

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

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

Margaret Spellings, Secretary of Education, Moderator

**Panel III Participants**

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

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

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

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

Craig Scott, Columbine High School  
Survivor, Aurora, CO

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

---

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Applause.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SECRETARY SPELLINGS:** Cathy?

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

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

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

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

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

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

**MS. PAINE:** Absolutely.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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