Can We Please Stop the Violence?
By: Tyra Harper

One of the scariest things as a parent is to get a call that something has happened to your child while at school. You trust that when you send your child off to school that the faculty and staff will make your child’s safety a top priority. This was the reality for one Wilmington, Delaware family Thursday as they mourned the loss of their 16 year-old daughter. According to 6 ABC News, Amy Joyner- Francis died after being assaulted by two other students inside of a restroom at the Howard School of Technology. Joyner- Francis’ cause of death is still under investigation, and no charges have been filed.

In an interview with 6 ABC News, family spokesperson Councilwoman Sherry Dorsey Walker said, “This not a young lady who was involved in street activity. This is an honor roll student, manager of the wrestling team, whose mother and father were very engaged in her life, as well as her siblings.”

According to the CDC website, school violence is a subset of youth violence, a broader public health problem. Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power against another person, group, or community, with the behavior likely to cause physical or psychological harm. Youth violence typically includes persons between the ages of 10 and 24, although pathways to youth violence can begin in early childhood. Examples of violent behavior include: bullying, fighting (e.g., punching, slapping, kicking), weapon use, electronic aggression, and gang violence.

A CDC study Understanding School Violence stated 11 homicides of school-age youth ages 5 to 18 years occurred at school during the 2010-2011 school year. The survey in a 2013 nationally representative sample of youth in grades 9-12 reported that 8.1 percent of students admitted being in a physical fight on school property in the 12 months before the survey.

A National Center for Education Statistics study Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2014 wrote, in 2009–10, about 74 percent of public schools recorded one or more violent incidents, 16 percent recorded one or more serious violent incidents, and 44 percent recorded one or more thefts.

Are we doing enough to keep students safe? Are the programs to prevent violence working? School should be a place where students go to learn and not have to worry about being harmed. There needs to be more focus on preventing incidents like this from happening; no student should die from a fight at school. Too often on the news I see students being jumped by classmates who are supposed to be their friends. Usually, these fights are over dumb things such as a boy or an argument over social media. Major changes need to be made so that situations like this do not occur in the future. Many times there are signs that incidents like this are about to occur. But, school officials often do little to stop or prevent them. Most students feel that since they are not involved in the incident directly, they should not speak up about what will happen or has already taken place with another student. I think that if many of these students interject or tell a school staff member, it could potentially save lives. What will it take for changes to be made? I hope no other student has to lose their life before school officials realize how major of problem school violence has become.