TEMPLATE

The tragedy in Broward County last week and other losses of life on school campuses across the nation over several years have driven increased interest in student-led civic engagement efforts and actions, including the idea of school walk-outs. INSERT DISTRICT NAME supports students’ Constitutional rights to peaceful assembly and free expression.Our goal in responding to walk-out plans and other forms of peaceful assembly is to try and keep focus on teaching and learning while providing guidance and planning to support student and staff safety.

Based on social media messaging, it appears that there are at least three major student-led efforts underway:

1. March 14: [@WomensMarch](https://twitter.com/womensmarch) Action – call for school walkout for 10 minutes
2. March 24: March for Our Lives for all to participate in Washington, DC ([@AMarch4OurLives](https://twitter.com/AMarch4OurLives))
3. April 20: National School Walkout for students across nation in local districts ([@schoolwalkoutUS](https://twitter.com/schoolwalkoutUS))

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to district communications for support/response.

**Guidelines for school leaders**

If/when you learn about student-led efforts, here are some tips for support:

* Meet with student leaders to assess needs and any plans.
* Remind students that counseling and guidance support are available to any student and that DISTRICT NAME encourages students to reach out
* Remind students that DISTRICT NAME supports their rights to peaceful assembly and free expression, but that school is about teaching and learning as priority, and that the DISTRICT NAME Student Code of Conduct remains in place and will be enforced.
* With student input, provide space on campus for students to assemble peacefully, but also ask students not to move off of campus for their own safety and security.
* Help ensure that any efforts to invite participation are open and that the events be inclusive of ALL students.
* Ask students to be respectful of students on campus who may not wish to participate, and/or students who may hold opposing views to those being shared during the event.
* Tell students that there may be increased staff, DISTRICT NAME PD and/or CMPD presence and that this presence is for student and staff protection and safety, not to quell their expression.
* Assess if there are teachable moments that could be relevant to class instruction or lessons.
* Invite student ideas for improving campus safety, security and culture.
* Stay in touch with Learning Community Superintendent, DISTRICT NAME Communications and DISTRICT NAME PD on any plans that may emerge.

**Messaging guidance**

The following messaging guidance is offered to campuses across the district if/when student-led civic engagement and actions occur:

***If you hear rumors of a walkout or protest***

Good morning/evening, XXX students and families. This is principal XXX with an important message. Recently, I have heard rumors of planned student protests/walkouts at our school in response to \_\_\_\_\_\_. At (school), our top priority is to support the academic and social emotional needs of our students while maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment for all. We respect and support the right of our students to advocate for causes that are important to them and welcome the opportunity to work with any student or student group to discuss appropriate and creative ways to do so while at school. They can contact me or any school administrator at any time. I encourage you to talk to your child(ren) about how they may be feeling about (topic) and the importance of expressing themselves in appropriate ways at school. It’s important to know that disorderly conduct that disrupts school operations is not acceptable and will be handled compassionately but firmly in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. Thank you for your continued support of (school). Enjoy your evening.

**When a peaceful protest or walkout occurs**

Good afternoon, XXX families. This is principal XXX with an important message. Today, some of our students participated in peaceful protests on campus in response to XXX. Our students (explain what happened i.e. sit-ins, poetry readings, etc.) for about X minutes and then peacefully returned to class, as instructed, to continue learning. At (school name), we understand that our students may be feeling lots of anxiety, fear and even anger about XXX. We respect the right of our students to advocate for causes that are important to them and support their efforts to do so in an authorized and orderly manner while at school. We thank our students for the way they conducted themselves today while allowing their civic voices to be heard. Thank you for your continued support of (school). Enjoy your evening.

**When a protest or walkout becomes disruptive**

Good afternoon, XXX families. This is principal XXX with an important message. At (school name), we respect the right of our students to advocate for causes that are important to them. Unfortunately, some students on our campus today chose to protest in ways that significantly disrupted school operations and threatened the safety and order of our school. Swift action was taken by school staff and DISTRICT NAME Police/law enforcement to address the situation. No students or staff members were injured during the incident. The safety of our students and staff is our top priority. Inappropriate behaviors that threaten school safety will be handled immediately and firmly in accordance with the DISTRICT NAME Code of Student Conduct and North Carolina law. I encourage you to talk to your child(ren) about how they may be feeling about (topic) and the importance of expressing themselves in appropriate ways at school. We look forward to welcoming students back tomorrow for a great day of teaching and learning. Thank you for your continued support of (school). Enjoy your evening.