



Contacts:

James Martinez – (312) 670-6782 (ext. 325)
Jenni Gaster Sopko – (312) 670-6782 (ext. 327)

**PTA Urges Parents to Ask Questions, Take Action to Help
Prevent Violence in Schools**

CHICAGO (October 4, 2006) – PTA urges parents to ask questions and take action for their children’s safety in the wake of several recent shootings occurring in schools across the country.

As unfortunate as these incidents are, they send an urgent call to parents to be involved in their children’s lives – at home and at school. Moreover, these acts of senseless violence are not simply family or school problems – communities must realize the shared responsibility and work with parents and school administrators to identify safety issues.

According to the National Crime Prevention Council, the crime rate can decrease by as much as 30 percent when a violence prevention initiative is a community-wide effort. All parents, students, school staff, and members of the community need to be a part of creating safe school environments for children. Many PTAs are working to identify the problems and causes of school violence and possible solutions for violence prevention.

As school safety policies and measures are reviewed or new ones created at the local and state level, PTA believes parents need to be informed and involved at all levels of this decision-making process.

Questions parents can ask about the safety of their school community include:

- ○ What is your child’s school procedure for getting information to parents during a crisis (website, phone tree, email, etc.)?
- ○ Does every teacher have a copy of emergency procedure clearly posted in the classroom? Is it reviewed with children?
- ○ Does your school practice emergency procedures with children? (much like a fire drill)
- ○ Does your child’s school review safety policy year-to-year? Does this review process involve parents?
- ○ How can I find out about community-wide violence prevention programs?

- ○ Are there conflict management and peer mediation programs offered in school?

Additional resources on school safety and what parents can do to help children cope are available at PTA.org/schoolsafety.

About PTA

With nearly 6 million members, PTA is the largest volunteer parent organization in the United States. Since its founding in 1897, PTA has prided itself on being a powerful voice for children, a relevant resource for parents, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who is concerned with the education, health, and welfare of children and youth. For more information about PTA, visit www.pta.org.