



March 9, 2018

Dear Hillsboro School District Families,

As you know, the recent tragedy in Florida, as well as too many others, has elevated the national discussion around school violence and school safety. As educators, we welcome this conversation; however, we are also mindful of the fact that it can generate controversy as various contributing factors and potential solutions are discussed.

First, I'd like to reinforce our absolute commitment to ensuring the safety and security of our students, staff, and schools. There is nothing more important to us than providing a safe learning environment for our students.

We have launched a page on our District website called Keeping Students Safe ([www.hsd.k12.or.us/keepingstudentsafe](http://www.hsd.k12.or.us/keepingstudentsafe)) where we have detailed the many systems, structures, protocols, and adults that together create a network of student safety support. Please review this page to familiarize yourself with the processes we have in place.

It is important to note that we take *every* report of a safety concern seriously and that we do investigate and take additional steps, as appropriate. Many of those actions will not be apparent to others due to our legal obligation to maintain confidentiality, but please be absolutely assured that we would not keep a student in school or hold school if we believed the student posed a credible threat.

Second, we wanted to make you aware of a series of national student-led walkouts, vigils, and/or protests regarding school safety that may be occurring in our area over the course of the coming weeks.

These include:

- March 14, 2018, 10 a.m. - walkout for 17 minutes to honor the 17 victims of the Florida school shooting.
- March 24, 2018, 10 a.m. (Saturday) - March for Our Lives event in Portland (Terry Schruck Plaza, 431 SW Madison St.).
- April 20, 2018, 10 a.m. - walkout for an undetermined amount of time to remember the victims in Columbine and Florida.

As a District, we are neither encouraging nor discouraging students to participate. We do recognize that students retain the right to freedom of speech and expression, within certain boundaries, while at school. We will be talking to students in advance in an age-appropriate manner about school safety, and if there is a desire for a deeper conversation we will approach that from a neutral and educational stance. If students wish to do more than just have a classroom conversation, they will be encouraged to write to their elected officials or to local newspapers, or to participate in activities outside of school hours. If that is not an acceptable option for them, we will work with them to find a solution that keeps students in class or at least on campus where they can be supervised.

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***Engage and challenge all learners to ensure academic excellence***

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If students do walk out, they and their parent(s)/guardian(s) should know the following:

- Staff members who are providing supervision will be focusing on keeping students safe and on campus. Schools simply do not have the staff to manage or force a check-out system with students.
  - Attendance will be taken after the walkout so we have a record of students who did not return to class.
- If students leave campus, we may not be able to provide supervision, so it is extremely important that students remain on school grounds.
- Students will not be disciplined for their participation as long as they remain safe, respectful, and responsible, and act in a manner that is not disruptive to the school environment.
- If students do not show up for school or return to class, or if they leave campus, their attendance record will reflect an unexcused absence, which may generate an automated phone call home.

Please discuss this matter with your student(s) in advance so there is a mutual understanding about expectations.

Again, it is our strong desire to work with students and families to ensure that everyone understands our approach to school safety, has their questions answered and their voice heard.

Working together, we can keep our schools safe and secure so students can learn and thrive.

If you have questions, please speak with your school administrator.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mike Scott  
Superintendent