



A Union of Professionals



## News Release

For Immediate Release  
October 14, 2010

Contact:

**AFT:** Cynthia Garza – 202/879-4447  
**PTA:** James Martinez – 571/329-9352  
**AASA:** Kitty Porterfield – 703/774-6953  
**APA:** Colleen A. Wilber – 202/657-0647

### **Joint Press Release by the American Federation of Teachers, the National PTA, America's Promise Alliance and the American Association of School Administrators On Redoubling Efforts To Protect Children from Bullying**

**WASHINGTON**—The recent spate of tragedies that have resulted from bullying, taunting or publicly embarrassing students is an alarming reminder that much work must still be done on educating society, including our children, about tolerance and mutual respect, and on keeping our young people safe in and outside of school.

All of us—parents, teachers, superintendents, civic and religious leaders, and others—must redouble our efforts to recognize and root out this unacceptable behavior. We must also work together to make sure our schools and communities are safe places for young people to learn, grow and thrive. We have an obligation to protect our children from the hatred that has led so many youth, with so much potential and promise, to take their own lives—hatred based on others viewing them as different, most recently because of religion or sexual orientation.

With the pervasiveness of new technology, including Web and phone cameras and social media sites, bullying of young people is no longer just limited to the schoolyard. It is a 24/7 concern that can result in serious harm, or even death. The American Federation of Teachers, the National PTA, America's Promise Alliance and the American Association of School Administrators have pledged to strengthen their efforts to keep children safe and free from bullying by educating students, educators and parents, and by encouraging more dialogue—including community town halls—about this serious topic.

“Children cannot live and learn when they are constantly being taunted and humiliated. They should feel safe in and outside of school, and they should never feel threatened or targeted by other students,” said AFT President Randi Weingarten. “In an era in which civil discourse seems to be eroding by the day, we must recognize that schools must do double duty. We must do what we can to teach our children to embrace diversity, and we must also make clear the real-life consequences of their actions.”

“The success of our young people rests on how well they are given the opportunity to reach their true potential. It goes without saying that if they feel unsafe and uncomfortable in school and in their community, it will be far harder for them to achieve academically and socially,” said Marguerite Kondracke, president and CEO of America’s Promise Alliance. “This is exactly the reason that the Alliance identified ‘safe places’ as one of our Five Promises. Our children and youth have enough obstacles facing them when they enter the classroom. Incivility and discrimination shouldn’t be one of them.”

Daniel A. Domenech, executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, said, “America’s school system leaders recognize the need to reinforce a culture of tolerance in all of our schools and to ensure that policies exist—and are enforced—to protect all students from the ravages of bullying. With parents, educators, students and the community working together to build a culture of mutual respect, we will ensure the safety and well-being of all of our children.”

“No child should feel unwelcome or unsafe at school, at home, online, or in their community for any reason,” said Charles “Chuck” Saylor, National PTA President. “Parents and PTAs can partner with their schools to understand what bullying is in order to stop it when they see it and provide help for children who are being bullied.”

More information and materials on preventing bullying and keeping kids safe can be found on the following websites:

AFT: <http://www.aft.org/yourwork/tools4teachers/specialpop/bullying.cfm>

AASA: <http://aasa.org/content.aspx?id=218>

National PTA: <http://www.pta.org/schoolsafety> & <http://www.pta.org/bullying.asp>

America’s Promise Alliance: <http://www.americaspromise.org>

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network: <http://www.glsen.org>

iT | Gets Better: <http://itgetsbetter.org>

Best Friends Foundation: <http://www.bestfriendsfoundation.org/>

Community Matters: <http://www.community-matters.org/>

Girl Scouts of the USA: <http://www.girlscouts.org/>

Girls Incorporated: <http://www.girlsinc.org>

TrueChild: <http://www.truechild.org/>

4-H: <http://www.4-h.org/>

###