

Student Walkout Sample Letter

Dear school district families and community members,

Following the tragic shooting at a Florida high school on February 14, there has been a collective momentum by students around the country to organize school walkouts and marches to honor the victims in that shooting and protest school violence.

Some of our students have already participated in student-led walkouts following the Florida shooting, and we are aware of several more school walkouts planned nationally and regionally.

At a minimum, we are aware of a student-led national 17-minute school walkout planned at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 14. National organizers are calling for 17 minutes of action/activity on that day to commemorate the 17 lives lost at the high school in Parkland, Florida.

We also recently became aware of a regional student-led effort to have students gather at the State Capitol Building starting to make their voices heard about school safety legislation before the legislative session ends. Planned events such as these are student-led events and not school-sponsored activities.

We are proud that our students want to exercise their First Amendment rights to express their views on this important topic. When students advocate for an issue they feel passionate about, it can be a powerful learning experience. We also recognize that some students may not want to participate in a walkout and would prefer to stay in class. We want to ensure that all students feel safe and respected, no matter what they choose to do.

We want you to know, as parents and community members, how the district will respond if students participate in a student-led walkout on a school day:

- If a walkout occurs on any of our campuses, schools and classes will continue on their normal schedule.
- Student safety is essential. Wherever possible, and especially in our middle and high schools, school administrators are working with student leaders to ensure a safe place and supervision for those who choose to participate in student-led walkouts.
- We encourage students who choose to participate in walkouts to remain on campus. When students leave campus, it is more challenging to look out for their well-being.
- The planned nationwide and local walkouts are student-led events and not school-sponsored activities. Therefore, we will continue to follow our district policy regarding excused and unexcused absences.

Actions Families Can Take: We encourage you to talk with your child, as is age-appropriate and/or appropriate for your family, about the collective national conversation about school safety and your child's possible participation in any planned student-led walkouts. * As with any school-related issues you or your child may feel passionate about, you are always welcome to

contact your state or federal legislators. You can identify your state and federal representatives by visiting www.leg.wa.gov and selecting the "Find Your District" (legislative or congressional) link on the left side of the page.

School Board Considers Resolution on School Violence

While public school district employees must remain neutral (non-political) during school hours, including during events such as student-led walkouts or protests, your elected representatives on the School Board plan to discuss and possibly act on a proposed resolution tonight that supports "sensible school safety legislation to protect students and staff."

The proposed resolution also supports some legislation currently under consideration by the state Legislature.

Additionally, the proposed resolution states that the "Board of Directors wholly rejects arming school staff for any purpose, and will maintain existing regulation of firearms at school and will NOT support any effort to arm educators and staff."

Finally, the proposed resolution suggests the Board of Directors endorse and participate in a student-led March for Our Lives on Saturday, March 24, 2018 at the Washington State Capitol. Similar marches are taking place throughout the nation on this day.

Thank you.