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**WHORM Subject File Code:** ME001-03

(Messages: Messages, Presidential: Sympathy – Condolences)

**Case file Number(s):** 366124

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*Last Updated: 01/09/2026*

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PR005-02

January 29, 1986

### Condolence Message

To the Faculty and Students of Concord High School:

Today all America joins with you in paying tribute to the memory of a teacher, a friend, a wife and mother, a leader.

The shock and grief, the numbness, we all experienced at having Christa McAuliffe so suddenly taken from our midst Tuesday morning is beyond the power of words to express. But through the silence of sorrow we can say that your burden is not only the burden of all Americans, but of people throughout the world who saw in Christa what you who knew her best saw in her -- a woman of courage and caring, an educator of boundless energy and inexhaustible enthusiasm, an inspiration to young and old alike.

In 1961, when the first manned missions were flown into space, Christa McAuliffe was 12 years old, younger than virtually all of you gathered here. She said recently that at the dawn of the space age she was fascinated by the possibilities it opened to the imagination, but that she never considered becoming an astronaut because there were no role models. And when she herself became a role model for others, she characteristically looked back in American history to others who had challenged a trackless frontier. On her application for selection as the first teacher in space, she wrote that, like the pioneer travelers of the Conestoga wagon days, she intended to keep a journal of her passage.

We will never have the opportunity to read that journal, but all of us -- all of you -- will have the opportunity to write the history that follows. And as you move forward from this day, as its clouds and shadows give way to fresh sunlight, I know that you will ponder many times how best to honor the memory of your dear friend. You could hardly do better than to believe as she believed, that the lives and example of every citizen alike -- teacher, engineer, lawyer, policeman, mother, father -- have the power to change the course of human events for the good.

Member of Challenger  
Crew

36612455

Charles Foley, Principal

Robert Frost once wrote that, "We love the things we love for what they are." Christa McAuliffe was very emphatic and confident about who she was and the dream she and the crew of Challenger were pursuing. It is a dream older than mankind, as ageless as the universe into which the all-knowing God has placed us. And it is a dream which thrives only when we follow our destiny -- to labor, to explore, to seek, to discover, and to know.

We pray, then, that in granting Christa McAuliffe and her companions their eternal rest, God will fill each of us with the bounty of His peace and consolation.

Nancy and I are with you in thought and spirit. God bless you.

RONALD REAGAN

SENT TO:

Mr. Charles Foley, Principal  
Concord High School  
Warren Street  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

RR:CAD:AVH:jz (1PMN)

*Sent Express by Bob Anderson*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 30, 1986

NOTE FOR MR. REGAN

FROM: TOM DAWSON

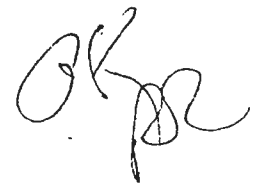
The principal of the high school in New Hampshire reports their ceremony will be held tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. A student will read the President's letter at the ceremony and they request it not be released until the ceremony has concluded (around 3:00 p.m.). A copy of the letter is attached.

*Make sure Larry sees  
this, & understands*



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 29, 1986



MR. PRESIDENT:

The school where Christa McAuliffe taught is holding a private memorial service for her tomorrow. We have been in contact with school officials, who have requested that no White House representatives attend the service in order to avoid publicity.

We have agreed with school officials, however, that you will send a message which will be read at the service. A draft of that message is attached for your review.

When you have had a chance to review the message, please give it to the Usher's Office to be returned to my office. It needs to be dispatched to New Hampshire this evening. Thank you.



David Chew

The President has seen 1/30

36612455  
MEDD-03

Received SS  
1986 JAN 29 PM 5:31

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 29, 1986

RR

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: FREDERICK J. RYAN, JR. *FR*  
SUBJECT: Concord High School

This morning I spoke with Charles Foley, Principal of Concord High School where astronaut Christa McAuliffe was a teacher. *death*

I conveyed your sympathies to him and the students of Concord High School and indicated your willingness to assist in any way. I specifically suggested the possibility of sending a prominent person (i.e. former astronaut, Cabinet member, etc.) to address the students about yesterday's events and to help ease their pain. The principal was very grateful for the offer, but declined, saying the school has been "badgered" by the Press and an outside visitor would probably just bring in more press.

The Principal explained that the Concord High School students are pulling together as a group to help each other deal with the sadness of their loss. He felt the Press had been cruel in the ways they played and replayed the film clips of the students before and after the tragic lift-off. Accordingly, he has closed the campus to press.

The school is planning a memorial service of its own for Thursday or Friday of this week. A special message from you will be sent to the ceremony. *Chasman*

*comment*  
The Principal asked me to convey to you their deep appreciation for your efforts to console them at this time. He was sure that the knowledge that you are personally concerned will be of great comfort to the students.

Com to M. Church 10-4-88

20