

I am Dr. Denise Kerr, Superintendent of Rose Tree Media School District, which is a suburb of Philadelphia. We have 3,760 students with six main schools and one alternative school. I have worked in education for forty years, so one can say I have seen many trends come and go. I am also the parent of wonderful adult Son, Justin, who has a very rare congenital condition. Both of these elements of my life bring me to my connections to today's topic.

What has always both fascinated and frustrated me is that it seems to take a major event to support real change in education. Sputnik in the fifties caused a rush to teach science in our schools. A drop in our competitive math scores has led to many revisions and a sense of urgency in math curriculum improvement. Dare I say, Columbine and 911 have pushed us to "zero tolerance" and lock down drills. And the list goes on and on... Change takes place when a sense of urgency is created.

What will it take for us to realize that Pennsylvania needs to have a more serious law regarding AEDs in schools so that lives may be saved? President Kennedy said, "The time to repair the roof is while the sun is shining." Sadly, for several of my colleagues here today, the absence of an AED on school property caused a fatality. I worked in Bucks County when a student ran to get the AED to save the life of a teacher who had a heart attack. I know that the presence of AEDs makes a difference. The presence of trained personnel matters, too. So, it is time **now** to examine current practices in our schools regarding this critical topic, while the sun is shining, so to speak, to create a sense of urgency.

I watched, somewhat in amazement, how resources of all sorts were rallied to support the recent need to supply H1N1 vaccinations. I applaud all efforts made to distribute the vaccine state-wide, thereby eliminating the possibility of a spread of illness or even death. It was evidence that when the Department of Health and the Department of Education get behind an initiative and join forces with communities, good things happen. I would like to see the same take place with regard to a mandate for AEDs in all schools, at sports

games, and a requirement for an appropriate task force at each location trained accordingly.

Since the amendment to Public School Code of 1949, added November 22, 2000 (P.L. 672, No.91) many districts have acquired AEDs in greater numbers. A recent survey completed by the National School Boards Association indicates this. The emphasis must now be placed on making certain schools are maintaining these AEDs (just as one must maintain a fire extinguisher) and on making certain schools hear the message that a cadre a staff members must be trained. Since every school must have an “emergency response team,” it seems logical that these folks must be required to be maintaining CPR/AED certification. Members of these teams volunteer for this duty.

In closing, we are here today because we do not want even one more death to bring attention to this issue. Rather, let’s bring attention to our work on AEDs in our schools by being proactive, something that is too often novel in our work. Let’s “fix the roof while the sun is shining.”