task is to support the mental health growth and development of our students and our staff. And I think that's what we have tried to do over the years through a variety of different things that we've done.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Talk about—I know you have worked on building a memorial and the kind of cathartic event that that becomes in the community. Can you say a word about that?

**MS. PAINE:** Yeah. Really in a situation like this, there's several different kinds of memorials that happen. There are the impromptu memorials that usually spring up right away. And we had one, the fence in front of Thurston High School. People that have seen media coverage will remember a chain link fence of three blocks long filled with flowers and teddy bears and balloons and all kinds of mementos. And that actually

turned out to be one of the most powerful healing events in our community. People gathered there. They cried there. They left their best wishes. It was just a very peaceful and wonderful place.

Of course there was the formal things, the funerals, the candlelight vigils, but our permanent memorial was an interesting journey. It took us five years to construct a permanent memorial because the dynamics were so complicated in our situation and so many people involved, so many injured. It took a really long time for people to agree and decide on what they want that memorial to look like.

On the fifth anniversary of the shooting, we dedicated the memorial, which is a park, right next to the high school campus. And I think it's a very beautiful memorial. It's a place where people can go to remember, and it's really a tribute to the community, which came together and supported us in that event.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you, Cathy, for sharing that. Jamie, let's turn to you. You're a young teacher, a special education teacher, obviously love kids. Talk about what happened in your school and in your life, and how you helped your students, your young children get through the event.

**MS. BAGGETT:** In March of 2005 on an early morning, Ms. Joyce Gregory, which was the bus driver in our school system in Stewart County, Tennessee, was fatally shot and killed by a high school student that was getting ready to enter the bus. She had almost 24 students, or approximately 24 students on the bus with her ranging in age from five to 17. The bus was actually on top of a grade or a hill, and it then rolled down the hill and thanks to some heroic students that were high school age, they were able to steer it into a telephone pole where it came to its rest. The older students then helped the younger ones off the bus, and law enforcement from a neighboring county and our county was on the scene. There were many different neighbors. And even the family of the young man that committed this crime were there on the scene. And it was just a very tragic event that as Panel II mentioned, we never thought would happen in our community because it's such a rural community. And of course no one thinks that that might happen in their area.

My students were not at school yet. This happened 6:30 in the morning, so it was fairly early. When I learned of it, we were able to speak to bus drivers and speak to parents and have them take the students back home. That's what the parents had requested so that they could speak with their children concerning the event because my students are special ed students as you mentioned, but they are multiple disabled. A lot of them are non-verbal, so their parents wanted to try and help them through the event and try to explain to them if that's possible why Ms. Joyce would not be at school and help them deal with the event.

The other students that were on the bus that morning were able to receive counseling. We had that outpouring from surrounding mental health facilities and different guidance counselors from surrounding schools, counselors in the community

that came in to help the students deal with what they had seen, what they had heard, what they had been through that morning. A lot of our students were arriving at school when they found out that that had occurred, so they were gathered into different classrooms with teachers as they began to arrive at the high school that morning. So we had different things that were going on.

It was just a very traumatic event for a lot of different individuals in the community because Ms. Joyce was not only involved in school and as a bus driver, she was also involved in Boy Scouts with her son, and she's involved in a lot of sporting events with her daughter, and she had just become a grandmother, and she was involved in her church group also. So she was very much a community member. So it was something that really affected a lot of different individuals in our community.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Can you talk about, you know, when you go to your college of education, you learn how to be a teacher, and you learn how to be a special ed teacher and work on reading and that sort of thing, talk your journey as a teacher, and in your community of teachers at your school, how did they react? How did they respond and what did they need to know to be able to help their students cope better?

**MS. BAGGETT:** I think the thing that helped us the most as teachers was being able to gather around in a group. We were taken into the library and we were able to go through the event ourselves in a debriefing. And then we were given materials and ideas to use to help our students. There was also counseling that was available throughout last year, and we received a grant for this year for counseling and an SRO, School Resource officer, to come in.

It has just been an outpouring of counseling that has really helped our students go through that. But more than that, it's helping them deal with the event just like Marlene was talking about. You have to help them understand that this is something that doesn't normally happen in every school. And it's not necessarily ever going to happen again in our school. But, you know, we need to be prepared in case something does happen.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** And so how—with this occurring just in March of last year, you're still on the recovery journey in your school.

**MS. BAGGETT:** Yes, ma'am. And just like Ms. Cathy was mentioning, it's an ongoing process for a lot of people. You know, they were able to deal with it and move on rather quickly. But for others and for a lot of different students as you hear of other school shootings, as you hear of different things going in the community, it just really brings back a lot of memories for different people.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Craig, you are an inspiration. We met your dad earlier. He's obviously an awesome guy and a tremendous leader, and has taken just this horrible tragedy and, turned it into something that is adding value and saving lives. Talk about your work since Columbine and your sister.

**MR. SCOTT:** Well, at Columbine on April 20th, I was in the school library which is the scene of the most intense shooting, and I lost two friends next to me underneath the table, and there were 10 students that were killed around me, nearly 20 that were wounded. And later that same day I found out that my sister, Rachel Joy Scott, was the first one to be killed.

And since then, me and my family have traveled and we've really just been sharing a story about Rachel in schools across the country. And I've spoken now to over a million people, mostly teens, and have run into a lot of the issues that teens are facing today and feel like I understand some of the things they're going through.

And in sharing this story, it's just really a simple story of a girl who would step out of her way in compassion to show kindness for other students that nobody else thought was important, have value. She would stick up for students that were getting put down or picked on. She would sit by the kid that sat all alone at lunch. She reached out to a student that had a mental and physical disability who was having some thoughts of suicide, and she saved his life from just every day in the hallway just talking to him for a couple of minutes, giving him a hug, asking him how he was doing.

And so we share this story, and then we give them a challenge. And the challenge is to pick up the chain reaction that my sister stood for. And we've seen thousands of students pick up that chain reaction. On a weekly basis of our program, Rachel's Challenge, is reaching about 60,000 students through nine different speakers. And we're seeing a huge impact because students are able to look at Rachel as a role model, somebody that was just a simple teenager but that made a big difference because of what she believed in.

And Rachel was a person of value. She was a person of character, and she was a person of faith. She was killed for her faith that day. And when she was asked by the gunman if she--and was mocked--if she still believed in God, she said yes, I do, and he said, well, go be with Him, and she took her last shot through the temple. And it's just a high price to pay to have to be able to do this, but it's been so worth it.

And, you know, I meet a lot of teens across this country. I see a lot of depression. I see a lot of loneliness and a lot of anger. And if we can carry messages that have value, that have substance, that aren't band-aid answers, I believe that we'll have an impact and kids can reach out to other kids. Teachers pick up the message as well. And we are seeing a big--Rachel's Challenge is making a big difference and she's becoming a hero, a role model for a lot of students. And it's a privilege to be able to do it and to be able to connect with the students like we do.

And so I believe that kindness and compassion can be the biggest anecdotes to violence. And we prevented a number of shootings happening, and later on the next panel I'd like to share something I wrote last night in my hotel room. Just expresses my feelings best.

Gut I think it's good to look at the parameters on the outside of the school and to things that we can do to prevent. But I think more importantly long-term than just being the outside things, whether they are dealing with the building or law enforcement, with metal detectors or with security cameras. It's getting to the heart of the young students, setting parameters around our heart. And I hope that--

My dad said earlier, he said is there a way that we can incorporate character back into our education where it's not some outside thing that we have to bring in, some outside program because for the first--my dad's a scholar in American history, and for the first 150 to 200 years, our educational system, their main focus was character and then knowledge, then academic achievement. But we've searched that in the last 50 years. And I'm not trying to place blames solely--but I think there's some--

And there's other issues that I've seen with the shootings, and I've met kids that had plans to do shootings. I've met kids who've handed me hit lists and told me I just saved a lot of people from dying at their school from sharing this story. And so I think that incorporating character back into our educational system is something that the generation, my generation is desperately crying out for. They're looking for truth and for answers, not wishy-washy--and I know there's a lot of wonderful programs in the room today, but I know there are those programs that want to just say something nice and slap a band-aid on it. And that's not going to--that band-aid's not going to save a kid from dying.

And so I just hope that, you know, from this, you know, we can begin to implement real solutions, and we can begin to see kids standing for something they believe in again. Because what do they stand for, what is our pop culture, what does our media feed us every single day, and I know what they're watching. I know what they're listening to because I watched it too. And I've chosen much more wisely since Columbine. My influence is that I listen to and watch, whether it's through Internet or movies or music or video games or whatever, I've chosen more positive influence and I give that challenge to the students in the school. I say, hey, listen, the shooters at Columbine, a lot of these shooters have chosen very negative influences in their lives. And if you want to be a person to make a positive impact, I challenge you pay attention to what you listen to, pay attention--we can't always stop them. The knowledge and information is at our fingertips 24/7 through our phones. It's a big door that's open.

And I'm happy for those boundaries that people do set up, parents set up, that teachers set up, and schools set up. And I think there needs to be more of those, but really the student has to choose for himself what he's going to listen to. And if we can give him an inspiration to choose something positive--a lot of entertainment out there focuses on--has no substance and is empty and shallow. And I hope that we take a look at deeper issues which lie in the heart.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Do you feel optimistic about this? I think a lot of grownups, people my age, are sitting there--how did we get here, you know, why are our

teens so angry? What's going on out there? Do you feel hopeful and optimistic that this is doable and the things that you mentioned?

**MR. SCOTT:** I do. I do feel optimistic in the sense that I know there are answers. And I know there are solutions that exist. I feel sad when I travel and I meet—students come after me. After an assembly, I talk to hundreds of students every single week. I speak in the beginning part of the week. I've heard all kinds of terrible stories about things they've been through, talking about a fatherless society, or kids that have been abused, or kids that have been put down, kids that have extra challenges because they have that mental or physical disability and are made fun of for it. Nobody wants to talk to them. Nobody wants to reach out to them. And so I hear a lot of stories, stories of loss, stories of murder. I've heard those stories, and it breaks my heart. The only thing I can do is share my story and share the things that I learned behind the worst school shooting in our history.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** You are an awesome young man. Thank you for being here.

(Applause.)

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Betty—lots of folks find answers in their faith as we've heard, including your sister, Rachel. Betty, why don't you talk about City Impact and your work, what you do and how you've worked through coping in lots of the communities you've worked in.

**MS. ALVAREZ:** I'm a broker. I'm a broker of people and services and talents and gifts. I think the thing that we can bring to any society is our assets. This young that's right here and Jamie and all these learned people all have gifts and talents. And what City Impact has done is taken people like this and the church, the faith-based community, and say how do we help out a Columbine. How do we help out the different school districts. How do we partner with them.

And what we found was City Impact is that we can utilize our therapists and our school psychologists that we work with, and our social workers. And we even go down to the place of working with early childhood education. When I heard this story about this young man that's working with high school, middle school, my staff says we have to grow our own. So we're working with pre-school. How do you begin to say, you know, no with your words and not with a toy? How do you begin to say I need time alone rather than lashing out in anger in violence?

Unfortunately because of media, because of the situations in our home and society, we have to set up these things within our faith communities, within our schools, within our social service agencies, within the myriad of clubs that we have and say can you come along side. So we'd—with our churches. Do you know that there's a church almost where every school is? There's a church within two different blocks of that. So I broker it. I say will you adopt a school. Will you adopt this teacher, will you adopt the superintendent? Will you love them, support them, encourage them? They need



supplies. Will you be there for them? And then we work with probation and say rather than have it be from a negative viewpoint, how do we partner with you?

We also are in the institutions because unfortunately these young people that have caused such pain have had pain themselves. And so begin to go into the institutions and say we'll love you and we'll forgive you. (Inaudible) amazing about the grandfather of this Amish community when he said I forgive them. And I know that forgiveness, the first words of forgiveness, lest I forgive them, was the first step of healing. And I'm sure today he doesn't even know the expansion of hurt he's going to be experiencing. But he started the healing process by saying I forgive you. In that role with teaching kids, it's to say I forgive you for taking that toy. Teaching kids to say I'm sorry. I'm held accountable for that. And then coming along side that.

So with City Impact, we believe that we need to make an impact on the city, and that's just not by the 40 that we have on staff. It's by empowering people to take responsibility for the community, for your children, for your teachers, for your police officers, for those that make up a community. We say we want to make a difference. Then you look at the places where you have liquor stores. Why is there a liquor store so close to a school? I want to be making the charge saying wait a minute. This is our community. They don't belong here. We belong here. This is our neighborhood.

And so what I do is I broker. I knock on doors. I pound on doors. I sit there until they come and talk to me, and then we go in. And so many times working with school districts, you do have to do that.

If I can digress a little bit. About four years ago, it was two years after Columbine, I was at a staff meeting and every pager and every phone went off at the same time. We first thought it was a fluke, you know, where the air and whatever is happening. And as we looked at our pagers and our phones, it was a local high school. A young man brandished a gun and he had it to his girlfriend's head and was threatening to kill her. This is during lunchtime at this high school. And the phones were all ringing because our staff were asked to be there. Within three to four minutes, because the SWAT team was doing an exercise, they were on campus, and this young man was shot dead in front of a myriad of staff members and faculty members and students.

And after this is all said and done and my staff was there working with them for about three months on campus, and then we involved the churches. The superintendent said, Betty, there was a bright thing in this whole ugly day. He said we knew where to go for help. You see, it wasn't just my staff working with that school. I got with the rabbi in the area, we got with the temples, and we said, this is our community. And we need to be working with that family that lost a young man. We were by that police officer that shot the young man. Because that's all our community, folks.

So that's how we've handled it, and we believe in that because I do think every single person that's here is in an asset. So let's pull our assets together. Let's build it. And I believe if we do build it, like that movie said, they'll come.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you, Betty. What strikes me about every single one of these panelists, and we'll open the floor to questions, is that every single person has taken something that happened to them and turned it into a great good, to pay it forward and to give back to your communities, and you're all so tremendous. So we have a few minutes for questions before our special guest arrives. And as you all can see, there are many people who want to hear more from you. Are you all ready on the right hand side? Sir, tell us who you are, where you're from and who your question is addressed to?

**MR. GRIFFIN:** Yes, my name is Richard Griffin. I'm the executive director for the Center for Safe Schools in Houston, Texas. And I just want to thank you, Secretary, for having this conference. It's a magnificent conference, and I think bringing all these elements together is a beginning step. It's not the first time that you've lent your office for this effort, and we appreciate it. And also to our magnificent President and his lovely wife for sponsoring this. Thank you very much.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you very much.  
(Applause.)

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Yes, ma'am.

**MS. MOHAMMAD:** Good afternoon, Madam Secretary. Thank you again. My name is Linda Mohammad, and I am a Baltimore City parent advocate, PTA president, mom, wife, the citizen of America. And today my question is where is the urban representation? We really appreciate Chris heartfelt love and respect, and when that happened in your city, we prayed for you and your community. And we really appreciate what you said today because in the urban community, there's a gap. The administration and the parents don't trust each other. So we're asking nationally how—are we addressing that because we need that in our community, and in Baltimore, we need that.

Our schools are failing our children. We have school violence. Our children are shot after school, but still in school zones, but not inside the building. And it's gang activity. So we want to know nationally what can we do to help bridge the gap between the administration and the parents who really want to be involved. And through Title I funding, through President Bush's administration, NCLB has allowed us to get educated and become literate parents, but however we're not being heard and taken seriously. So we're asking today how can you help us bridge that in Baltimore City?

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Can I ask you if you would come share your thoughts with the committee I've just appointed on school safety and safe and drug free schools, and as a parent advocate, give us your advice? That's obviously why we're here to reach out beyond just the organizations that are represented here and to every single home and family in America and thank you for your work in Baltimore. We'll get you that information. I want to hear from you. Thank you. Yes, sir.

**MR. CHUNG:** Good afternoon. I'm David Chung, a developmental behavioral pediatrician that directs the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. And one of the themes that I've heard on all three of the panels is the need to address some of the mental health needs of students and the impact that has, whether that's in prevention efforts. We heard about unresolved grief, in trauma in the lives of students and how that leads to episodes of violence. We've heard about being prepared, having the staff prepared to deal with these issues, and now we're hearing about the recovery and how important it is for staff to be prepared for that.

So I have a question which I'd like to ask the entire panel. What should we be asking for our teachers and school administrators and school mental health providers to have as base skills before they enter the workforce? What pre-service training is important skills?

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** That's a great question. Marlene and Cathy, why don't you talk about that. Larry also. You have all dealt with that.

**DR. WONG:** Yes, I think it's a great need to have a special training now and inclusion of child development and especially of the kinds of problems that Linda alluded that in certain areas, there tend to be more children who have been exposed to community violence, and as a result have some very deleterious health and mental health effects, not because of their own personality, but because of the environmental stresses that they're exposed to. So I think that that's a very special need that must be met in the urban center.

However, with respect to some prevention activities, I just want to say that some of the audience may not be aware of the fact that President Bush convened the President's new Freedom Commission, and out of those came some really excellent recommendations about enhancing and expanding mental health services in schools. And his Commission head, Dr. Mike Hogan from Ohio, said our children's mental health system is broken. It isn't even in place. It's just broken, and that we need to begin building it to meet some of the needs. We have more children than ever who are depressed. We don't know why, but a greater number of children who are depressed. And what we've learned about these school shooters is that suicide and homicide were two sides of the same coin. And that they all in some ways express the wish to die.

So that I thank you for that question, and I think that if we--I know that there's been a charge given to some executive committees at the federal level, also to (inaudible) U.S. Department of Ed, so I hope that those efforts will be re-invigorated because the recommendations are there at the federal level.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you, Marlene. Larry?

**DR. MACALUSO:** For many of our schools, particularly in the rural areas, it's extremely important to find ways to bring those services into the schools. In my particular district, parents would have to travel 15 to 20 miles, and that's not going to happen to get the mental health services that they need. So we try to do some of that, but

certainly there needs to be more. And in any way that--through government that we can provide the incentive for those types of programs to be in place would be excellent.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Cathy?

**MS. PAINE:** Well, as a school psychologist, obviously I'm very interested in the whole area of mental health. And I think our situation is a classic example of the mental health needs both before and after a crisis. Our shooter was clearly one of those young men who wanted to commit suicide as well as cause harm to others, depression, was diagnosed with schizophrenia. So he clearly had some mental health issues and needed to have those addressed.

In the schools, I think it's our responsibility and our charge with teachers that they understand somewhat about children's mental health. And at least they understand and have a system where they can report their concerns if they are concerned about a student. Every school district needs to have a way for staff to do that, and a way for them to get support that they need.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** And in your teacher training or staff development in your school district, are those sorts of techniques enforced? Or are there models available that school districts might use?

**MS. PAINE:** There are models, and I think most of them exist in the crisis response literature. What we try to do each fall is do a little refresher with our staff about not only our emergency procedures, lock-downs, evacuations, but also how should they respond to students where they have concerns.

One of the problems frankly that happened in our situation was that many people knew many individual things about this particular student, but they were never all brought together and shared those concerns with each other. And so the whole picture was never really put together until afterwards. Now we have great hindsight now when we can say, you know, how all these things related. If there was a system in way that people can share that information, I think that will go a long ways to preventing future violence.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** So we're back to reporting and information.

**MS. PAINE:** Absolutely.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** It all comes together. Yes, sir.

**MR. GROSS:** Good afternoon, Madam Secretary and to the panel. It's an honor to be here. My name is Dan Gross and I'm CEO and founder of a national violence prevention program called PAX based in New York City. And like a lot of the people here on the panel and here today, I come to the issue of violence prevention with a personal story. My younger brother, Macros, was shot in a random shooting that

happened in New York City in February of 1997. And like a lot of the people very admirably on the panel and here today, a big part of my healing and recovery is working to do something to prevent others from going through what my family's been through. —totally anonymous national hotline for kids to call to report threats of weapons in school, and that's 1-866-SPEAKUP. We have lesson plans that are in thousands of schools across the country. We have television PSA's, and it's been overwhelmingly successful. 15,000 calls in four years with hundreds of instances of confirmed prevention to the extent of taking that weapon away or thwarting concrete plans can be—can qualify as prevention.

It breaks my heart every time we hear about these tragedies, and we think about if the kids had only known about SPEAKUP and the importance of it, and have the inspiration and motivation to do it, that we could have prevented it. So I guess my question is how—anything. We're at your service. Anything that we can do to work with the Department of Education, to work with the Department of Justice, to work directly with the President or the First Lady to make sure that every student in the country knows about this life-saving resource, we'd be honored.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you very much for your great work. And I think I showed it earlier. There's a resource guide that obviously is not comprehensive, but we need to make sure that that is an ever-expanding set of resources. That's why we've convened you all for ideas like that, and thank you for your tremendous work in honor of your brother and your family. Thank you. Yes, ma'am.

**MS. FELDMAN:** Hi, good afternoon. I'm Dara Feldman. I'm a national board-certified teacher and was last year's Disney's Outstanding Elementary Teacher.

I left the kindergarten classroom at the end of last year because my heart was a little bit torn. We're so focused on excellence in academics, and as Smart and Good High Schools reports—speaks to the excellence in academics and ethics that I felt very lopsided. In fact, I resigned yesterday from Montgomery County Public Schools so that I could work on excellence in ethics side of education. I just want to honor the awesome work that you're doing. And also with Craig, just your compassion and your caring and your courage to take what could be looked at and actually is a tragedy, but to move it forward with such grace and to put focus on that we need get back to the basics of our founding fathers.

And what saved me last year in the kindergarten classroom was something called the Virtues project. Not religious. It's the virtues, it's what's good in all of us. It's the way you want to be, the way you want your children to be. It's in 85 countries around the world and has been going on for 15 years. And because I saw the difference it made in my own children in my classroom, and in the lives of the children under my own roof, I've made it my passion to try to share and get back to basics.

So my question to you is what can we do with the re-authorization of No Child Left Behind in terms of balancing education out, not just focusing on the rigor of

academics, but also the rigor of the heart, and how to create a balanced society that's not competitive but is caring, collaborative, you know, compassionate so that there's unity in the world? We are now a global society. And although we live in North America, because the world is now flat, we need to prepare ourselves and our youth for this new global society. Long question.

**SECRETARY SPELLING:** Yes, thank you for that comment and question. I mean amen. You're right. Absolutely. And these people are working on it every day. I do think the No Child Left Behind re-authorization provides us some opportunities to take a look at what those strategies might be. But one of the things we've also learned is there is no one size fits all kind of prescription here either. So there's that balancing act. Maybe part of it begins with information and understanding as we've heard from a couple of the panels as well. I'm sorry you left the classroom, but it sounds like you're still working--

**MS. FELDMAN:** It's just a bigger classroom.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Yes, it is a bigger classroom. Thank you for your work. Okay, I think we have time for maybe one more question. Yes, ma'am.

**MS. MOORE:** Thank you very much for inviting us. My name is Rose Moore. I'm with ADHD, Child Advocate Services. I'm the CEO. And I also have a radio show called the Rose Moore show, and it's broadcast on [www.alltalkradio.net/worldwide](http://www.alltalkradio.net/worldwide).

The reason that I'm here today is for a couple of reasons. As you're talking about being a school psychologist and as a special ed teacher, I think what the parents need to understand is that when we have to get down to the grass roots of why these children are committing these crimes, the child find is not being appropriately addressed with our teachers to find those children in the first place. When they do find the children, the school psychologist is not state-licensed, so they are not able to diagnose a child during the evaluation process. And on our show, we always tell the parents now is the time to use your insurance to get an independent evaluation to find out if these children are having a problem either through the academics or through the behavior of which Craig has witnessed with his own sister.

The show that we have, the Rose Moore show, is the only one of its kind in the world. And it's broadcast throughout the world. My husband and I pay for it through our own pockets. It's on Saturdays from 6 to 7, Pacific Standard time. But what it's for is to find, address and solve the unmet needs of the learning disabled in the public school system. And on the show, we have had many of the top two, three or four psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors. We've had teachers, special ed, school psychologists, everything that we can, and we're still doing it. We're working on the child find, and right now we're working on how to write an IUP for teachers.

So what I want to say is that the education that has to be done for our teachers needs to be done as soon as possible because right now only 50 percent of the teachers throughout the United States are highly qualified. Thank you.

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you, Rose, for that comment and for your work. I think we have our special guest coming, so I think we—maybe we have a chance for one more question if there is one, and then we'll—

**MS. JOHNSON-HOSTLER:** Good afternoon. My name is Monica Johnson-Hostler, and I represent the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence. And I actually am the director of the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

I guess it's more of a broader question in terms of the last two school shootings specifically were very clearly targeted at girls. So I guess my question is in terms of the Department of Education and the Department of Justice, has there been conversations about how we clearly and accurately address men's violence against women because these two last cases were clearly targeted at females. So it's more of a broader question. And I think most—especially Department of Justice are very familiar with the Violence Against Women Act and the work that we do, but this is an area that we haven't been involved in, so it's a broad question in terms of addressing men's violence against women in these school shootings.

**SECRETARY SPELLING:** That's a great question, and one that we've already specifically tasked this new Commission that I formed on safe and drug free schools to take a look at, as well as the reporting issues that we talked about earlier, use of other parts of the community and how to make sure that private schools and other providers are aware of all the strategies, plans and techniques. So if other people have suggestions for assignments for this group, we welcome them and thank you for your good work. Thank you.

Let's thank our panel. They are very inspiring and—  
(Applause.)

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Thank you all.  
[Whereupon, the proceedings were concluded.]