

MADISON MIDDLE SCHOOL
3429 45th Avenue S.W., Seattle, WA 98116 206-252-9200

Focus on Learning – Every student, every adult, every day – Achievement for all!

March 7, 2018

Dear Madison Families: Please read the following carefully.

According to social media, a nation-wide student walk-out is planned for Wednesday, March 14. As a public institution, Madison **cannot** support or advocate for a student walk-out, although it is fair to say that action needs to be taken regarding gun acquisition and possession. There have been 18 school shootings in the United States this year (including one middle school, high schools and colleges). The number of gun deaths in the U.S. since 1968 exceeds the number of deaths in all wars in American history and among U.S. personnel in conflict abroad. The statistics do not lie; this is a terrible, appalling crisis that must be rectified.

As a public institution, however, our position does not allow us to support a political protest. Individual citizens on our staff may exercise their right to protest outside of work time, as you and your student may. That said, we also want to support your parenting rights and authority to communicate your expectations with your middle schooler.

Here is what you need to know:

- If you grant permission for your child to walk out, please provide permission **in writing** indicating the time you will be picking up your student. Again, we are asking for this in writing in the form of a hand-written note or an email to the Madison attendance office). A phone call is not in compliance with the Seattle School District's policy and Washington State Law (information emailed home last week from Superintendent Nyland).
- If you are granting your student permission to walk out, your student must be delivered into the hands of a parent or guardian that is a listed contact person in our system. Students will **not** be released to other parents or "go with a friend".
- Students who participate in the walk out and have a signed written excuse from their parents will be coded as an unexcused absence for the missed class periods.
- Students must make arrangements with their teachers to make up any missing work. It is also a teacher's right to not provide make-up work when the absence is unexcused.
- Students who leave campus **without** parent permission and parent supervision will earn an unexcused absence and the act will be considered an **elopement** which results in a heavy consequence including but not limited to five days of lunch work study and a family conference. Please discuss your plans for March 14th with your child.

Madison teachers are working on some activities during school hours for March 14th – this could range from a moment of silence to classroom activities regarding the topic of

gun violence, protest, and movements, often led by our nation's youth, that have resulted in change.

Finally, please note that it has also come to my attention that there will be more opportunities for all age groups to express their right to protest in the weeks to come. For example, there is an organized (city and nationwide) march for this same purpose (March for Our Lives Seattle) on Saturday, March 24th which may be a better option for your family.

Please take time with your family to discuss urgent topic and your expectations and family plans for March 14th.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Gary, Jr.
Principal