



*Talking Points and Suggestions for Discussing*  
**NATIONAL SCHOOL WALKOUTS**  
*February 2018*

Please consider the following when speaking with anyone regarding the **National School Walkouts and Affton School District**. As always, these are provided in an effort to be helpful and are not intended to limit or control your actions or words.

***Background Information***

- There are currently three (3) national events scheduled:
  - Wednesday, March 14 at 10 a.m. - [#ENOUGH National School Walkout](#)
    - Women's March Youth EMPOWER is calling for students, teachers, school administrators, parents and allies to take part in a #NationalSchoolWalkout for 17 minutes at 10am across every time zone on March 14, 2018 to protest Congress' inaction to do more than tweet thoughts and prayers in response to the gun violence plaguing our schools and neighborhoods.
  - Saturday, March 24 at 10 a.m. in St. Louis - [March For Our Lives](#) & [March For Our Lives St. Louis](#)
    - On March 24, the kids and families of March For Our Lives will take to the streets of Washington DC to demand that their lives and safety become a priority and that we end this epidemic of mass school shootings. The collective voices of the March For Our Lives movement will be heard. Join us in DC or march in your own community.
  - Friday, April 20 at 10 a.m. - [National School Walkout](#) & Find a [National School Walkout](#)
    - *From their Twitter page:* On Friday, April 20th we want students to attend school and then promptly WALK-OUT at 10:00 am. Sit outside your schools and peacefully protest. Make some noise. Voice your thoughts. "We are students, we are victims, we are change."

***Talking Points***

- Administrators and principals at Affton School District will take their cues from students and staff, and, assuming students are passionate about this issue and want to plan a walkout or demonstration, will work hand in hand with St. Louis County Police to ensure the safety of all those involved.
- Affton High School and Rogers Middle School plan to meet with student leaders to help organize and prepare for a peaceful walkout or demonstration on March 14 that would be strictly optional and keeping to the 17-minute purpose.

- We do not anticipate broad disciplinary consequences for students who opt to walkout and remain peaceful and respectful. However, discipline actions will be considered on a case by case basis in the event they are needed.
- Affton School District is committed to supporting and working together with students to address their concerns with fairness, dignity and respect.

## ***Suggestions for Administrators***

Some recommendations about the Walkout:

1. Support students at AHS and RMS by either holding an assembly or by meeting with student government officers to discuss their thoughts about the Walkout event.
2. Set parameters for the Walkout – peaceful, respectful, a moment of silence, a speech by one student and the principal (or a trusted faculty member), or a reading of the names of victims (by our students).
3. Make it clear to all students that participating in the Walkout is strictly optional. Any student who chooses to stay indoors can do so, and that would have to be staffed. You may also consider optional activities for students who want to remain indoors but still take action, for example, an area for students who would rather write a letter to their lawmakers.
4. To help better ensure student safety, you might recommend considering an area inside the school for students to gather instead of walking outside the building - the gym, auditorium, cafeteria, or a combination are good alternatives.
5. Short of that, contain the walkout to a specific area of school property to avoid spillover onto local streets. Students should prepare for cold weather and be given a chance to grab coats, etc.
6. Ask the St. Louis County Police to have a presence that day nearby, but to keep their distance unless they are needed.
7. Expect signs (and some chanting) about gun control, gun reform, mental health reform, and even other issues. The hashtags being used by the walkout group are #nationalschoolwalkout and #enough.
8. Once plans are in place, we will send out a SchoolMessenger Alert to parents about the planned event, emphasizing that it will be peaceful, attended by staff, and held in memory of the Parkland victims. Give parents who do NOT want their child to participate an email address where they can choose to opt out.
9. Send out a separate email to all faculty, informing them of the Walkout and assigning them to locations on the grounds. Reassure them that their participation is voluntary.
10. Although it's billed as a 17-minute walkout, expect to be spending at least 30-45 minutes out of the school day on this.
11. You can invite parents to participate, or not. Your decision, based on parking and logistical problems.
12. Expect the press to show up.
13. Because the **March for Our Lives** event is being held on a Saturday, I would say that it's every man for himself on that day, just like the Women's March. It's not a school day, chances are students, families, and perhaps faculty who are interested will head to the local march in St. Louis.