



Real Solutions to Gun Violence
www.paxusa.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2, 2010

MEDIA CONTACT:

Jennie Lintz – Jennie.lintz@paxusa.org
PAX/Real Solutions to Gun Violence
Phone: 917.330.0590

CUMBERLAND COUNTY LAUNCHES YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION TIP LINE

FAYETTEVILLE, NC – FEBRUARY 2, 2010 – North Carolina education officials, association leaders, and other state and county leaders recently launched a SPEAK UP Campaign in Cumberland County. The SPEAK UP Campaign, led by PAX/Real Solutions to Gun Violence and funded by the ESA Foundation, is a two-year initiative with the goal of keeping young people in Cumberland County safe from weapon-related violence in and outside of school.

“The problem of gun violence in America is a public health epidemic that kills eight children and teens every day,” commented Dan Gross, co-founder and CEO of PAX, one of the largest and most successful non-profit gun violence prevention organizations in the nation. “Empowering young people to anonymously speak up about threats is vital to keeping their schools and communities safe.”

The centerpiece of the campaign is the anonymous SPEAK UP hotline, which students can call or text to report weapon threats 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Since its inception, 1-866-SPEAK-UP has received over 35,000 calls nationwide. The SPEAK UP Campaign features outdoor advertising and television and radio public service announcements.

“North Carolina is committed to keeping its schools safe and its young people healthy. Violence prevention is an important element of this,” said Dr. June St. Clair Atkinson, North Carolina State Superintendent. “SPEAK UP Cumberland County provides an innovative means of keeping students in Cumberland County safe from weapon-related violence.”

The ESA Foundation, the computer and video game industry’s philanthropic arm, will be funding the SPEAK UP program in the Cumberland County School System through a two-year commitment of a \$100,000 for each year the program is in place.

“It is our goal over the course of the next two years that every young person in Cumberland County will become aware of the 1-866-SPEAK-UP hotline and will be familiar with the SPEAK UP Cumberland County message,” said Sally Jefferson, vice president of state government relations with the Entertainment Software Association.

Research shows that students often know about weapon threats before they occur, but may not tell others because of social pressure or fear of physical retaliation. The SPEAK UP campaign was created in 2002 by PAX, a non-profit organization working to prevent gun violence among children and families.

For more information about SPEAK UP, visit PAX on the web at <http://www.paxusa.org>.