

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Robert Gregory • Interim Superintendent • contactsuper@nps.k12.nj.us

Dear NPS Parents and Families,

As I shared a few weeks ago, we are committed to doing everything we can to make sure that we are responding to the tragic events that occurred in Parkland, Florida on February 14th.

Toward that end, I want to make sure you aware of several upcoming events we are sponsoring in partnership with school staff and students to improve safety in our schools and to support our students' right to make their voices heard on this important issue.

1. March 12-16, 2018: Students Learn about Activism and Advocacy "We all have the right to live free from fear and violence in our community." (High School and Middle School Students)

The Newark Public Schools has prepared a curriculum for educators to use to engage with students about activism and the topic of gun violence throughout next week. This curriculum has been prepared in advance of the nation-wide walkout on March 14th, to make sure that students are engaging with this experience in a productive way and learning about how advocacy can be used to advance a social cause.

2. March 14, 2018: National School Walkout (High School and Middle School Students)

Parkland students have asked their peers across the country to participate in a 17 minute walkout to mourn those lost and to advocate against future gun violence. We will use this opportunity to support our students' right to make their voices heard, to make this experience a teachable moment, and to make sure that this takes place in an orderly and safe fashion. Students of course are welcomed to opt-out of participating in this walkout. Please contact your school if you do not wish to participate or if you have any questions about this event.

3. March 21- April 25, 2018: Professional Development on School Safety Protocols (All Staff)

We are partnering with the Mayor's Office to provide professional development in the coming weeks to all staff across the district on important safety protocols and procedures. This training will provide staff with essential information to make sure our schools are prepared to do whatever is necessary to keep students safe in the event of an unforeseen incident. Topics include guidance for active shooter drills, updated evacuation protocols and emergency information for educators.

4. March 24, 2018: March For Our Lives (Newark – All Community Members)

The district and school board members are supporting our student leaders as they work to organize their peers and other community members to participate in this event in a safe and productive fashion. This is on a Saturday, so it will not take away from any classroom time and is in no way mandatory for students to participate in.

No community should have to experience fear or gun violence like the students and families of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School did. Let's continue to work together to do all that we can to prevent things like this from happening here in Newark and across the country. The safety of our students is of the utmost importance.

Best,
Robert

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Robert Gregory".

A. Robert Gregory
Interim Superintendent
Newark Public Schools