

EPS Staff,

With the recent tragedy in Parkland Florida, we once again and all too often join the nation and school community in mourning a senseless loss of lives. Additionally, these events cause us to reflect upon the safety and security of our own students and schools. The attached letter will be distributed to families tomorrow sharing some of the work we are already doing and plans for improving safety.

Unlike in the past, students across the nation are standing up demanding action and change. As it is very likely some sort of student protest will occur in Evergreen, I want to share the district's position on protests occurring during the school day.

- In accordance with Board's Results policy, we want all students to understand how to "appropriately advocate for change". We as educators should utilize current events as a learning opportunity for our students. We support our students in efforts to stand up for what they believe in and should emphasize our role in guiding them through the process of advocacy (including research, debate, position formulation, action, impact, and consequences). I've personally already seen great examples of this throughout the district.
- In accordance with district policy, state and federal law, students have the right to assemble and peacefully exercise their free speech rights in common areas before and after school hours so long as they do not create a significant disruption to the educational environment. However, this does not apply during school hours where they would create a significant disruption.
- In the event of a student walkout on March 14th (or any other school day), this is a student-led event and not district or school sponsored.
- We have developed a district safety plan that will include additional staff at all secondary schools to ensure a safe environment for students who leave the building. Teachers are expected to notify administration if students leave and stay in their class with any remaining students.
- Staff should work with students to make sure ALL feel supported. Please let students know it is ok to stay at school and not leave. Everyone should make their own choices and we will be encouraging parents to talk with their child about their plans for the day.
- For students who may choose to walkout/boycott, part of our role is to ensure they are aware that there are consequences for any action. Though a resulting absence may be unexcused, we try not to be punitive in our response to students missing class and this instance will be no different.
- Safety is key, so remind students to be careful in their actions. We hope students do not leave school property but are prepared for that possibility.
- Schools and classes are operating on a normal schedule, and we expect staff and students to be engaged in teaching and learning. We understand that staff may request use of personal leave time to participate in the protest, however, class coverage is of utmost importance. We expect our staff to support all students – those who participate in the protest as well as those who do not. (Staff use of personal leave must comply with applicable employee contracts.)
- Refer all media inquiries to the communications and community relations department.

While the district cannot formally endorse or support any one political demonstration or protest above others with our time or resources, this is one cause where I believe we are all personally united. Moving forward, we must work together, each doing our part, maintaining our common focus in addressing the complex work that will make every school a safe environment for learning.

Serving Evergreen's Future

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Evergreen Public Schools, with over 26,000 students and 3,200 staff members, is the sixth largest school district in the state, and the third largest employer in Clark County.