October 7, 1958

President Dwight D. Eisenhower
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

As you are no doubt aware, Clinton High School at Clinton, Tennessee, was ripped by three heavy dynamite explosions during the early morning hours upon Sunday, October 5, 1958. It is with deep regret that the Anderson County School Board reports that these explosions have so severely damaged the high school building as to require abandonment of its use for an indefinite period. At best, it will require large expenditures, tentatively estimated at from $200,000 to $300,000 and several months of time to restore or replace the damaged building.

There can be no doubt that these criminal acts of dynamite terrorism are directed toward the conscientious efforts of the Anderson County School Board to comply with the decisions of the United States Supreme Court and the orders of the United States District Court with regard to the integration of races at Clinton High School. We are pleased to say that local, state and national law enforcement officials are sparing no effort to apprehend the criminals who perpetrated this act of terrorism.

It is our determination, and we consider it imperative, to keep the public schools of Anderson County, including Clinton High School, open and operating in accordance with the law. Although the integration of Clinton High School was contrary to our personal convictions, we have sought to carry out our duties in accordance with the law and to abide in good faith by the orders of our Federal Courts. We do not intend now to be intimidated or to have our children deprived of an education by the closing of our public schools by acts of terrorism.

We are planning to make use of temporary facilities at a different location immediately to continue Clinton High School in operation pending the restoration or replacement of the high school building. However, at this time Anderson County is not in a financial position to restore or to replace this building. Prior to the destruction of the Clinton High School, the Board had under consideration an emergency building program to replace certain other schools in our system already condemned. The financial means are not available on a local level for repairing or replacing Clinton High School, which is our largest and one of our better schools.
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Under all of the circumstances of this disaster, we are, therefore, appealing to you to determine if ways and means could not be found to make available funds from the Federal Government to repair or replace the Clinton High School building in order that it may be kept open and operating in accordance with the law, and our present emergency may be met. As we conceive it, there is a joint obligation upon the part of the local, state and national government to assure that acts of terrorism will not close our public schools during these difficult times.

Under date of January 4, 1956, the United States District Court for this District issued an order directing the Anderson County School Board to open the Clinton High School on an integrated basis no later than September of 1956. Although we opposed by all lawful means integration of our school, upon receipt of the Federal Court Order, we as law-abiding citizens complied. After an outburst of violence in the fall of 1956, through the cooperation of local, state and national law enforcement agencies, law and order was restored and we have since operated our schools in compliance with the orders of the Federal Courts.

Through no choice of our own and to the great distress of our County, Clinton was chosen as the battleground for the opening of the integration struggle. We have borne the burden until now and have sought to fulfill our obligations to the best of our ability and to provide for the education of the children of Anderson County in our public schools. We most earnestly request your assistance in meeting the present emergency.

Yours very truly,

ANDERSON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Francis Moore, Chairman