

SCHOOL SAFETY CONFERENCE -- MESSAGE POINTS

- **Intro -- importance of schools.** While school violence is not increasing, they represent the very "heart" of our communities -- and must be kept safe, secure. Nothing has torn the heart of the nation like the recent school shootings. We must make it all of our work to set this right. Thucydides e.g.
- **Snapshot of School Safety.** Parents, police and policy makers need to know what the problem is -- and it's government's job to let them know. Today, we'll issue the first annual school safety report so that everywhere, at the start of the school year, all Americans can be better informed about the safety of their schools. (Provide outline of data, say we need even more, issue challenge of what more needs to be done.)
- **Meeting our Responsibilities.**
 - (1) Make sure government is equipped to respond. From meeting w/Jonesboro, etc., we know there's much more we can do. List examples of issues face: media, year-long costs overwhelming locality, counseling needs, etc.
 - (2) Focus on 10% of schools w/serious problems. Security first, zero tolerance for gangs, guns and drugs. Use metal detectors, work w/police, close campuses, hire School Resource Officers, or whatever else it takes to make sure schools are safe, secure.
 - (3) Help the 90% of other schools w/less serious problems to maintain order and discipline, to stop bullying, backtalk and fist fights, and to prevent serious crime and violence problems from developing and taking hold in our schools.
 - (4) Help all schools prevent violence and tragedy in the first place by: developing school violence plans; reaching out to police, mental health professionals, businesses and others in the community -- and supporting their efforts. If we can help communities -- who decide to make schools, safe, disciplined and drug-free -- help themselves, we'll have done everything we can do.
- **Announcements:**
 - (1) Media Campaign. Year-long effort by MTV to speak to youth about the problem of violence, safety, etc. ONDCP? Guides? What else?

(2) \$5 Million Emergency Response Fund. New fund -- like FEMA and terrorism to help communities recover from tragic violence. Funds for counselors, school security, etc.

(3) New and Improved Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools Program. Promise more funds, more comprehensive response, more accountability, etc.

(4) Promoting A Comprehensive Response to School Safety. COPS, [after school programs] prevention, truancy, intervention, etc.

(5) Zero tolerance for Violent Youth (or some other "big idea"). Mandatory detention, screening, sharing of records, lose right to own a gun. (~~IDEA reform~~, gun detection technology, values/religion, school uniform sponsorship, pledges to turn off TV every night, meet teachers, etc.)

Going to Satellite Downlink sites. Any edits?

(This should probably be shorter, so if you see things to cut, please recommend edits)

PROMOTING SAFETY, DISCIPLINE AND LEARNING IN SCHOOLS
The Clinton Administration Record

[Quote or intro-sentence?]

MAKING OUR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES SAFER AND DRUG-FREE

Strengthening and Expanding the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act.

President Clinton expanded the Drug-Free Schools Act into the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act of 1994, making violence prevention a key part of this program. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program provides support for violence and drug prevention programs to 97% of the nation's school districts. Schools use these funds to keep violence, drugs and alcohol away from students and out of schools. The President's FY99 budget expands the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program by \$50 million to fund 1,300 Drug and Violence Prevention Coordinators that will help junior high and middle schools across the country develop and implement effective strategies to keep our kids safe and away from drugs.

Providing Safe After-School Opportunities for Up to Half a Million Children a Year. Last year (FY98), the President fought for, and won, a \$40 million expansion of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. This funding will enable 315 rural and urban schools in 36 states to provide school-based after-school programs, including on weekends and during the summer. The President's FY99 budget includes a \$200 million major expansion, which will provide safe and educational after-school opportunities for up to 500,000 school-age children in rural and urban communities across the country. In addition, the Administration released a report in June 1998, titled *Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kids*. This report shows that after-school programs can lower juvenile crime and improve academic performance. *Safe and Smart* was sent to community-based organizations and every school district in the country.

Forging School-Based Partnerships Between Schools and Law Enforcement. Under the new School-Based Partnerships grant program, the Clinton Administration released \$16.4 million this year in grants to 155 law enforcement agencies. 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. The School-Based Partnerships program emphasizes using principles of community policing and problem-solving methods to address the causes of school-related crime. The grants will help to forge or strengthen partnerships between local law enforcement and schools to focus on school crime, drug use and disorder 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 President release the Departments of Justice and Education's *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*. This guide

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gives schools and communities information on how to identify early warning signs and take action steps to prevent and respond to school violence.

Listening Sessions... [Leanne]

Enforcing Zero Tolerance for Guns and Other Weapons in Schools. In October 1994, President Clinton signed into law the Gun-Free Schools Act, and 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.

Cracking Down on Truancy. Truancy prevention initiatives have been shown to keep more children in school and dramatically reduce daytime crime. The President, through 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 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 uniform policies, a growing number of schools have decided to require school uniforms. Among the schools to have adopted these policies are: New York City, Dade County, San Antonio, Houston, Chicago and Boston -- some of the nation's largest school districts.

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 survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors has shown that 276 of 347 cities surveyed -- or 80 percent -- had youth curfew laws, up 70 percent in 1995.

Encouraging Conflict Resolution. The Departments of Education and Justice have developed and distributed 40,000 conflict resolution guides to schools and community organizations, providing guidance on how to develop effective conflict resolution programs. And Education and Justice continue to train 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 he first proposed in last year's drug strategy and budget. The President's 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. President Clinton

signed into law the bipartisan Drug-Free Communities Support Program in 1997, which over the next five years 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.

PROMOTING LEARNING, IMPROVING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND STRENGTHENING SCHOOLS

Providing Early Education to More Children with Head Start and Early Head Start.

Since 1993, President Clinton 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 President's 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.

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 and will help teachers get the training and preparation they need to succeed.

Supporting Modern Schools For The 21st Century. The President is calling on Congress to pass his School Modernization Initiative, which will provide communities with interest-free bonds to help renovate, modernize and build over 5,000 schools nationwide.

Teaching Every Child to Read by the 3rd Grade. More than 1000 colleges have committed work-study students to tutor children in reading, and thousands of AmeriCorps members and senior volunteers are organizing volunteer reading campaigns. In addition, the President is working to enact an early literacy bill such as the America Reads Initiative that will provide more tutors after school, improve the teaching of reading in our schools, and help parents help their children learn to read.

Striving for Excellence with National Education Standards. Seeking high national standards for all students, the President has proposed a first-ever national test in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. **Goals 2000** is helping States to establish voluntary standards of excellence and to plan and implement steps to raise educational achievement. In addition, thanks to President Clinton's leadership, the **Title I program** is helping more than 10 million disadvantaged students reach high academic standards by giving them extra help with basic and advanced skills.

Expanding Choice and Accountability in Public Schools. Under President Clinton, the number of public charter schools has increased from only one charter school in the nation in 1993 to more than 1,000 charter schools this year, providing greater choices in public education to families across the nation. The President has also called for an end to social promotion,

aggressive intervention in failing schools, and higher standards for students, teachers and schools.

Preparing for the 21st Century with Greater Education Technology. The Clinton Administration created the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund to help connect every classroom to the Internet by 2000, increase the number of multimedia computers in the classroom, provide teachers with technology training, and promote the development of high-quality educational software. In addition, this Administration has secured the "e-rate" -- discounts for schools, libraries, rural health care centers and hospitals to connect to the Internet.

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October 9, 1998

Reauthorization of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program

ONDCP is OK w/ paper
3 concepts w/ these
Changes

President Clinton will announce his plan for the overhaul of the Safe and Drug-free schools program to provide more effective programs for the reduction of drugs and violence in schools, more accountability for results and better targeting to those schools that need the most assistance. While the majority of schools in America are safe and orderly, national data clearly indicate that there is more to be done to ensure that all schools are drug-free, safe and disciplined learning environments.

6pm

per

Rob

Hausman

Funding for schools with high-quality plans that are held accountable for results. Under this proposal, federal funds will provide support to school districts with demonstrated need and a commitment to adopt a rigorous, comprehensive approach to drug and violence reduction and prevention. These school districts will submit school-wide and/or district plans to ensure that the school, school-related activities and transit to/from school are safe: that drugs are not bought, sold or used, that gangs are not present and that guns and weapons are not brought to school.

~~Districts will compete for these funds and~~ *In order to receive funds, districts*
do the following: *(avoid word "compete")*

Adopt and enforce, clear and fair discipline policies. School districts will have to develop and implement formal discipline policies that clearly state behavioral expectations and consequences, zero-tolerance gun and drugs, school uniforms, and closed campus policies. Infractions must be dealt with in a fair manner, consistent with applicable law. The policy must specify methods for keeping parents notified and involved in the discipline of their children.

Secure Schools and Pathways. School must establish a plan to maintain building security. Security measures should be established on school premises if appropriate, including metal detectors and other security hardware. Establish formal agreements with law enforcement or school safety officials to patrol school grounds and pathways.

Assess and intervene for troubled youth. The district's plan must specify procedures for the identification of students for evaluation and counseling interventions. The plan will include mechanisms for training of teachers and staff, and for district officials and mental health providers to engage in confidential information sharing where appropriate. Local districts will also specify the arrangements for the provision of alternative education placements, where necessary, for chronically disruptive and violent students.

Integrate effective prevention programs. The school-wide plan will address the integration of drug and violence reduction and prevention programs, including programs those that teach students behavior management skills such as decision-making, mediation, conflict-resolution, strategies for avoiding gang-membership, social skills training, mentoring and other programs aimed at changing behaviors. Schools must show that the

programs and activities that will be funded have proven effectiveness in creating drug-free and safe learning environments.

Provide effective anti-drug policies and programs. All schools will have to develop zero-tolerance policies against the sale, use and distribution of drugs. Schools must also ensure that students have the skills and knowledge to effectively refute the use of drugs. Programs and activities that are funded through this plan must be shown to be effective in helping to create a drug-free learning environment.

Connect to after-school activities for youth. The school will establish programs that extend the school day and/or develop linkages with community groups that offer after-school programming. The plan will also deploy an adequate number of trained adults – teachers, guidance counselors, paraprofessionals, after school coordinators, nurses, parent and senior volunteers – to provide each child with an opportunity to be known by and to make a meaningful connection to a responsible adult in the school community.

Collect data and publish an annual report card with results. Districts will receive funding to enable them to improve data collection and report on the effectiveness of the approach outlined in their plan. Districts will provide annual report cards to the public on the number and type of school-related drug and/or violence incidents. Data collection will be strengthened at all levels of government to increase the ability to obtain comprehensive measures and to monitor and assess progress.

Involve parents, teachers and community. School plans will be developed and implemented in consultation with parents, teachers, students, law enforcement officials, mental health providers and other members of the community.

Develop plan for crisis management. The school district will have to develop and implement a crisis management plan that specifies actions to take in the event of a crisis, such as a shooting on school grounds. This response plan will be developed in consultation with community representatives and address assistance to be provided to victims, offenders, contacts with parents, law enforcement, and mental health organizations, counseling for students and staff, and communication with the media. *or a rash of drug overdoses*

Increased state assistance for local districts. States will receive funding to improve their capacity to provide technical assistance and training to local districts to enable them to create drug-free and safe schools. This assistance will be available to all districts, including those that are not participants in the comprehensive grants outlined above. Those non-participating districts will also be eligible for provision of a drug and violence prevention program coordinator.

Partnerships with institutions of higher education. Higher education institutions, through the schools of education will revamp course offerings to ensure that new teachers are provided with effective training in classroom management techniques. New teachers will also be partnered

with mentor teachers during training to enhance their awareness of high risk behaviors and their skills in handling drug-abusive, disruptive and/or violent students.

Support for research and evaluation. The federal government will continue national activities to support state and district efforts, including improvement of the quality, analysis, use and collection of data; identification and dissemination of research-based drug and violence prevention and reduction approaches; demonstrations of model approaches and development of replication techniques.

**THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON**

**White House Meeting on School Violence
September 1, 1998
Roosevelt Room - 3:00 pm**

- Opening Discussion with Delegations
 - Jonesboro, Arkansas
 - Paducah, Kentucky/McCracken County
 - Pearl Mississippi
 - Springfield, Oregon
- Dialogue with Administration Officials
- Suggestions for the White House Conference on School Safety
 - October 15, 1998

Questions for Discussion

- What steps did you take in the aftermath of the incident that occurred in your school/community, and do you feel that you were adequately prepared to deal with it?
- What types of assistance did you receive from outside sources (Federal and State government, other service providers) to help you deal with the incident? Was this assistance helpful? What assistance would you have liked to receive (regardless of source) to help you deal with the incident?
- What steps have you taken, since the incident occurred in your community, to help prevent a similar incident in the future?
- What actions do you think the Federal government should take to help prevent similar incidents, and what actions should the Federal government take to help schools that experience similar crises?

White House Meeting on School Violence
September 1, 1998
Roosevelt Room - 3:00 pm

Participants: Springfield-Eugene-Lane County, Oregon

Mayor Bill Morrisette
City of Springfield, OR

Gino Grimaldi
Assistant City Manager, City of Springfield, OR

Mayor Jim Torrey
City of Eugene, OR

Bobby Green
Chair, Lane County Board of Commissioners

Jamon Kent
Springfield Schools Superintendent

Alfred McDaniel
Chair, Springfield School Board

Participants: City of Jonesboro, Ark

Mayor Hubert Brodell
City of Jonesboro

Floyd Johnson
Public Safety Director, City of Jonesboro

Karen Curtner
Teacher, Westside Schools

Participants: City of Pearl, Mississippi

Mayor Jimmy Foster
City of Pearl

William Hunter Dodson
Superintendent of Pearl Public Schools

Roy A. Balentine
Principal of Pearl High School

James Bush
Alderman

Participants: Paducah, Kentucky

Susan Zimmerman
Lockheed Martin

Karen McCuiston
PR and Commissioner for McCracken County Schools

Bill Bond
Principal, Heath H.S.

Randy Wright
Member of Board of Education-McCracken County Schools

The Administration

Department of Education

Leslie Thornton, Chief of Staff
Bill Modzeleski, Safe and Drug Free Schools
David Frank, Public Affairs
Julie Green, Press Secretary

Department of Justice

Ray Fisher, Associate Attorney General
Shay Bilchik, Administrator for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Ricky Seidman, Deputy Associate Attorney General
Katherine Terman, Acting Director, Office of Victims of Crime

Department of Health and Human Services

Bernie Arons, Director, Center for Mental Health Services

The White House

Lynn Cutler, Deputy Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs
Mike Cohen, Special Assistant to the President for Education Policy

Rahm Emanuel, Senior Advisor to the President for Policy and Strategy and Executive Assistant
to the Chief of Staff for Policy (Tentative)

Jose Cerda, Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

Neera Tanden, Associate Director for Domestic Policy

Leanne Shimabukuro, Associate Director for Crime and Immigration Policy

Richard Socarides, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor for Public Liaison

Coordinator of the White House Conference on School Safety (October 15, 1998)

① Beal Bowl - Padukh KY

- can't be prepared
- take cash + sby shanty ASH
- medical need of victim
- take care of the kid
- take care of parents
- parents panicked

- law enforcement

✓ notes - converging

② Mayor Joel Morrison - Springfield

- Communities - in emergency plans -
need em. violence plans +
response that will happen immediately
- intergovernmental cooperation - (Portland, Eugene, etc.)

flap of natural disaster [- big hit, short follow-up
in the case - aftermath still going on

③ Mayor Robert Adair

- kids in hospital. have no ID
- someone needs to get off to hospital ASH
to identify kids + calm
parents

④ Pearl - Jimmy Fols

- Communication is important any agencies
- Media - public

- within 10-15 minutes of event -

ref. + cellular telephones were useless

Emergency Plan worked well

new radio cell phones

Bill Dobson - Pearl

cooperation between school + city officials

→ - Counseling

- psychologist from VA

- They used public sector counselors

- need properly trained counselor

- post trauma stress syndrome

~~considerations~~

counselors - to teachers first, to prepare

Every school should have a predetermined list of
counselors

Simon

Post team

- worst is own after by the time they get there
- team is in too late, overwhelming with there, stay too short

Recall

- Cost of recents for remainder of year - Cost, nonbeneficial

- FEMA-like disaster relief

- on-site immediately
- deal with parts with
- regional in nature
- maybe Council of Govts?

short-term vs. long term

gov's there, st. dept of ed
law enforcement

Security

Oklahoma City → support because fed. bldg involved -
61

Jonesboro

has no school psychologist on campus

- schools have disturbed, emotionally unstable staff
- worked with police, mental health agencies, d.a., etc.
- children - dark house

Barriers to sharing information

- schools can't share information

Robby Green
Lene Dr.

"had we known family was seeking help, we
would have been better off"

Media taking over

media No. 1 problem

control our space

keep helicopters away

find a spot for the media + require

them to stay there - on they will

block streets + close down neighborhoods

need to be able to share information and
identify problem children

Megan Bodeel - Jonesboro

- need to reassert parental control over kids
- coordinator to work w. it at so site -
st. hel. work with all school districts

Megan a Shel

FEMA - crime response fund - not just school

- need more adults w. the kid - nurses, social workers, coaches

Assistance center during the summer

Solve Schools Crisis - surface level now
- need to move to regional / local level

~~At~~ Karen Cutner - Jonesboro

- concerned about emot. disturbed kids
who are "managed" by medic.
- should not be labeled & as spec. ed
- need alternative facilities

Mayor Toing

Cons

① - Need counselors - especially for middle school kid

② Confidentiality issue -

drug counselors
school counselor
police

can't share info with
individuals

③ talk to rural / small communities about
preparing for violence
about safety plans

educators must learn how to identify troubled youth
themselves

Nancy Zimman - K7 -

national campaign - per. L

- reward schools

④ - private sector

Counselor - mental health specialist

use public & to converse must

Oct 15 Conference

→ lay the groundwork for state/regional
conference



FEMA data review

Prevention - counseling
training

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James Bush
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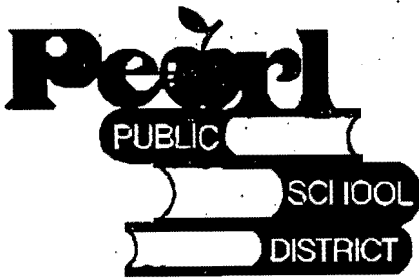
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Coordinator of the White House Conference on School Safety (October 15, 1998)

**PEARL PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT**

3375 Hwy. 80 E.

Pearl, Mississippi 39208

(601) 932-7921 FAX No. (601) 932-7929

Dr. William H. Dodson
SuperintendentClayton R. James
Administrative AssistantLinda Shook
Public Relations/Testing Coordinator

August 31, 1998,

Dear Ms. Long:

As a result of an incident of school violence on October 1, 1997, in Pearl, Mississippi, four of our school and community leaders are scheduled to be part of a discussion on school safety scheduled for Tuesday, September 1, 1998. These four representatives include the following: Jimmy Foster, mayor of Pearl; Dr. William A. Dodson, superintendent of Pearl Public School District; Roy A. Balentine, principal of Pearl High School; James Bush, alderman for the city of Pearl. This same group is planning a return visit of a similar nature for a meeting on October 15, 1998.

For reference purposes, the enclosed package includes pertinent biographical information and an overview of typical answers to the target questions to be used in discussion. I trust this information will be helpful; please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Shook".

Linda Shook

PEARL PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

3375 HIGHWAY 80 EAST
PEARL, MISSISSIPPI 39208DR. WILLIAM H. DODSON
SUPERINTENDENT

Telephone No. 601-932-7916

Fax No. 601-932-7929

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: Chantell LongFROM: Glinda ShockNUMBER OF PAGES 5 CONTACT NUMBER _____DATE: August 31, 1998 TIME: _____

REMARKS

General Responses to Target Questions for Washington Conference

What steps did you take in the aftermath of the incident that occurred in your school? Do you feel you were adequately prepared to deal with it? Experience with students in a variety of situations over a period of years provided a kind of "instinct" to deal with such a horrific tragedy. Although no one is likely to feel adequately prepared for something like this, administrators feel they responded in a responsible manner to the needs of the students and the community. Increased security was implemented immediately following the incident. Counseling for students and faculty was also arranged immediately. The governor's office was contacted for additional funding to help defray the cost of security at the school.

What types of assistance did you receive from outside sources (federal, state, etc.)? Was assistance helpful? What assistance would you have liked to have received regardless of source?

Help in the form of manpower was received from several agencies. Other assistance came from the Veterans Administration, the governor's office, and the Mississippi Department of Public Safety. A substantial amount of local funding was also received. Assistance was necessary, particularly to help pay for security officers and a counselor for the remainder of school year 1997-98. All assistance, funding and otherwise, played a vital role in helping the students, the school district, and the community recover from the tragedy.

What steps have you taken since the incident to help prevent similar incidents in the future?

Steps taken include continuation of security and teacher supervision throughout the day in hallways, at main entrances, etc. Crisis management plans have been reviewed and updated in each of the schools. Preventive programs are also being implemented: character building in k-5; conflict resolution training in secondary; peer mediation training in grades 6-12; mentoring programs in lower grades.

What actions do you think the federal government should take to help prevent similar incidents; and what actions should the federal government take to help schools that experience similar crises?

Federal funding is needed (perhaps in the form of grants) for implementation of preventive programs such as character building and conflict resolution. Funding is also needed for professional personnel in areas such as psychological testing and mental health. Substantial funding is needed for security personnel and surveillance equipment.

Roy A. Balentine

Roy Balentine has been principal of Pearl High School, Pearl, Mississippi, since July 1, 1997. Prior to being named principal, he served the district as an assistant principal for two years at Pearl Junior High School. Before working in Pearl Schools, Mr. Balentine was an assistant principal in Lowndes County Schools, another school district in Mississippi. Mr. Balentine was a classroom teacher before entering the field of school administration. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi.

Mr. Balentine is a member of Phi Delta Kappa, National Association of Secondary School Principals, and Mississippi Association of School Administrators. He is also a member of Kiwanis Club of Pearl, a local civic organization. Mr. Balentine and his wife, Shawn, are members of First Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi.

Presently, Mr. Balentine serves as a consultant to the Mississippi Department of Education providing training to new school board members in the area of crisis management. Recent speaking engagements on crisis management and dealing with the media include seminars in Georgia, Ohio, Mississippi, and Alabama. In addition, Mr. Balentine has appeared as a guest on several national new shows, including THE TODAY SHOW on NBC.

Jimmy Foster

Jimmy Foster is currently serving his first term as mayor of Pearl, Mississippi. Prior to becoming mayor, Mr. Foster served twenty-three years in law enforcement. He has a vested interest in Pearl Schools, as he graduated from Pearl High School in 1971, and he has children attending the schools. Mr. Foster is also a former member of the school board.

Mr. Foster is a graduate of Hinds Community College and Livingston University. He has done additional work in criminal justice at University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Dr. William H. Dodson

Dr. Dodson has been superintendent of schools in Pearl Public School District for sixteen years. Prior to his tenure in Pearl, Mississippi, Dr. Dodson served as principal of Greenville High School, in Greenville, Mississippi. Earlier experience in education includes experience as both a teacher and coach in other areas of the state. As an adjunct faculty member of local colleges, Dr. Dodson has taught courses in public school law and school administration.

Dr. Dodson is a member of numerous local, state, and national associations. Representative professional groups include American Association of School Administrators, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Phi Delta Kappa, Mississippi Association of School Administrators, and Mississippi Association of School Superintendents.

Dr. Dodson is an active member of several local civic clubs including Pearl-Brandon Rotary Club and Rankin County Cancer Society. He is a charter founder of the Pearl Education Foundation, a group of businesses and individuals who fund educational enhancement projects. An active member of McLaurin Heights Baptist Church, Dr. Dodson has served in several capacities, including deacon and Sunday School teacher.

Dr. Dodson holds degrees from Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi, and Delta State University. He and his wife, Nancy, have two daughters and four grandchildren.

James Bush

James Bush is presently serving his third term as alderman for the city of Pearl, Mississippi, the community in which he has lived and worked for thirty-five years. During this time period, Mr. Bush has been actively involved with the school system, having had three children to attend Pearl schools. His wife continues to work in the district, and his daughters teach in two of the schools.

Mr. Bush is sales manager for the Mississippi-Arkansas-Louisiana region of O'Neal Steel.