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From: The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

For your information, the accompanying Facts for Families, from the AACAP series may be helpful in preparing background for White House comments. The entire series can be accessed through the web page: www.aacap.org

Please call if you have any questions or requests regarding additional information.

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FACTS *for* FAMILIES

No. 65

(8/98)

CHILDREN'S THREATS: WHEN ARE THEY SERIOUS?

Several recent tragedies have involved children shooting and killing individuals after making threats. When this occurs, everyone asks themselves, "How could this happen?" and "Why didn't we take the threat seriously?"

Most threats made by children or adolescents are not carried out. Many such threats are the child's way of talking "big" or tough, or getting attention. Sometimes these threats are a reaction to a perceived hurt, rejection, or attack.

What threats should be taken seriously?

Examples of potentially dangerous or emergency situations with a child or adolescent include:

- threats or warnings about hurting or killing someone
- threats or warnings about hurting or killing oneself
- threats to run away from home
- threats to damage or destroy property

Child and adolescent psychiatrists and other mental health professionals agree that it is very difficult to predict a child's future behavior with complete accuracy. A person's past behavior, however, is still one of the best predictors of future behavior. For example, a child with a history of violent or assaultive behavior is more likely to carry out his/her threats and be violent.

When is there more risk associated with threats from children and adolescents?

The presence of one or more of the following increases the risk of violent or dangerous behavior:

- past violent or aggressive behavior (including uncontrollable angry outbursts)
- access to guns or other weapons
- bringing a weapon to school
- past suicide attempts or threats
- family history of violent behavior or suicide attempts
- blaming others and/or unwilling to accept responsibility for one's own actions
- recent experience of humiliation, shame, loss, or rejection
- bullying or intimidating peers or younger children

Children's Threats, *Facts for Families*, No. (8/98)

- a pattern of threats
- being a victim of abuse or neglect (physical, sexual, or emotional)
- witnessing abuse or violence in the home
- themes of death or depression evident in conversation, written expressions, reading selections, or artwork
- preoccupation with themes and acts of violence in TV shows, movies, music, magazines, comics, books, video games, and Internet sites
- mental illness, such as depression, mania, psychosis, or bipolar disorder
- use of alcohol or illicit drugs
- disciplinary problems at school or in the community (delinquent behavior)
- past destruction of property or vandalism
- cruelty to animals
- firesetting behavior
- poor peer relationships and/or social isolation
- involvement with cults or gangs
- little or no supervision or support from parents or other caring adult

What should be done if parents or others are concerned?

When a child makes a serious threat it should not be dismissed as just idle talk. Parents, teachers, or other adults should immediately talk with the child. If it is determined that the child is at risk and the child refuses to talk, is argumentative, responds defensively, or continues to express violent or dangerous thoughts or plans, arrangements should be made for an immediate evaluation by a mental health professional with experience evaluating children and adolescents. Evaluation of any serious threat must be done in the context of the individual child's past behavior, personality, and current stressors. In an emergency situation or if the child or family refuses help, it may be necessary to contact local police for assistance or take the child to the nearest emergency room for evaluation. Children who have made serious threats must be carefully supervised while awaiting professional intervention. Immediate evaluation and appropriate ongoing treatment of youngsters who make serious threats can help the troubled child and reduce the risk of tragedy.

For additional information, see FFFs - #55 Understanding Violent Behavior in Children; #37 Children and Firearms; #03 Teens: Alcohol and Other Drugs; #13 Children and TV Violence; and #33 Conduct Disorders.

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The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) represents over 6,500 child and adolescent psychiatrists who are physicians with at least five years of additional training beyond medical school in general (adult) and child and adolescent psychiatry.

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FACTS *for* FAMILIES

FAMILY & PARENTING ISSUES

No. 55 (11/96)

UNDERSTANDING VIOLENT BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

There is a great concern about the incidence of violent behavior among children and adolescents. This complex and troubling issue needs to be carefully understood by parents, teachers, and other adults.

Children as young as preschoolers can show violent behavior. Parents and other adults who witness the behavior may be concerned, however, they often hope that the young child will "grow out of it." Violent behavior in a child at any age always needs to be taken seriously. It should not be dismissed as "just a phase they're going through!"

Range of Violent Behavior

Violent behavior in children and adolescents can include a wide range of behaviors: explosive temper tantrums, physical aggression, fighting, threats or attempts to hurt others (including homicidal thoughts), use of weapons, cruelty toward animals, fire setting, intentional destruction of property and vandalism.

Factors Which Increase Risk of Violent Behavior

Numerous research studies have concluded that a complex interaction or combination of factors leads to an increased risk of violent behavior in children and adolescents. These factors include:

- Previous aggressive or violent behavior
- Being the victim of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse
- Exposure to violence in the home and/or community
- Genetic (family heredity) factors
- Exposure to violence in media (TV, movies, etc.)
- Use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Presence of firearms in home
- Combination of stressful family socioeconomic factors (poverty, severe deprivation, marital breakup, single parenting, unemployment, loss of support from extended family)
- Brain damage from head injury

Understanding Violent Behavior, "Facts for Families," No. 55 (11/96)

What are the "warning signs" for violent behavior in children?

Children who have several risk factors and show the following behaviors should be carefully evaluated:

- Intense anger
- Frequent loss of temper or blow-ups
- Extreme irritability
- Extreme impulsiveness
- Becoming easily frustrated

Parents and teachers should be careful not to minimize these behaviors in children.

What can be done if a child shows violent behavior?

Whenever a parent or other adult is concerned, they should immediately arrange for a comprehensive evaluation by a qualified mental health professional. Early treatment by a professional can often help. The goals of treatment typically focus on helping the child to: learn how to control his/her anger; express anger and frustrations in appropriate ways; be responsible for his/her actions; and accept consequences. In addition, family conflicts, school problems, and community issues must be addressed.

Can anything prevent violent behavior in children?

Research studies have shown that much violent behavior can be decreased or even prevented if the above risk factors are significantly reduced or eliminated. Most importantly, efforts should be directed at dramatically decreasing the exposure of children and adolescents to violence in the home, community, and through the media. Clearly, violence leads to violence.

In addition, the following strategies can lessen or prevent violent behavior:

- Prevention of child abuse (use of programs such as parent training, family support programs, etc.)
- Sex education and parenting programs for adolescents
- Early intervention programs for violent youngsters
- Monitoring child's viewing of violence on TV/videos/movies

For additional/related information see other Facts for Families: Conduct Disorders (#33), Children & Firearms (#37), Children and TV Violence (#13), Child Abuse (#5), Child Sexual Abuse (#9).

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FACTS *for* FAMILIES

No. 67 (11/98)

CHILDREN AND THE NEWS

Children often see or hear the news many times a day through television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. Seeing and hearing about local and world events, such as natural disasters, catastrophic events, and crime reports, may cause children to experience stress, anxiety, and fears.

There have also been several changes in how news is reported that have given rise to the increased potential for children to experience negative effects. These changes include the following:

- television channels and Internet services and sites which report the news 24 hours a day
- television channels broadcasting live events as they are unfolding, in "real time"
- increased reporting of the details of the private lives of public figures and role models
- pressure to get news to the public as part of the competitive nature of the entertainment industry
- detailed and repetitive visual coverage of natural disasters and violent acts

While there has been great public debate about providing television ratings to warn parents about violence and sex in programming, news shows have only recently been considered in these discussions. Research has shown, however, that children and adolescents are prone to imitate what they see and hear in the news, a kind of contagion effect described as "copy cat" events. Chronic and persistent exposure to such violence can lead to fear, desensitization (immunity), and in some children an increase in aggressive and violent behaviors. Studies also show that media broadcasts do not always choose to show things that accurately reflect local or national trends.

Children and the News No. 67 (11/98)

For example, statistics report a decrease in the incidence of crime, yet, the reporting of crime in the news has increased 240%. Local news shows often lead with or break into programming to announce crime reports and devote as much as 30% of the broadcast time to detailed crime reporting.

The possible negative effects of news can be lessened by parents, teachers, or other adults by watching the news with the child and talking about what has been seen or heard. The child's age, maturity, developmental level, life experiences, and vulnerabilities should guide how much and what kind of news the child watches.

Guidelines for minimizing the negative effects of watching the news include:

- make sure you have adequate time and a quiet place to talk if you anticipate that the news is going to be troubling or upsetting to the child
- ask the child what he/she has heard and what questions he/she may have
- provide reassurance regarding his/her own safety in simple words emphasizing that you are going to be there to keep him/her safe
- look for signs that the news may have triggered fears or anxieties such as sleeplessness, fears, bedwetting, crying, or talking about being afraid

Parents should remember that it is important to talk to the child or adolescent about what he/she has seen or heard. This allows parents to lessen the potential negative effects of the news and to discuss their own ideas and values. While children cannot be completely protected from outside events, parents can help them feel safe and help them to better understand the world around them.

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FACTS *for* FAMILIES

No. 10

(Updated 11/98)

TEEN SUICIDE

Suicides among young people nationwide have increased dramatically in recent years. Each year in the U.S., thousands of teenagers commit suicide. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15-to-24-year-olds, and the sixth leading cause of death for 5-to-14-year-olds.

Teenagers experience strong feelings of stress, confusion, self-doubt, pressure to succeed, financial uncertainty, and other fears while growing up.

For some teenagers, divorce, the formation of a new family with step-parents and step-siblings, or moving to a new community can be very unsettling and can intensify self-doubts. In some cases, suicide appears to be a "solution."

Depression and suicidal feelings are treatable mental disorders. The child or adolescent needs to have his or her illness recognized and diagnosed, and appropriate treatment plans developed. When parents are in doubt whether their child has a serious problem, a psychiatric examination can be very helpful.

Many of the symptoms of suicidal feelings are similar to those of depression. **Parents should be aware of the following signs of adolescents who may try to kill themselves:**

- change in eating and sleeping habits
- withdrawal from friends, family, and regular activities
- violent actions, rebellious behavior, or running away
- drug and alcohol use
- unusual neglect of personal appearance
- marked personality change
- persistent boredom, difficulty concentrating, or a decline in the quality of schoolwork
- frequent complaints about physical symptoms, often related to emotions, such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, etc.
- loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- not tolerating praise or rewards

Teen Suicide, "Facts for Families," No. 10 (11/98)

A teenager who is planning to commit suicide may also:

- complain of being a bad person or feeling "rotten inside"
- give verbal hints with statements such as: "I won't be a problem for you much longer," "Nothing matters," "It's no use," and "I won't see you again."
- put his or her affairs in order, for example, give away favorite possessions, clean his or her room, throw away important belongings, etc.
- become suddenly cheerful after a period of depression
- have signs of psychosis (hallucinations or bizarre thoughts).

If a child or adolescent says, "I want to kill myself," or "I'm going to commit suicide," always take the statement seriously and seek evaluation from a child and adolescent psychiatrist or other physician. People often feel uncomfortable talking about death. However, asking the child or adolescent whether he or she is depressed or thinking about suicide can be helpful. Rather than "putting thoughts in the child's head," such a question will provide assurance that somebody cares and will give the young person the chance to talk about problems.

If one or more of these signs occurs, parents need to talk to their child about their concerns and seek professional help when the concerns persist. With support from family and professional treatment, children and teenagers who are suicidal can heal and return to a more healthy path of development.

For more information, see Facts for Families #3 "Teens: Alcohol and Other Drugs," #4 "The Depressed Child," #37 "Children and Firearms," and #38 "Manic-Depressive Illness in Teens."

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FACTS *for* FAMILIES

No. 8 (11/95)

CHILDREN AND GRIEF

When a family member dies, children react differently from adults. Preschool children usually see death as temporary and reversible, a belief reinforced by cartoon characters who "die" and "come to life" again. Children between five and nine begin to think more like adults about death, yet they still believe it will never happen to them or anyone they know.

Adding to a child's shock and confusion at the death of a brother, sister, or parent is the unavailability of other family members, who may be so shaken by grief that they are not able to cope with the normal responsibility of child care.

Parents should be aware of normal childhood responses to a death in the family, as well as danger signals. According to child and adolescent psychiatrists, it is normal during the weeks following the death for some children to feel immediate grief or persist in the belief that the family member is still alive. However, long-term denial of the death or avoidance of grief is unhealthy and can later surface in more severe problems.

A child who is frightened about attending a funeral should not be forced to go; however, some service or observance is recommended, such as lighting a candle, saying a prayer, or visiting a grave site.

Once children accept the death, they are likely to display their feelings of sadness on and off over a long period of time, and often at unexpected moments. The surviving relatives should spend as much time as possible with the child, making it clear that the child has permission to show his or her feelings openly or freely.

Children and Grief, "Facts for Families," No. 8 (11/95)

The person who has died was essential to the stability of the child's world, and anger is a natural reaction. The anger may be revealed in boisterous play, nightmares, irritability, or a variety of other behaviors. Often the child will show anger towards the surviving family members.

After a parent dies, many children will act younger than they are. The child may temporarily become more infantile, demanding food, attention and cuddling, and talking "baby talk."

Younger children believe they are the cause of what happens around them. A young child may believe a parent, grandparent, brother, or sister died because he or she had once "wished" the person dead. The child feels guilty because the wish "came true." Some danger signals to watch for:

- o an extended period of depression in which the child loses interest in daily activities and events.
- o inability to sleep, loss of appetite, or prolonged fear of being alone.
- o acting much younger for an extended period.
- o excessively imitating the dead person.
- o repeated statements of wanting to join the dead person.
- o withdrawal from friends.
- o sharp drop in school performance or refusal to attend school.

These warning signs indicate that professional help may be needed. A child and adolescent psychiatrist can help the child accept the death and assist the survivors in helping the child through the mourning process.

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FACTS *for* FAMILIES

No. 36 (11/95)

HELPING CHILDREN AFTER A DISASTER

A catastrophe such as an earthquake, hurricane, tornado, fire, or flood is frightening to children and adults alike. It is important to acknowledge the frightening parts of the disaster when talking with a child about it. Falsely minimizing the danger will not end a child's concerns. Several factors affect a child's response to a disaster.

The way children see and understand their parents' response is very important. Children are aware of their parents' worries most of the time, but they are particularly sensitive during a crisis. Parents should admit their concerns to their children, and also stress their abilities to cope with the situation.

A child's reaction also depends on how much destruction he or she sees during and after the disaster. If a friend or family member has been killed or seriously injured, or if the child's school or home has been severely damaged, there is a greater chance that the child will experience difficulties.

A child's age affects how the child will respond to the disaster. For example, six-year-olds may show their concerns about a catastrophe by refusing to attend school, whereas adolescents may minimize their concerns, but argue more with parents and show a decline in school performance. It is important to explain the event in words the child can understand.

Following a disaster, people may develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which is psychological damage that can result from experiencing, witnessing, or participating in an overwhelmingly traumatic (frightening) event. Children with this disorder have repeated episodes in which they re-experience the traumatic event. Children often relive the trauma through repetitive play. In young children, distressing dreams of the traumatic event may change into nightmares of monsters, of rescuing others, or of threats to self or others.

Helping Children After A Disaster, "Facts for Families," No. 36 (11/95)

PTSD rarely appears during the trauma itself. Though its symptoms can occur soon after the event, the disorder often surfaces several months or even years later.

Parents should be alert to these changes:

- o Refusal to return to school and "clinging" behavior, including shadowing the mother or father around the house;
- o Persistent fears related to the catastrophe (such as fears about being permanently separated from parents);
- o Sleep disturbances such as nightmares, screaming during sleep and bedwetting, persisting more than several days after the event;
- o Loss of concentration and irritability;
- o Behavior problems, for example, misbehaving in school or at home in ways that are not typical for the child;
- o Physical complaints (stomachaches, headaches, dizziness) for which a physical cause cannot be found;
- o Withdrawal from family and friends, listlessness, decreased activity, and preoccupation with the events of the disaster.

Professional advice or treatment for children affected by a disaster—especially those who have witnessed destruction, injury or death—can help prevent or minimize PTSD. Parents who are concerned about their children can ask their pediatrician or family doctor to refer them to a child and adolescent psychiatrist.

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FACTS *for* FAMILIES

No. 37 (11/95)

CHILDREN AND FIREARMS

Parents, professionals, and many others are concerned about the increasing numbers of children and adolescents killed by firearms:

- o Every day, 10 American children ages 18 and under are killed in handgun suicide, homicides and accidents. Many more are wounded.
- o Gunshot wounds to children ages 16 and under have increased 300 percent in major urban areas since 1986.
- o Sixty percent of teen deaths by suicide involve the use of a gun. Nearly 3,000 teens use handguns to commit suicide every year.
- o An estimated 400,000 youngsters carried handguns to school in 1987. In Baltimore, half the males reported having taken a gun to high school.
- o At least 25 million American households keep handguns and 50% of owners keep them loaded.

We cannot gun-proof our children and adolescents. Children are playful and active. Adolescents are curious and impulsive. Such healthy traits when mixed with guns can cause death.

The best way to protect children against gun violence is to remove all guns from the home. If parents feel they must have one or more guns in the home, there will always be some dangers. The following actions are crucial to lessen the dangers:

- o Store all firearms unloaded and uncocked in a securely locked container. Only the parents should know where the container is located.
- o Store the guns and ammunition in separate locked locations.
- o For a revolver, place a padlock around the top strap of the weapon to prevent the cylinder from closing, or use a trigger lock; for a pistol, use a trigger lock.
- o When handling or cleaning a gun, never leave it unattended, even for a moment; it should be in your view at all times.

Children and Firearms, "Facts for Families," No. 37 (11/95)

Even if parents don't own a gun, they should check with parents at other places where their children play, to make sure safety precautions are followed. In a study of accidental handgun shootings of children under 16, nearly 40% of the shootings occurred in the homes of friends and relatives. The tragedies occurred most often when children were left unsupervised.

When youngsters use alcohol and also have a gun available, the risk for violence rapidly increases. In a youth suicide study, victims who used firearms were about five times more likely to have been drinking than those who used other means. In a study of firearm-associated murders among family members, almost 90% of the offenders and victims had used alcohol or drugs before the killings.

The average American child witnesses 45 acts of violence on TV each day, most involving handguns. Children often imitate what they see, and are more aggressive after extensive viewing of TV violence. Parents should help protect their children from the effects of watching TV violence. For example, they can watch with children; ration TV; and disapprove of the violent episodes in front of the children, stressing the belief that such behavior is not the best way to resolve a problem.

Children and adolescents with emotional or behavioral problems may be more likely than other children to use guns, against themselves or others. Parents who are concerned that their child is too aggressive or might have an emotional disorder may wish to seek an evaluation by a child and adolescent psychiatrist.

More information about gun safety issues and guidelines is available from the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, 1225 "I" Street, N.W., Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005.

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FACTS *for* FAMILIES

No. 13 (11/95)

CHILDREN & TV VIOLENCE

American children watch an average of three to four hours of television daily. Television can be a powerful influence in developing value systems and shaping behavior. Unfortunately, much of today's television programming is violent. Hundreds of studies of the effects of TV violence on children and teenagers have found that children may:

- o become "immune" to the horror of violence;
- o gradually accept violence as a way to solve problems;
- o imitate the violence they observe on television; and
- o identify with certain characters, victims and/or victimizers.

Extensive viewing of television violence by children causes greater aggressiveness. Sometimes, watching a single violent program can increase aggressiveness. Children who view shows in which violence is very realistic, frequently repeated, or unpunished, are more likely to imitate what they see. The impact of TV violence may be immediately evident in the child's behavior or may surface years later, and young people can even be affected when the family atmosphere shows no tendency toward violence.

This does not mean that violence on television is the only source for aggressive or violent behavior, but it is a significant contributor.

Children & TV Violence, "Facts for Families," No. 13 (11/95)

Parents can protect children from excessive TV violence in the following ways:

- o pay attention to the programs their children are watching and watch some with them.
- o set limits on the amount of time they spend with the television.
- o point out that although the actor has not actually been hurt or killed, such violence in real life results in pain or death.
- o refuse to let the children see shows known to be violent, and change the channel or turn off the TV set when something offensive comes on, with an explanation of what is wrong with the program.
- o disapprove of the violent episodes in front of the children, stressing the belief that such behavior is not the best way to resolve a problem.
- o to offset peer pressure among friends and classmates, contact other parents and agree to enforce similar rules about the length of time and type of program the children may watch.

Parents should also use these measures to prevent harmful effects from television in other areas such as racial or sexual stereotyping. The amount of time children watch TV, regardless of content, should be moderated, because it keeps children from other, more beneficial activities such as reading and playing with friends. If parents have serious difficulties setting limits, or deep concerns about how their child is reacting to television, they should contact a child and adolescent psychiatrist for help defining the problem.

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FACTS *for* FAMILIES

No. 38 (11/95)

MANIC-DEPRESSIVE ILLNESS IN TEENS

Teenagers with manic-depressive illness have an ongoing combination of extremely high (manic) and low (depressed) moods. Highs may alternate with lows, or the person may feel both extremes at close to the same time. Professionals also refer to manic-depressive illness as bipolar mood disorder.

Manic-depressive illness usually starts in adult life, before the age of 35. Although uncommon in young children, it does occur in teenagers. This illness can affect anyone. However, if one or both parents have manic-depressive illness, the chances are greater that their children will develop the disorder.

Manic-depressive illness may begin either with manic or depressive symptoms. The manic symptoms include:

- o severe changes in mood compared to others of the same age and background - either unusually happy or silly, or very irritable;
- o unrealistic highs in self-esteem - for example, a teenager who feels specially connected to God;
- o great energy increase and the ability to go with little or no sleep for days without feeling tired;
- o increased talking - the adolescent talks too much, too fast, changes topics too quickly, and cannot be interrupted;
- o distractibility - the teen's attention moves constantly from one thing to the next;
- o high risk-taking behavior, such as jumping off a roof with the belief that this will not cause injury.

Manic-Depressive Illness in Teens, "Facts For Families," No. 38 (11/95)

The depressive symptoms include:

- o persistent sadness, frequent crying, depression;
- o loss of enjoyment in favorite activities;
- o frequent complaints of physical illnesses such as headaches or stomach aches;
- o low energy level, poor concentration, complaints of boredom; and
- o major change in eating or sleeping patterns, such as oversleeping or overeating.

Some of these signs are similar to those that occur in teenagers with other problems such as drug abuse, delinquency, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, or even schizophrenia. The diagnosis can only be made with careful observation over an extended period of time. A thorough evaluation by a child and adolescent psychiatrist can be helpful in identifying the problems, manic-depressive or other, and starting specific treatment.

Teenagers with manic-depressive illness can be effectively treated. Effective treatment for manic-depressive illness usually includes education of the patient and the family about the illness, mood stabilizing medication such as lithium, and psychotherapy. Lithium often reduces the number and severity of manic episodes, and also helps to prevent depression. Psychotherapy helps the teenager understand himself or herself, adapt to stresses, rebuild self-esteem, and improve relationships.

Free distribution of single *Facts* sheets is a public service made possible by the Academy Endowment Fund. This fund supports educational programs and materials designed to educate parents, families, teachers, caregivers, and others about the mental illnesses affecting nearly 12.5 million children and adolescents in an effort to de-stigmatize these illnesses, promote early identification and treatment, and encourage funding for scientifically based research. Please make a tax deductible contribution to the Academy Endowment Fund and support this public outreach. (AACAP Endowment Fund - FFF, P.O. Box 96106, Washington, D.C. 20090)

Facts for Families® is developed and distributed by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. *Facts* sheets may be reproduced for personal or educational use without written permission, but cannot be included in material presented for sale or profit. A complete set of over 50 *Facts* sheets covering issues facing children and adolescents is available for \$18.00 (\$15.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling). Please make checks payable to AACAP, and send requests to Public Information, P.O. Box 96106, Washington, D.C. 20090-6106.

Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) announced \$27.4 million in grants for 151 policing agencies across the country to hire 428 officers -- bringing the total number of officers funded under the President's COPS Initiative to over 88,500 -- keeping the COPS Initiative ahead of schedule and under budget.



Department of Education
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 1999

**CLINTON ADMINISTRATION LAUNCHES \$300 MILLION
PROGRAM FOR SAFE SCHOOLS**

***Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative to Target Youth with Comprehensive
Services to Prevent Violence and Promote Healthy Development***

Washington, DC -- Grants totaling more than \$300 million will be awarded to 50 communities to provide youth with safer learning environments and help them avoid the dangers of violence, drugs and other destructive behaviors. Under the new *Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative*, announced today by Attorney General Janet Reno, Secretary of Education Richard Riley and Surgeon General David Satcher, MD, each community will receive up to \$3 million per year for three years to link existing and new services and activities into a comprehensive community-wide approach to violence prevention and healthy child development.

The outline of the Initiative was first announced by President Clinton last October at the White House Conference on School Safety. It is based on evidence that a comprehensive, integrated community-wide approach is an effective way to promote healthy childhood development and address the problems of school violence and drug abuse.

"Law enforcement alone cannot prevent tragedies like those we witnessed last year in Paducah, Jonesboro and Springfield," said Reno. "But when law enforcement works in partnership with our schools and our health professionals, and with parents and the whole community, we can prevent violence in all its forms before it occurs and give our young people

safer, healthier environments in which to learn."

"Building safe schools depends on building strong communities, said Education Secretary Richard Riley. "These grants will encourage vital partnerships among schools, families and community organizations taking a comprehensive, preventive approach to insure our children's health, safety and future success."

This Initiative represents a ground-breaking partnership among the three Agencies. In order to be considered for funding, communities must be working in partnership at the local level. The comprehensive safe school plans submitted for funding must be the product of a formal partnership between the school district, law enforcement and the local mental health authority, created in collaboration with family members, students, juvenile justice officials and relevant community-based organizations. To be considered comprehensive, safe school plans must address at least the following six elements: (1) a safe school environment, (2) alcohol and other drugs and violence prevention and early intervention programs, (3) school and community mental health preventative and treatment intervention services, (4) early childhood psycho-social and emotional development programs, (5) educational reform, and (6) safe school policies.

Activities that may be funded as part of this Initiative include, but are not limited to, truancy prevention, after school activities, teen courts, alternative education, purchasing security equipment and services, mentoring, programs such as conflict resolution, life skills, school-based anti-drug curricula, nurse home visitation, family strengthening and staff professional development. These activities are designed to promote healthy development, enhance resilience, and build on personal strengths. Additional funds will also be available for hiring law enforcement officers to work in schools as part of this Initiative.

"We know that children stand a better chance later in life when they start with an

environment that is healthy, educationally stimulating, free of violence and abuse, free from stress, and free from harmful substances," said Satcher. "But far too many children are not getting the opportunity for a healthy start in life. We're working to change that."

The application process will begin today, and the grants are expected to be awarded by the start of the next school year. Awards will range from up to \$3 million per year for urban school districts, up to \$2 million per year for suburban school districts, and up to \$1 million per year for rural school districts and tribal schools.

In addition to the six elements listed above, each plan will be required to include the following:

- ▶ A demonstration of community need, and an outline of existing available resources for providing services to the target community;
- ▶ Procedures for referral, treatment, and follow-up by the specialty mental health system for children and adolescents with serious mental health problems; and
- ▶ Provision of mental health services for all students, including those expelled, suspended, or not attending school prior to age 16.

Each successful applicant also will have to implement an evaluation program and agree to participate in a national evaluation.

The first year of the initiative will be funded out of FY1999 appropriations, with \$60 million from the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program of the Department of Education; \$25 million from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the Department of Health and Human Services; and \$15 million from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) of the Department of Justice. In conjunction with the *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* grants, up to \$80 million from the Office of Community Oriented Policing of the U.S. Department of Justice. Additional funding is contingent on future

appropriations.

Applications for the *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* grants may be obtained on the Internet at www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org, www.SAMHSA.gov, www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/sdfs, or from the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse Fax-on-Demand service:(800) 638-8736.

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Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

Although schools are generally safer today than they were just a few years ago – and statistics show that students are safer sitting in a classroom than walking down a street – there is still much more that we can do to improve the health and safety of our schools and students. Last Fall, in the wake of tragic multiple shootings at a number of schools, the President convened the first-ever White House Conference on School Safety, so that we could share ideas on how to make our schools and communities safer. During the Conference, the President issued a call to action, announcing a series of new initiatives to address many of the problems highlighted at the Conference.

An Unprecedented Collaborative Effort. Today, the Departments of Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services (the “Agencies”) are formally introducing an unprecedented collaborative effort, the Safe Schools/Health Students Initiative (the “Initiative”). The Agencies – through the Initiative – will provide schools, students and communities with the tools to develop and implement comprehensive community-wide strategies for creating safe and drug-free schools and for promoting healthy childhood development.

Enhanced Comprehensive Services. Students, schools and communities will receive enhanced comprehensive educational, mental health, social service, law enforcement, and, as appropriate, juvenile justice system services. Activities that may be funded as part of this Initiative include, but are not limited to, truancy prevention, teen courts, alternative education, purchasing security equipment and services, after school activities, mentoring, programs such as conflict resolution, life skills, school-based anti-drug curricula, nurse home visitation, family strengthening and staff professional development. These services and activities will allow young people to develop the social skills and emotional resilience necessary to avoid drug use and violent behavior, and will help to create safe, disciplined and drug-free school environments. The Initiative is based on evidence that a comprehensive, integrated community-wide approach is an effective way to promote safe schools and healthy students.

A Streamlined Application Process. Through a streamlined, single application process, approximately 50 successful applicants will receive support from the Agencies for up to three years (depending on Congressional appropriation of funding in future years) to support a wide variety of developmental, educational and public safety services. Successful applicants will be school districts (local education agencies) representing community partnerships involving, at a minimum:

- the local educational agency,
- the local public mental health authority,
- the local law enforcement agency,
- family members,
- students, and
- juvenile justice officials.

A Demonstrated Plan. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate that their comprehensive safe school plans include the following elements: (1) a safe school environment, (2) alcohol, drug and violence prevention and early intervention, (3) school and community mental health preventive and treatment intervention services, (4) early childhood psycho-social and emotional development services, (5) educational reform, and (6) safe school policies.

Awards. Awards will range from up to \$3 million per year for urban school districts, up to \$2 million per year for suburban school districts, and up to \$1 million per year for rural school districts and tribal schools. The Initiative will be funded out of FY1999 appropriations, with \$60 million from the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program of the Department of Education; \$25 million from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the Department of Health and Human Services; and \$15 million from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) of the Department of Justice. In addition, up to \$80 million are available from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing for the hiring of law enforcement officers to work in schools.

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services



COPS Fact Sheet

www.usdoj.gov/cops/

\$70 million
for 602 SROs in
337 cities.

COPS in Schools

"When our children's safety is at stake, we must take action - and we all must do our part."

President Clinton

Program Information

Recent headlines about violence in our schools are resulting in a surge of interest in school safety. Unfortunately, these headline-making crimes are not isolated incidents.

According to the National Education Association:

- 100,000 children carry guns to school;
- 160,000 children miss class every day because of the fear of physical harm; and
- 81 percent of teachers say they spend most of their time on undisciplined students.

Many communities are discovering that trained, sworn Law enforcement officers assigned to schools make a difference. The presence of these officers provide schools with on-site security and a direct link to local law enforcement agencies.

Community policing officers typically perform a variety of functions within the school. From teaching crime prevention and substance-abuse classes to monitoring troubled students to building respect for law enforcement among students, School Resource Officers combine the functions of law enforcement and education.

To help hire community policing officers to work in schools, the COPS Office is offering up to \$60 million to local law enforcement agencies. The COPS in Schools initiative provides an incentive for law enforcement agencies to build working relationships with schools to use community policing efforts to combat school violence.

The COPS in Schools initiative reduces the local match requirement for law enforcement agencies seeking to hire additional officers in and around schools.

Funding Requirements

Grants will be awarded to provide for a designated portion of the salary and benefits of each new officer over three years. The maximum is \$125,000 per officer; any remainder is paid with state or local funds. Funding begins when new officers are hired or on the award date (whichever is later). Funds are distributed over the course of the grant.

COPS grants must not replace funds that eligible agencies otherwise would have devoted to hire officers in the future. In other words, any hiring under the COPS in Schools program must be in addition to, not in lieu of, officers that otherwise would have been hired. Grant recipients must develop a written plan to retain their COPS-funded officer positions after Federal funding ends. This plan must be submitted with the application.

Program Requirements

To be eligible to receive funding under this grant program, applicants must:

- be eligible to receive funding under the current guidelines established for the Universal Hiring Program (UHP);
- provide assurance that the officers employed under this program will be assigned to work in primary or secondary schools;
- enter into a partnership agreement with either a specific school official or with an official with general educational oversight authority in that jurisdiction.

In addition to these program requirements, applicants must document:

- **Problem Identification and Justification**

For Example:

Problem Identification: Gang violence adjacent to or within schools.

Justification: Documentation such as crime data, information on the number of gang members in a particular school, number of suspension and expulsions related to gang activities, school survey, and complaints from the community.

- **Community Policing Strategies**

Examples include conflict mediation, mentoring activities, gang mediation, problem solving projects, and truancy programs.

- **Quality and Level of Commitment to Program**

Examples include the amount of dedicated officer hours deployed to school activities, the duration and quality of the proposed program, evidence of previous successes, and a description of the impacted or targeted areas.

- **Link to Community Policing**

Information on how proposed activities are linked to an overall organizational community policing strategy.

Deadlines

Use the Universal Hiring Program application to apply for COPS in Schools grants. The application deadlines are December 4, 1998, February 5, April 2, June 4 and July 16, 1999. If your agency already was awarded a FAST, AHEAD or UHP grant, you may request additional officers at any time. Note on your application if you are requesting officers that will be assigned to primary or secondary schools.

For More Information

To obtain a copy of an application or for more information, please call the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 1-800-421-6770 or visit the COPS website at www.usdoj.gov/cops/

Departments that have a pending application under the Universal Hiring Program and that are interested in applying that request to the COPS in Schools initiative should contact their grant advisor at 1-800-421-6770.

Updated: December 9, 1998

FS-cis-002

Draft 4/22/99 7 p.m.

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**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
STATEMENT ON SCHOOL SAFETY GRANTS
THE WHITE HOUSE
APRIL 23, 1999**

Good Morning. Before I leave for the NATO Summit, I'd like to say a few more words about the tragedy at Columbine High School, and *about* steps we are taking to make all schools safer.

The images we have seen this week from Littleton are disturbingly familiar. We have witnessed too many similar scenes recently, of terrified children and grieving families in places such as Pearl, West[?], Paducah, Jonesboro, and Springfield. The events in Littleton are the latest, gravest reminders that no community is immune to senseless violence. It is important to remember--and to remind our children--that the vast majority of America's schools are secure. Nearly everywhere in America, a child is still safer sitting in school than he or she is walking down the street. But even one killing at a school is too many. And this week's tragedy must steel our nation's resolve to make our schools even safer.

I have spoken to Attorney General Reno, who was at the scene yesterday to assist law enforcement officials in their investigation and to *offer* comfort *to* students and their families. And I'd like to announce that the Justice Department will make \$1.5 million available to help the victims in their long journey toward recovery.

But we must do more. At our White House Conference on School Safety in October, I launched a new initiative to bring the same community policing efforts that are reducing crime on our streets into our schools. Today, I am pleased to announce that the first of these grants will be awarded to 336 schools and communities, enabling them to hire more than 600 police officers. Like their counterparts on the street, these officers will work closely with the citizens they serve -- with students, teachers and parents to improve campus security, to counsel troubled youth, and to mediate conflicts before they escalate into violence. I'd like to thank Senators Robb, Hollings, Gregg and Campbell, and Rep. Maloney for their leadership on this issue. By the end of the year, we hope to have some 2,000 new officers in our schools -- and I encourage all communities to apply for these grants.

I *also* want to take this opportunity to remind communities all across America that they have until June 1 to apply for *new federal* grants that can support the full range of violence prevention strategies -- from boosting security measures??? to hiring more mental health counselors to establishing new mentoring programs.

Taking actions like these to prevent future acts of violence in our schools, *is perhaps the best way for us to* honor the memories of those who lost their lives Tuesday morning.

Senators Robb, Hollings and Judd for efforts to secure these funds. By the end of the year, we hope to have some 2,000 new officers in our schools -- and I encourage all communities to apply for these grants.

One of the most important lessons we learned at the White House Conference on School Safety last fall was that preventing youth violence requires the commitment and the participation of all members of a community. That is why we have also put in place a new Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative, run jointly by the Departments of Justice, Education and Health and Human Services, to support community-wide efforts to improve school safety. Communities all across America have until June 1 to apply for grants that can support the full range of violence prevention strategies -- from boosting security measures to hiring mental health and drug counselors to establishing new mentoring programs.

These are some of the things that we are already doing to protect our children in school. Many of our newest ideas will require legislation. And next week, I will have more to say on those pieces of my budget.

As the days pass, and the grief becomes less raw, ~~this week's tragedy~~ must steel our nation's resolve to act -- to prevent violence from ~~ever again~~ shattering the peace of our schoolyards; to keep guns and firearms out of the hands of children and away from our schools; to reach out to our troubled youth and help them resolve their anger and alienation with words, not weapons. That will be the best way to honor the memories of those who lost their lives Tuesday morning. Thank you.

These are some of the steps
communities can take, and
in Washington can take,
to prevent future acts of
violence in schools.

problems. Schools have until the end of April to apply for these funds.

Encouraging communities to adopt comprehensive school safety strategies. In addition to today's announcements, the President will urge communities to apply for funds through the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, which will provide up to \$180 million this year -- and a total of \$380 million over the next three years -- to help 50 communities develop and implement community-wide responses to school safety and youth violence. This initiative, which was also a product of the White House School Safety Conference, represents an unprecedented collaboration between the Departments of Justice, Education and Health and Human Services to provide comprehensive educational, law enforcement, mental health, juvenile justice, and other services to help communities prevent youth violence and drug abuse, in and out of school. Communities have until June 1, 1999 to apply for as much as \$3 million each through this initiative.

Sending out 150,000 additional guides on the early warning signs of violence. Next week, the Departments of Justice and Education will distribute 150,000 additional copies of *Early Warning Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*. The guide, aimed at teachers, principals, parents, and others who work with young people, provides information on how to identify and respond to the early warning signs of troubled youth that can lead to violence in schools. In addition, the guide also instructs schools on how to develop a violence prevention plan and provides a crisis procedure checklist for schools to use if violence occurs. Finally, the guide lists actions students can take -- such as listening to troubled friends, involving trusted adults, and asking law enforcement to conduct school safety audits -- to help create safer schools. More than 200,000 guides already have been distributed to schools across the nation.

President Clinton: Helping to Keep Our Schools Safer
April 23, 1999

In a statement today, President Clinton will announce new assistance for the community of Littleton, Colorado and added resources for communities to help keep students safe at school. Specifically, he will announce: (1) up to \$1.5 million in immediate funding from the Justice Department to assist the victims, their families, and the Littleton community with expenses relating to the recent school shooting; and (2) \$70 million in Justice Department grants to help fund more than 600 school resource officers in 336 communities across the country.

Expanding assistance to victims. In response to the recent tragedy in Littleton, Colorado, and subsequent requests from Colorado authorities, the Justice Department will provide up to \$1.5 million in immediate funds from the Crime Victims' Fund to support:

- ✓ **Direct compensation to victims and their family members** for funerals, uncovered medical expenses, lost wages of parents, and private mental health counseling for victims;
- ✓ **Additional personnel and overtime costs for critical incident stress management services** for first responders to the crisis; and
- ✓ **Added victims services and counseling personnel** to help meet the immediate and longer-term support needs of the community.

Helping schools work with law enforcement to prevent crime and violence

- **Adding over 600 police officers for schools.** School resource officers provide schools with on-site security and a direct link to law enforcement agencies. The President will announce that the Justice Department COPS Office will release \$70 million to fund more than 600 police officers in schools in 336 communities across the country. Today's announcement is the first installment in meeting the President's pledge made at the White House Conference on School Safety to provide funds for up to 2,000 officers in schools.
- **Building on the President's successful community policing initiative.** In addition to helping communities hire school resource officers, the COPS Office is providing \$17 million through a School-Based Partnerships initiative. This initiative emphasizes using community policing principles and problem-solving methods to address the causes of school-related crime. The grants will help strengthen partnerships between local law enforcement and schools, and help them to focus on school crime, drug use and discipline

W Sfr
the Departments of Justice, Education and Health and Human Services to help communities put meet their school safety needs -- assisting them with everything from the installation of metal detectors to the hiring of mental health counselors to the establishment of new after school and mentoring programs. The deadline for these grants is June 1 -- and I encourage all schools to apply for them.

Wey? ... all same community policing efforts that we've seen on the streets
And we launched a new initiative to put more community police officers in our schools. All across America, community police officers have had tremendous success working with citizens to prevent crime in our streets. They can do the same for our schools. We need to assign more police officers to our schools every day, so that they can get to know the students and faculty, work with our troubled young people, and mediate conflicts before they escalate into violence. So today, I am pleased to announce that the first round of these grants will be awarded to 337 communities, enabling them to hire more than 600 school resource officers. We hope to have 2,000 of these officers in place by the end of the year and I encourage all communities to apply for these grants. (into America's schools)

But we have much more to do. Many efforts will require new legislation. Today, I ask Congress to support my plan to overhaul the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Program. We must require all schools to adopt rigorous, comprehensive safety plans -- plans that establish tough discipline codes and crisis management procedures, ensure safe passage to and from school, combat drug use and reach out to parents. I also ask Congress to pass the School Emergency Response to Violence Act, which will enable the federal government to respond to school-related violence in much the same way FEMA responds to natural disasters.

How, ways
This week's tragedy in Littleton must steel our national resolve to act -- to prevent violence from ever again shattering the peace of our schoolyards; to keep guns and firearms out of the hands of children and away from our schools; to reach out to our troubled youth and to help them resolve their anger and alienation with words, not weapons. That will be the best way to honor the memories of those who lost their lives in Littleton Tuesday morning.

The enormity of what happened

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
STATEMENT ON SCHOOL SAFETY GRANTS
THE WHITE HOUSE
APRIL 23, 1999

Good Morning. Before I leave to open the NATO Summit, I'd like to say a few more words about the tragedy that has shaken all Americans this week -- and the steps we are taking to prevent such violence from ever occurring again in our schools.

First, let me say that I have spoken to Attorney General Reno, who was in Littleton yesterday to offer condolences and to see what more we could do to help the families of Columbine High School cope with their tragedy. And I'd like to announce that the Department of Justice will make available \$750,000 in victim assistance funds to help provide mental health counseling, reimburse parents for lost wages, and pay for uncovered medical expenses and funerals. And as more needs become apparent, we will move quickly to respond to them.

Perhaps what is most disturbing to all Americans is that what we saw in Littleton this week has become all-too-familiar. We've seen the grieving families, the terrified children, the police and ambulance sirens before -- in Pearl, Mississippi; Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; and Springfield, Oregon. Littleton is the latest reminder that no community is immune to senseless violence -- and that we all must do more to keep children safe in our schools.

Let me reiterate: America's schools are indeed safe. In the overwhelming majority of communities across the nation, a child is safer in school than he or she is walking down the street. 90 percent of all schools do not experience serious violent crime. But we all know that any act of violence in a school is one too many.

For the past six years, my administration has been working to make our schools as safe as they can be. In 1994, we put in place a policy of zero tolerance for guns in school, requiring principals to expel any student who brings a firearm on campus. We are cracking down on the illegal gun markets that supply firearms to children and criminals. We are supporting after-school programs to keep our children safe in the hours when they are most tempted to commit crime or try drugs.

And last year, in close consultation with parents, students, and school officials from Pearl, Paducah, Jonesboro and Springfield, we developed a comprehensive plan to promote school safety and prevent youth violence. At the start of the school year, we sent every school district in America an early warning guide -- to help them identify troubled youth before they commit acts of violence. We put together the first annual School Safety Report Card to help parents and teachers understand the safety challenge facing their children's schools and work to solve them.

And last fall, at our White House Conference on School Safety, I announced several new initiatives to bring all sectors of the community -- parents, teachers, police officers, counselors, together to work to protect our students. We launched an unprecedented collaboration between

Armed Partnership between federal agencies and local communities to improve school safety by installing metal detectors, guns made illegal with laws, and school up training programs.

the Departments of Justice, Education and Health and Human Services to help communities put meet their school safety needs -- assisting them with everything from the installation of metal detectors to the hiring of mental health counselors to the establishment of new after school and mentoring programs. The deadline for these grants is June 1 -- and I encourage all schools to apply for them.

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* might have been October, unfortunately. Ok.

want to speak for a moment
what we must do

JUSTICE

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we call steal for radio

worked keep

at greatest risk

in September

SOLVE

more than 6000 guns so far?

tempted to commit crime or try drugs.

And last year, in close consultation with parents, students, and school officials from Pearl, Paducah, Jonesboro and Springfield, we developed a comprehensive plan to promote school safety and prevent youth violence. At the start of the school year, we sent every school district in America an early warning guide -- to help them identify troubled youth before they commit acts of violence. We put together the first annual School Safety Report Card to help parents and teachers understand the safety challenge facing their children's schools and work to solve them.

And last fall, at our White House Conference on School Safety, I announced several new initiatives to bring all sectors of the community -- parents, teachers, police officers, counselors, together to work to protect our students. We launched an unprecedented collaboration between the Departments of Justice, Education and Health and Human Services to help communities ~~now~~ meet their school safety needs -- assisting them with everything from the installation of metal detectors to the hiring of mental health counselors to the establishment of new after-school and mentoring programs. The deadline for these grants is June 1 -- and I encourage all schools to apply for them.

way to get this higher?

And we launched a new initiative to put more community police officers in our schools. All across America, community police officers have had tremendous success working with citizens to prevent crime in our streets. They can do the same for our schools. We need to assign more police officers to our schools every day, so that they can get to know the students and faculty, work with our troubled young people, and mediate conflicts before they escalate into violence. So today, I am pleased to announce that the first round of these grants will be awarded to 337 communities, enabling them to hire more than 600 school resource officers. We hope to have 2,000 of these officers in place by the end of the year and I encourage all communities to apply for these grants.

too similar

But we have much more to do. Many efforts will require new legislation. Today, I ask Congress to support my plan to overhaul the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Program. We must require all schools to adopt rigorous, comprehensive safety plans -- plans that establish tough discipline codes and crisis management procedures, ensure safe passage to and from school, combat drug use and reach out to parents. I also ask Congress to pass the School Emergency Response to Violence Act, which will enable the federal government to respond to school-related violence in much the same way FEMA responds to natural disasters.

This week's tragedy in Littleton must steel our national resolve to act -- to prevent violence from ever again shattering the peace of our schoolyards; to keep guns and firearms out of the hands of children and away from our schools; to reach out to our troubled youth and to help them resolve their anger and alienation with words, not weapons. That will be the best way to honor the memories of those who lost their lives in Littleton Tuesday morning.

June Shih

04/22/99 02:28:48 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Lowell A. Weiss/WHO/EOP

cc:
Subject:

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
STATEMENT ON SCHOOL SAFETY GRANTS
THE WHITE HOUSE**

APRIL 23, 1999

see minimize language at TC Williams
Good Morning. Before I leave to open the NATO Summit, I'd like to say a few more words about the tragedy that has shaken all Americans this week -- and the steps we are taking to prevent such violence from ever occurring again in our schools.

First, let me say that I have spoken to Attorney General Reno, who was in Littleton yesterday to offer condolences and to see what more we could do to help the families of Columbine High School cope with their tragedy. And I'd like to announce that the Department of Justice will make available \$750,000 in victim assistance funds to help provide mental health counseling, reimburse parents for lost wages, and pay for uncovered medical expenses and funerals. And as more needs become apparent, we will move quickly to respond to them.

Perhaps what is most disturbing to all Americans is that what we saw in Littleton this week has become all-too-familiar. We've seen the grieving families, the terrified children, the police and ambulance sirens before -- in Pearl, Mississippi; Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; and Springfield, Oregon. Littleton is the latest reminder that no community is immune to senseless violence -- and that we all must do more to keep children safe in our schools.

1 in a million CDC
Let me reiterate: America's schools are indeed safe. In the overwhelming majority of communities across the nation, a child is safer in school than he or she is walking down the street. 90 percent of all schools do not experience serious violent crime. But we all know that any act of violence in a school is one too many.

weak trans.
For the past six years, my administration has been working to make our schools as safe as they can be. In 1994, we put in a place a policy of zero tolerance for guns in school, requiring principals to expel any student who brings a firearm on campus. We are cracking down on the illegal gun markets that supply firearms to children and criminals. We are supporting after-school programs to keep our children safe in the hours when they are most

Promoting School Safety, Preventing Youth Violence and Encouraging Learning

--The Clinton Administration Record --

Making Our Schools and Communities Safer and Drug-Free

The White House Conference on School Safety. Although schools are generally safer today than they were just a few years ago -- and statistics show that students are safer sitting in a classroom than walking down a street -- there is still much more that we can do to improve school safety and security. In particular, the multiple shootings that took place in schools in Pearl, MS, Paducah, KY, Jonesboro, AK, and Springfield, OR, serve as painful reminders that no community is immune from senseless violence -- and that all communities must do their best to prevent such tragedies from ever occurring. In October 1998, the President held the first ever White House Conference on School Safety to convene experts, parents, principals, students, law enforcement, and local leaders from communities that experienced school shootings to provide an opportunity for Americans to learn more about how they can ~~make their own schools and~~ communities safer.

A New Federal Response for Violent Deaths in Schools. President Clinton has proposed a \$12 million School Emergency Response to Violence -- or Project SERV -- in his FY 2000 budget to help schools and local communities respond to school-related violent deaths, such as those that occurred last year in Jonesboro, Arkansas; Paducah, Kentucky; Pearl, Mississippi; and Springfield, Oregon. Developed with input from local officials and educators in these and other communities, Project SERV will enable the federal government to assist local communities in much the same way FEMA assists in response to natural disasters.

Targeted Resources for Schools with Serious Crime Problems. To help give the estimated 10% of schools with serious crime problems the tools they need to put the security of our children first, the President will announced a new \$65 million initiative to hire up to 2,000 community police and School Resource Officers to work in schools -- and to train police, educators and other members of the community to help recognize the early warning signs of violence. [NB: The first grants are ready for announcement for the radio address.]

Reforms to Help Make All Schools Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free. President Clinton has announced his plan for a significant overhaul of the nearly \$600 million Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program. Under the President's proposal, schools will be required to adopt rigorous, comprehensive school safety plans that include: tough, but fair, discipline policies; safe passage

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(3) Reforms to Help Make All Schools Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free. President Clinton will announce his plan for a significant overhaul of the nearly \$600 million Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program. Under the President's proposal, schools will be required to adopt rigorous, comprehensive school safety plans that include: tough, but fair, discipline policies; safe passage to and from schools; effective drug and violence policies and programs; annual school safety and drug use report cards; links to after school programs; efforts to involve parents; and crisis management plans.

(4) A Community-Wide Response to School Safety and Youth Violence. To help communities throughout the country promote a coordinated, comprehensive response to school safety, the President will launch a new Safe Schools -- Safe Communities initiative designed to help 10 cities develop and implement community-wide school safety plans. A minimum of \$25 million in discretionary grants from the Departments of Education, Justice and Health and Human Services -- or \$1-3 million per site -- will be made available for this initiative.

The President will announce a partnership with MTV to engage youth in solutions to violence. He will announce that MTV, beginning in 1999, will launch a year-long media campaign -- "Fight For Your Rights: Take A Stand Against Youth Violence" -- designed to give young adults a voice in the national debate on school and youth violence. Working with the Departments of Education and Justice, and the National Endowment for the Arts, MTV will distribute a Youth Action Guide that aims to engage youth in mentoring and other positive solutions to violence. The guide will be made available

community organizations, providing guidance on how to develop effective conflict resolution programs; Education and Justice are training community officials and educators on these conflict resolution measures.

Targeting Young People with a National Anti-Drug Media Campaign. In July 1998, President Clinton launched the national expansion of the Anti-Drug Media Campaign first proposed in last year's drug strategy and budget. The 5-year, \$2 billion campaign is designed to let teens know -- when they turn on the television, listen to the radio, or surf the 'Net -- that drugs are dangerous, wrong and can kill you.

Building and Strengthening 14,000 Community Anti-Drug Coalitions. In 1997, President Clinton signed into law the bipartisan Drug-Free Communities Support Program. Over the next five years this program will provide \$143.5 million to help community coalitions rid their streets of drugs -- the coalitions are made up of young people, parents, media, law enforcement, religious and other civic organizations and school officials. Under this program, the President recently announced new Federal assistance to enhance grassroots efforts in 93 communities in 46 states to prevent youth drug abuse. This assistance will fund the work of broad-based community coalitions to target young people's use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

Strengthening Schools, Promoting Discipline and Supporting Learning

Working Toward Smaller Classes with Well-Prepared Teachers. President Clinton has proposed helping school districts reduce class size in grades 1-3 to a nationwide average of 18 students by helping them to hire an additional 100,000 well-prepared teachers. This initiative will help children learn to read well in the early grades by giving them more individualized attention, will help teachers get the training and preparation they need to succeed and help educators maintain discipline and order which fosters a better learning environment.

Providing Early Education to More Children with Head Start and Early Head Start. Since 1993, the Clinton Administration has expanded Head Start by 57 percent, from \$2.8 billion in FY93 to \$4.4 billion in FY98. Now, 830,000 children are enrolled in Head Start, 200,000 more today than in 1992. In addition, the landmark Head Start Act Amendments of 1994 established the Early Head Start program, which expands Head Start to low-income families with children under three and to pregnant women. Under the President's budget, by 1999 nearly 50,000 infants, toddlers and their families will be served by Early Head Start. Studies have shown that investments made during the early stages of life reduce tendencies towards violence later in adulthood. Additionally, early investments also ensure that children are ready to learn when they enter school.

Replacing Crumbling Schools with Safer Ones. The proposed School

reducing school violence, drug use and class disruption; actions that parents can take locally to combat school crime; and resources available to schools and communities to help create safe, disciplined and drug-free schools.

Enforcing Zero Tolerance for Guns and Other Weapons in Schools. In October 1994, President Clinton signed into law the Gun-Free Schools Act, requiring states to have in effect a law requiring local education agencies (LEAs) to expel students who bring guns to school. The President issued a Presidential Directive later that month to enforce "zero tolerance" for guns in schools, a policy requiring the expulsion of students who bring guns to schools. In school year 1996-97, the U.S. Department of Education estimates that, under zero tolerance policies, 6,093 students were expelled from public schools for bringing a firearm to school.

Supporting Civic, Community and Faith-Based Organizations. Recognizing the important role that civic, community and faith-based organizations can play in reducing crime, the Administration launched a new Values-Based Violence Prevention Initiative to make \$2.2 million in grants available to 16 community-based collaboratives, including religiously-affiliated organizations, that target youth violence, gangs, truancy, and other juvenile problems by promoting common-sense values and responsibility.

Providing Safe After-School Opportunities for Up to Half a Million Children a Year. Last year (FY98), the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program was expanded to \$200 million. This funding is already supporting hundreds of programs in rural and urban schools in 44 states and the District of Columbia that provide school-based after-school programs, including on weekends and during the summer. This year, the President proposed to triple this initiative -- to \$600 million -- to provide safe and educational after-school opportunities for up to 1.1 million school-age children in communities across the country. In addition, the Education Department released a report in June 1998, titled *Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kid*. This report shows that after-school programs can lower juvenile crime and improve academic performance. *Safe and Smart* was sent to every school district in the country.

Cracking Down on Truancy. Truancy prevention initiatives have been shown to keep more children in school and dramatically reduce daytime crime. The Education Department issued a guidebook to the 15,000 school districts nationwide which outlines the central characteristics of a comprehensive truancy prevention policy and highlights model initiatives in cities and towns across the country. Since then, the Education Department has provided grants to local school districts to develop innovative truancy prevention programs of the kind described in the guidebook.

Encouraging Schools to Adopt School Uniform Policies. School uniforms have

to and from schools; effective drug and violence policies and programs; annual school safety and drug use report cards; links to after school programs; efforts to involve parents; and crisis management plans.

A Community-Wide Response to School Safety and Youth Violence. To help communities throughout the country promote a coordinated, comprehensive response to school safety, the President launched a new Safe Schools -Healthy Students initiative designed to help 50 cities develop and implement community-wide school safety plans. Earlier this month, the Departments of Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services announced that they will provide over \$180 million this year, and a total of \$380 million over three years through the Initiative for communities to fund comprehensive school safety plans that include anti-truancy initiatives, mentoring, mental health services, conflict resolution programs, school resource officers, and more -- helping to prevent youth violence before it occurs. Communities will have until June 1, 1999 to apply for the funds.

Forging School-Based Partnerships Between Schools and Law Enforcement. Under the new School-Based Partnerships grant program, the Clinton Administration released \$16.4 million in grants to 155 law enforcement agencies in September. The School-Based Partnerships grants will be used by policing agencies to work with schools and community-based organizations to address crime at and around schools. This initiative emphasizes using principles of community policing and problem-solving methods to address the causes of school-related crime. The grants will help forge or strengthen partnerships between local law enforcement and schools to focus on school crime, drug use and discipline problems.

Helping Teachers and Principals Respond to the Early Warning Signs of Troubled Youth. President Clinton directed the Secretary of Education and the Attorney General to develop a guide to help teachers and principals identify and respond to the early warning signs of troubled youth that can lead to school violence. In August 1998, the Departments of Justice and Education released *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*. This guide provides schools and communities with information on how to identify the early warning signs and take action steps to prevent and respond to school violence. Every school in the nation received a copy of the guide, and additional copies can be obtained through the Department of Education website.

Issuing the First Annual Report on School Safety. In December 1997, President Clinton called for an Annual Report on School Safety, which was released on October 15, 1998 and sent to every school in the nation. The report includes: an analysis of all existing national school crime data and an overview of state and local crime reporting; examples of schools and strategies that are successfully

Promoting a Community-Wide Response to School Safety and Youth Violence

To help communities throughout the country promote a coordinated, comprehensive response to school and youth violence, the President will launch a new Safe Schools -- Safe Communities initiative designed to help cities develop and implement community-wide school safety plans. He will also kick-off a partnership between the federal government and MTV to engage youth in solutions to violence.

The Safe Schools -- Safe Communities Initiative

- **A Community-Wide Response.** Parents, principals, police and others should work together to prevent school crime and violence from ever taking hold in their communities. To help promote such coordinated, community-wide responses throughout the country, the President will launch "Safe Schools -- Safe Communities." Under this initiative, 10 cities will be eligible for at least \$25 million in discretionary grants from the Departments of Education, Justice and Health and Human Services to develop and implement strategies with the following components:
 - ✓ *Formal school safety policies, including zero tolerance for guns and drugs, discipline, school uniforms, and truancy prevention;*
 - ✓ *School security measures, such as metal detectors and police patrol of schools;*
 - ✓ *Assessment and interventions for troubled youth, such as mental health counselors and alternative schools;*
 - ✓ *Prevention, including mentoring for students; and*
 - ✓ *After school programming for children and youth*
- **One-Stop Shopping.** Under this initiative, communities adopting a comprehensive approach to school safety will no longer have to seek federal support for their efforts in a piece-meal fashion. Instead, eligible applicants will benefit from "one stop shopping" -- or a single application, through which a series of federal grants targeting youth violence can be accessed. Each site will be eligible for up to \$3 million, depending on the size and needs of the community.

Getting Youth Involved in the Community Response

- **MTV Partnership.** The President will announce a partnership with MTV to engage youth in solutions to violence. He will announce that MTV, beginning in 1999, will launch a year-long media campaign -- "Fight For Your Rights: Take A Stand Against Youth Violence" -- designed to give young adults a voice in the national debate on school and youth violence.

- **Providing Solutions for Youth.** In partnership with the Department of Justice and Education, and the National Endowment for the Arts, MTV will create and distribute a Youth Action Guide that aims to engage youth in mentoring and other positive solutions to violence. The guide will be made available through a 1-800 number at the Justice Department and through MTV.

been found to be a promising strategy to reduce violence while promoting discipline and respect in school. Because of this, the Clinton Administration has encouraged schools to consider adopting school uniform policies by sharing with every school district a school uniforms manual prepared by the Department of Education in consultation with local communities and the Department of Justice. Since the President highlighted school uniforms, a growing number of schools have adopted these policies including: New York City, Dade County, San Antonio, Houston, Chicago and Boston.

Supporting Curfews at the Local Level. Community curfews are designed to help keep children out of harm's way and enhance community safety. Because of their success, President Clinton has encouraged communities to adopt curfew policies. A 1997 survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors has shown that 276 of 347 cities surveyed -- or 80 percent -- had youth curfew laws, up from 70 percent in 1995.

Developed a Comprehensive Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Strategy. President Clinton has proposed a comprehensive strategy to (1) target gangs and violent youths with tougher punishments and by expanding anti-gang task forces and the use of racketeering statutes (i.e., RICO) for gang-related offenses; (2) crack down on kids and guns by prohibiting violent juveniles from buying guns and increasing penalties for selling handguns to youths; and (3) keep kids off the streets and out of trouble by expanding after-school programs and promoting anti-truancy initiatives and youth curfews.

Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Children. A number of laws and initiatives are keeping guns out of the hands of children and away from criminals. For instance, since the Brady Law's enactment, 250,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers have been denied handguns, and the 1994 Crime Bill banned 19 of the deadliest assault weapons and their copies -- keeping assault weapons off America's streets. The Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII) is cracking down on the illegal gun markets that supply firearms to juveniles and criminals in 27 target cities. The ATF has already traced more than 77,000 guns in the YCGII cities, providing law enforcement with crucial investigative leads about illegal gun trafficking. The Administration's FY 2000 budget proposal contains an expansion of YCGII to 10 more cities with accompanying ATF agents to follow with on gun trafficking investigations. In addition to these programs, President Clinton signed a directive to every federal agency, requiring child safety locking devices with every handgun issued to federal law enforcement officers. And, in an historic agreement, eight major gun manufacturers have voluntarily agreed to provide child safety locking devices with all their handguns, helping to protect our children.

Encouraging Conflict Resolution. The Departments of Education and Justice have developed and distributed 40,000 conflict resolution guides to schools and

THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY

October 15, 1998

- **The White House Conference on School Safety.** Although schools are generally safer today than they were just a few years ago -- and statistics show that students are safer sitting in a classroom than walking down a street -- there is still much more that we can do to improve school safety and security. In particular, the multiple shootings that took place in schools in Pearl, MS, Paducah, KY, Jonesboro, AK, and Springfield, OR, serve as painful reminders that no community is immune from senseless violence -- and that all communities must do their best to prevent such tragedies from ever occurring. The White House Conference on School Safety provides an opportunity for Americans to learn more about how they can make their own schools and communities safer.
- **The First Annual Report on School Safety.** At the conference, the President will discuss the findings of first Annual Report on School Safety -- a report intended to give parents, principals and policy makers an accurate, yearly snapshot of the school crime, as well as to provide information on what practical steps they can take to make their schools safer.

Major Findings of the Report:

Students less likely to be victimized but more likely to feel unsafe.

Although the number of multiple homicide events at schools has increased since 1993 (from 2 to 6 -- and with 4 times as many victims), the overall school crime rate has actually dropped (from 164 crimes per 1,000 students in 1993 to about 128 such crimes in 1996). However, the percentage of students reporting that they felt unsafe at or on their way to school has increased.

Most schools safer than community at large. While the overall level of school and non-school crime is about the same (about 3 million crimes in each setting), students are more than twice as likely to experience serious violent crime while out of school. And the very worst violent victimizations -- murders and suicides -- rarely occur in or near schools. Fewer than 1% of the 7,357 thousand children who were murdered in 1992-93 -- or 63 -- were killed at school.

Serious crime and violence concentrated in a small percentage of schools. Only about 10% of public schools report serious or violent crimes to their local police departments. Nearly half -- or 47% -- of schools report less serious or non-violent crimes to police, and 43%

report absolutely no crimes at all.

Violence more likely in larger, urban schools and with older students.

One third of large schools (1,000+ students) report serious violent crimes to police, compared with less than one tenth of small schools. Also urban schools are twice as likely as rural schools to report serious violent crimes, and middle and high schools are 4 times more likely than elementary schools to report such crimes.

Fist fights and theft the most common crimes. Overall, physical attacks and fights without weapons are the crimes most often reported to police by middle and high schools. Theft is the most common school crime overall. In 1996, less than 10% of crimes against students were of a serious or violent nature.

Other Important Findings:

Fewer weapons in schools. About 6% of high school seniors -- less than in recent years -- are carrying firearms and other weapons to schools. Also, the percentage of seniors intentionally injured -- with or without weapons -- has not changed significantly over the past 20 years.

Gang presence nearly doubled. Between 1989 and 1995, the percentage of students reporting the presence of street gangs in their schools increased from 15% to 28% -- including large increases at urban, suburban and rural schools.

Violence and drugs linked. Students who reported being the victims of violent crimes at schools were more likely to report the availability of drugs at school. The presence of gangs and guns is also related to school crime and the victimization of students.

Teachers often crime victims. On average, 3% of teachers are the victims of violent crimes, and nearly 5% are the victims of theft at school.

- **The President's Call to Action.** During a panel discussion with a group of recognized school safety advocates and youth violence experts, the President will announce a series of new initiatives that address many of the problems identified in the Annual Report on School Safety. Specifically, he will propose:

(1) A New Federal Response for Violent Deaths in Schools. President Clinton will propose a \$12 million School Emergency Response to

Putting Security First for Schools with Serious Crime

To help give the estimated 10% of schools with serious crime problems the tools they need to put the security of our children first, the President will announce a new \$65 million initiative to hire an estimated 2,000 community police and School Resource Officers to work in schools -- and to train school safety officers, educators and other members of the community to help recognize the early warning signs of violence.

Up to 2,000 Community Police Officers for Schools

While students are less likely to be a crime victim at school than in previous years, serious crime continues to plague many larger and urban schools -- and more students now feel unsafe at or on their way to school.

- Building on the President's successful Community Policing Initiative. To help address the needs of these schools, the President will announce the availability of \$60 million from his COPS Program to hire new community police and School Resource Officers to work in schools with serious crime problems. These new funds will help communities to expand their community policing efforts to include school crime problems as part of their overall community policing strategies. Generally, local police departments will receive up to \$125,000 per officer for three years -- with no local match required.
- New training resources. Additionally, this new initiative will dedicate \$5 million -- through the COPS Office's Regional Community Policing Institutes -- to train new police officers, and to train educators and other community members to help recognize the early warning signs of school violence.

A record of building partnerships between law enforcement and schools

- Forging School-Based Partnerships Between Schools and Law Enforcement. In September 1998, the President announced \$16.4 million in grants to 155 law enforcement agencies to fund new School-Based Partnerships grants through the Department of Justice. These grants will be used by policing agencies to work with schools and community-based organizations to address crime in and around schools. This initiative emphasizes using community policing principles and problem-solving methods to address the causes of school-related crime. The grants will help strengthen partnerships between local law enforcement and schools, and help them to focus on school crime, drug use and discipline problems.
- Meeting the President's Pledge of 100,000 More Police. Last week, the

Burke Dennis K

From: Kathryn Turman
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 1999 9:00 PM
To: Harkins Ann; Burke Dennis K; Seidman Ricki L
Cc: Kramer Harri j.; Mansour Linda
Subject: Wish list from Colorado

I had another call from Deputy AG Don Quick. He presented a wish list for OVC assistance -- all of which we can authorize and provide through our supplemental funding to their existing VOCA grants.

(1) Supplement their crime victims compensation program asap -- especially for the Jefferson County program. The paper is being prepared now and will be fast-tracked for \$750,000 for direct compensation to victims for funerals, uncovered medical expenses, lost wages of parents, and private mental health counseling for direct victims (includes family members of victims).

(2) Funds to support additional personnel and overtime for people providing critical incident stress management services to first responders.

(3) Funds to support additional victims services/counseling personnel for the affected and responsible agencies for immediate and longer-term needs.

(4) Help with designing an abbreviated compensation application form (done by faxing them the forms created in OK, GA, and recently in DC.)

They are working on a ballpark figure for OVC for the victim assistance supplemental funds. I called Bill Modzeleski and encouraged him to make sure the school district is at the table for those discussions, since the schools will definitely help in hiring additional counselors for the long-haul.

Kathryn

Draft 4/22/99 8 p.m.

Shih

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

STATEMENT ON SCHOOL SAFETY GRANTS

THE WHITE HOUSE

APRIL 23, 1999

Good Morning. Before I leave for the NATO Summit, I'd like to say a few more words about the tragedy at Columbine High School -- and the steps we are taking to make all schools safer.

The images from Colorado have been disturbingly familiar-- the terrified children, the racing ambulances, the grieving families. We've seen it all before -- in Pearl, West Paducah, Jonesboro, and Springfield. This week, we were again reminded that no community is immune to senseless violence.

It is important to remember -- and to remind our children -- that the vast majority of America's schools are safe. Nearly everywhere in America, a child is still safer sitting in school than walking down the street. But even one act of violence in school is one too many. This week's tragedy must steel our resolve to act -- to keep guns out of the hands of children; to help young people express their anger and alienation with words, not weapons; to prevent violence from shattering the peace of our schoolyards.

I have spoken to Attorney General Reno, who was at the scene yesterday to assist law enforcement officials in their investigation and to offer comfort to students and their families.

And I'd like to announce that the Justice Department will make \$1.5 million available to help the victims in their long journey toward recovery.

But we must do more. At our White House Conference on School Safety in October, I launched a new initiative to bring more of the same community policing efforts that are reducing crime on our streets into our schools. Today, I am pleased to announce that the first of these grants will be awarded to 336 schools and communities to help hire more than 600 police officers.

Like their counterparts on the street, these officers will work closely with the citizens they serve -- with students, teachers and parents to improve campus security, to counsel troubled youth, and mediate conflicts before they escalate into violence. I'd like to thank Senators Robb, Hollings, Gregg and Campbell, and Rep. Maloney for their leadership on this issue. By the end of the year, we hope to have 2,000 new officers in our schools -- and I encourage all communities to apply for these grants.

I also want to take this opportunity to remind communities that they have until June 1 to apply for the federal “Safe Schools-Healthy Students” grants that can help them put in place comprehensive violence prevention plans -- from installing metal detectors to hiring more mental health counselors to establishing new mentoring programs.

Taking actions like these to prevent future acts of violence in our schools is one important way we can honor the memories of those who lost their lives Tuesday morning.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

Transcript

October 15, 1998

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
AT THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY

The East Room

10:30 A.M. EDT

MRS. CLINTON: Good morning and welcome to the White House. We are delighted to have all of you here to begin this important national conference on school safety and youth violence.

We're here because we believe that every child in America deserves to grow up in homes and communities free from fear and violence, and to attend a safe, orderly school where he or she can learn and flourish. We've come together today after a lot of hard work by many, many people around our country, as well as in our government, to help make that vision a reality.

I'm glad to see so many of you here today who contribute to the safety and well being of our children -- parents and teachers, law enforcement officials, religious leaders, elected officials, heads of youth organizations, counselors, child advocates and young people. I also welcome those who are participating in this event by way of satellite. There are over 650 down-linked sites in communities nationwide. And we're also being cybercast on the Internet. I'm heartened that so many of you have joined us here today, because to be successful we must reach out and get our message out and mobilize communities beyond these walls and this White House.

This year, the words "children," "guns" and "death" were tragically linked in our national consciousness. Shootings in schools across the country -- from Jonesboro, Arkansas, to Springfield, Oregon -- refocused our attention on the problem of youth violence and brought us together in national mourning and grief. These terrible events also left us asking over and over again how could this have happened, what does it mean, what can we do about the countless acts of violence that occur in our nation every day and that affect our children in communities, in their homes, on their streets and in their schools.

We know that this conference cannot find all the answers or solutions; but we can make significant headway by listening to those on the front lines about the many challenges we face and by learning to work more effectively together. Today we will hear how critically important it is to get responsible adults back into the lives of our young people and give our children positive alternatives to violence and crime. We will also be reminded once again how

schools so often reflect the problems and needs of the neighborhoods around them and how we must develop comprehensive school safety plans that engage the broader community.

We have a busy day ahead and I know that there have already been some very stimulating workshops earlier this morning that many of the participants here in the White House participated in. And now conference panelists will build on existing knowledge about the problems of young people and violence. You've already looked at some of the root causes of youth violence and at some of the early warning signals of violent behavior.

In this first plenary panel we are pleased to be joined by the Attorney General, Janet Reno, and the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley; as well as three people who have firsthand experience and expertise about the problems we're discussing today: Suzann Wilson, Marlene Wong and Paul Kingery. We will look in-depth about the challenges from the recent incidents of violence in our schools, to the more familiar problems of guns, drugs and gangs. And we will also talk about what happens in the early years of a child's life that may in some way direct that child more toward violence and what we can do to help break the cycle of violence in families and communities.

After lunch, the President will lead a discussion about solutions and will unveil new initiatives that we believe will help address the problems of youth violence. And the panelists will talk about successful strategies, from community policing to mentoring, that are making a real difference across our country.

At the third and final conference panel later this afternoon, community leaders and legislators will highlight some of the nations most effective programs that are helping to lower juvenile crime and delinquency. And we will look at how entire communities have developed comprehensive intervention and prevention strategies that not only cut youth violence but also lower dropout rates, teen pregnancy rates, and arrests for possession of drugs and weapons.

The President has also said there are no problems facing America that haven't been solved already somewhere in America. And we have seen firsthand how the enforcement of laws, like zero tolerance for guns in schools, are combined with prevention measures like art classes and after-school sports and tutoring, and that together they help keep our children in school, off of drugs and out of trouble.

But sometimes the word doesn't spread. A successful program in one city may not be known about across the country. And part of our goal today is to make sure everyone concerned about these problems knows what is going on, so they can seek out the help and

the ideas and the assistance they need.

We're going to recognize the progress this country is making in creating safer schools and communities. And we're going to highlight how it does make a difference what political leadership does, whether it's at the national level with the passage of anti-crime measures like the Brady law or the ban on assault weapons that are keeping thousands of handguns and assault weapons out of the hands of felons and fugitives and stalkers and away from children. And I'm delighted that we're going to be joined today by Sarah and Jim Brady as well.

We've also funded 100,000 new police officers on the street, and we know the effect of community policing and how it has helped to reduce crime -- but not only decrease crime, but also create better networks of support within communities between law enforcement and neighbors. The fact is that we know works. We just have to get about the business of doing it, and we have to learn from each other.

Too many of our children are not benefiting from what we know works, and I'm delighted to see some of the mayors from our cities here today who have done such great work in implementing effective anti-crime and anti-youth violence measures. We have to do more than develop safe strategies. We have to teach our children that guns won't earn you respect and that violence won't settle an argument. And we have to give them a positive vision of their future.

So we're going to get started now, and we're going to see a short video, made by MTV, that gives us a chance to hear from the people who are most affected by violence in their lives, mainly our young people. So if you will, please join me in watching this video.

END

10:37 A.M. EDT

TALKING IT OVER

BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

RELEASE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 1998, AND THEREAFTER

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Shortly after midnight on the morning of March 25, when my husband and I were in Uganda, we were awakened with tragic news. For the fourth time since October, American children had opened fire on classmates at school.

This time, these tragic events happened in a town we knew well, Jonesboro, Ark. Four young girls and a teacher were dead. Bill and I were heartsick at this senseless loss of life.

Across the country and around the world, the questions were the same: "How could this happen?" and "What does it mean?" On talk shows, in newspaper columns and at kitchen tables, people sought explanations for this outbreak of child violence. The President called on the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education to convene national experts to study the tragedy.

But as the shock recedes, we are left with more questions than answers about how to prevent children from harming other children. Despite our inability ever to understand fully, we have to analyze why two young boys turned to violence if we are to find any help for the next child who might choose a gun to deal with his pain and problems.

We must not let ourselves off the hook by talking about "bad children" and "good children." We, the adults, have choices, and we know that the choices we make -- as individuals and as a society -- will affect how our children develop.

Everywhere we look, children are under assault, not just from violence but from neglect, from the breakup of families, from the temptations of alcohol, tobacco, sex and drug abuse, and from greed, materialism and spiritual emptiness. One in five American children lives in poverty. One in four is born to an unmarried mother.

This instability poses great risks to the healthy development and economic security of our children. The disappearance of fathers from children's daily lives has many consequences, including increased rates of violence and aggressiveness among boys. One of the ways to counter the absence of fathers is for adults -- especially men -- to step into the role of mentor and guide.

Clearly, children deserve safety and security at home. Yet, hundreds of thousands of children are victims of abuse and neglect. A recent study shows that children reported abused and neglected are 67 times more likely to be arrested between the ages of 9 and 17 than other children. Buffalo, N.Y.'s Police Commissioner Gil Kerlikowske sums it up

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